

**PICKENS COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL
STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK
2015-2016**

Name: _____

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Our Vision

Graduation and Life Preparation for All!

Our Mission

The mission of the Pickens County Middle School Community is to prepare our students for high school graduation and future success by inspiring them to become responsible learners and productive members of society.

Our Beliefs

Excellence in student learning is the chief priority for the school.

Teachers, administrators, parents, and the community share the responsibility for advancing the school's mission.

The commitment to continuous improvement is imperative if our school is going to enable students to become confident, self-directed, lifelong learners.

Students learn in different ways and should be provided with a variety of instructional approaches to support their learning.

A safe and physically comfortable environment promotes student learning.

GEORGIA LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL TO WATCH

Pickens County Middle School is a Georgia Lighthouse School to Watch. PCMS is one of only 20 middle schools in the State of Georgia with this designation. With a total of 483 middle schools in the state, only 4% are Lighthouse Schools to Watch. Schools to Watch® is an initiative launched by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform in 1999. Through the Schools to Watch® initiative, the National Forum identifies schools across the United States that are well on their way to meeting the Forum's criteria for high performance. Schools to Watch are:

- **academically excellent** — These schools challenge all students to use their minds well.
- **developmentally responsive** — These schools are sensitive to the unique developmental challenges of early adolescence.
- **socially equitable** — These schools are democratic and fair, providing every student with high-quality teachers, resources, and supports.

STUDENT NAME (print) _____

**Pickens County Middle School
Internet Use Agreement Authorization Form**

User Authorization:

I hereby certify that I have read and understand the Pickens County Public Schools (PCPS) Internet and Technology Use Regulation Policy located in the PCPS *Student Code of Conduct* and agree to abide by its terms and conditions. I understand that if I violate this regulation my Internet access privilege may be revoked, and I will be subject to disciplinary action. I further understand that a violation of the regulation may subject me to criminal and/or civil liability.

User Name (please print) _____

User Signature _____ Date _____

Parent or Guardian Authorization:

As the parent or guardian of the above named user, I hereby certify that I have read and understand the Pickens County Middle School Internet Use Regulation. I further understand that some materials accessible to Internet users may be offensive, illegal, defamatory, or inaccurate and that although the Pickens County School District has taken reasonable precautions to restrict access to such materials, such exposure may nevertheless occur. With that understanding, I hereby give permission to the Pickens County School District for my child to use the Internet. I further agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Pickens County School District, its employees and agents, from any and all claims arising from or related to my child's use or misuse of the Internet, and waive any and all claims I may have against the school district for such use or misuse.

Parent or Guardian's Name (please print) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Sponsoring Teacher

I hereby certify that I have read and understand the Pickens County Middle School Internet Regulation. As a sponsoring teacher, I have instructed the above named user on acceptable use of the internet and proper internet etiquette.

Teacher's Name (please print) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

PICKENS COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL Student Academic Achievement Plan 2015-2016

Name _____ Date _____

My academic and behavioral goals for the 2015-2016 school years are:

- A. To improve my Lexile Reading Level by 50 points.
- B. To improve my Math Level from _____ to _____.
- C. To improve my writing skills from previous test scores.
- D. To avoid missing more than 5 days of school.
- E. To decrease the number of tardies and checkouts to 5 or less.
- F. To avoid any discipline referrals this year.
- G. Other Goals:

The school strategies available to me for improving my academic achievement are:

- 1. Before school tutoring and C.A.R.E.S. remediation (Tues. - Thurs.);
- 2. Study Island Social Studies and Science (available from Social Studies/Science and school tutoring teachers);
- 3. Teacher tutoring (Ask your teacher for help.);
- 4. Math Connection and ELA Connection classes (available for all grades); and
- 5. Credit Recovery Program.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT GOALS

	Baseline	1st Benchmark	2nd Benchmark	Goal
SRI				
Lexile				
Math Benchmark				

Standards Based Benchmarks	Fall Benchmark Score	Spring Benchmark Score
ELA		
Math		
Science		
Social Studies		
Writing		

For Parents:

Our home strategies for improving my child’s academic and behavioral achievement are:

- _____ I will check my child’s organizer/agenda daily.
- _____ I will ensure that my child completes homework assignments.
- _____ I will make an effort to communicate with my child’s teacher/s.
- _____ I will help my child be at school, on time, and to stay for the entire day.
- _____ I will have my child read at least 20 minutes daily.

For Student:

_____ I will check my grades on a weekly basis through Infinite Campus.

Student
Signature _____ Date _____
Parent
Signature _____ Date _____

Password Manager Page

Program	User Name	Password
Study Island		science
GOFAR		
GA College 411		
Destiny	first initial last initial lunch number (no spaces; lower case)	lunch number
Mackin Via	first initial last initial lunch number (no spaces; lower case)	read
Google Drive	first initial last initial lunch number @students.pickenscountyschools.org (no spaces; lower case) Example for John Smith: js67892@students.pickenscountyschools.org	0 grade level first initial last initial lunch number (no spaces; capital letters) Example: 07JS67892

Editing Marks



spelling error



start a new paragraph



capitalize the letter



insert a comma



Ideas, sentence structure is confusing to the reader



sentence is a fragment



insert more information



lowercase the letter



Insert a period



Insert quotation marks; dialogue or citation



reverse the order



run-on sentence



delete this

Reading Log

Genre	Title	Author	Signature

Behavior Card / 1st Nine Weeks: Be a Dragon - In the Classroom!

Level 1 Minor Behaviors Monitoring Grid	Points	HR/ CARES	Math	ELA	Social Studies	Science	Common Areas	Connection Class #1	Connection Class #2
@ 95 points Warning — Inform student of rule violated	100 99 98 97 96 95								
@ 90 points Inform student of rule violated 1st Parent Contact	94 93 92 91 90								
@ 85 points Inform student of rule violated After School Detention and 2nd Parent Contact	89 88 87 86 85								
@ 80 points Inform student of rule violated and schedule parent conference	84 83 82 81 80								
@ 75 points Inform student of rule violated and Administrative Referral	79 78 77 76 75								
@ 70 points Inform student of rule violated and CICO - Behavior Program (Notify Administrator)	74 73 72 71 70								
@ 65 points Administrative Referral	69 68 67 66 65								

Behavior Monitoring Point Grid	Descriptors/Deductions:
<p>You can earn points back! It is your responsibility to let your teachers know that you are making an effort to earn points back.</p> <p><i>This page must be kept in the agenda at all times! If the agenda and/or Behavior Card are not with you in class, you will lose 5 behavior points.</i></p>	<p>DR — Disrespect = 5 points DB — Disruption = 5 points IL — Inappropriate Language = 5 points PDA — Public Display of Affection = 5 pts. CM — Computer Misuse = 5 points HP — Horseplay = 5 points WR — Willful Refusal = 5 points OA — Out of Area = 5 points RP — Redeemed Points</p>

Important: Any student having 95 points or more at the end of a 9-week grading period may be eligible for Principals Celebrations. Additional eligibility requirement: No Administrative Referrals.

Behavior Card / 2nd Nine Weeks: Be a Dragon - In the Classroom!

Level 1 Minor Behaviors Monitoring Grid	Points	HR/ CARES	Math	ELA	Social Studies	Science	Common Areas	Connection Class #1	Connection Class #2
@ 95 points Warning — Inform student of rule violated	100 99 98 97 96 95								
@ 90 points Inform student of rule violated 1st Parent Contact	94 93 92 91 90								
@ 85 points Inform student of rule violated After School Detention and 2nd Parent Contact	89 88 87 86 85								
@ 80 points Inform student of rule violated and schedule parent conference	84 83 82 81 80								
@ 75 points Inform student of rule violated and Administrative Referral	79 78 77 76 75								
@ 70 points Inform student of rule violated and CICO - Behavior Program (Notify Administrator)	74 73 72 71 70								
@ 65 points Administrative Referral	69 68 67 66 65								

Behavior Monitoring Point Grid

Descriptors/Deductions:

You can earn points back!
It is **your** responsibility to let your teachers know that you are making an effort to earn points back.

This page must be kept in the agenda at all times! If the agenda and/or Behavior Card are not with you in class, you will lose 5 behavior points.

- DR — Disrespect = 5 points**
- DB — Disruption = 5 points**
- IL — Inappropriate Language = 5 points**
- PDA — Public Display of Affection = 5 pts.**
- CM — Computer Misuse = 5 points**
- HP — Horseplay = 5 points**
- WR — Willful Refusal = 5 points**
- OA — Out of Area = 5 points**
- RP — Redeemed Points**

Important: Any student having 95 points or more at the end of a 9-week grading period may be eligible for Principals Celebrations. Additional eligibility requirement: No Administrative Referrals.

Behavior Card / 3rd Nine Weeks: Be a Dragon - In the Classroom!

Level 1 Minor Behaviors Monitoring Grid	Points	HR/ CARES	Math	ELA	Social Studies	Science	Common Areas	Connection Class #1	Connection Class #2
@ 95 points Warning — Inform student of rule violated	100 99 98 97 96 95								
@ 90 points Inform student of rule violated 1st Parent Contact	94 93 92 91 90								
@ 85 points Inform student of rule violated After School Detention and 2nd Parent Contact	89 88 87 86 85								
@ 80 points Inform student of rule violated and schedule parent conference	84 83 82 81 80								
@ 75 points Inform student of rule violated and Administrative Referral	79 78 77 76 75								
@ 70 points Inform student of rule violated and CICO - Behavior Program (Notify Administrator)	74 73 72 71 70								
@ 65 points Administrative Referral	69 68 67 66 65								

Behavior Monitoring Point Grid	Descriptors/Deductions:
<p>You can earn points back! It is your responsibility to let your teachers know that you are making an effort to earn points back.</p> <p><i>This page must be kept in the agenda at all times! If the agenda and/or Behavior Card are not with you in class, you will lose 5 behavior points.</i></p>	<p>DR — Disrespect = 5 points DB — Disruption = 5 points IL — Inappropriate Language = 5 points PDA — Public Display of Affection = 5 pts. CM — Computer Misuse = 5 points HP — Horseplay = 5 points WR — Willful Refusal = 5 points OA — Out of Area = 5 points RP — Redeemed Points</p>

Important: Any student having 95 points or more at the end of a 9-week grading period may be eligible for Principals Celebrations. Additional eligibility requirement: No Administrative Referrals.

Behavior Card / 4th Nine Weeks: Be a Dragon - In the Classroom!

Level 1 Minor Behaviors Monitoring Grid	Points	HR/ CARES	Math	ELA	Social Studies	Science	Common Areas	Connection Class #1	Connection Class #2
@ 95 points Warning — Inform student of rule violated	100 99 98 97 96 95								
@ 90 points Inform student of rule violated 1st Parent Contact	94 93 92 91 90								
@ 85 points Inform student of rule violated After School Detention and 2nd Parent Contact	89 88 87 86 85								
@ 80 points Inform student of rule violated and schedule parent conference	84 83 82 81 80								
@ 75 points Inform student of rule violated and Administrative Referral	79 78 77 76 75								
@ 70 points Inform student of rule violated and CICO - Behavior Program (Notify Administrator)	74 73 72 71 70								
@ 65 points Administrative Referral	69 68 67 66 65								

Behavior Monitoring Point Grid

Descriptors/Deductions:

You can earn points back!
It is **your** responsibility to let your teachers know that you are making an effort to earn points back.

This page must be kept in the agenda at all times! If the agenda and/or Behavior Card are not with you in class, you will lose 5 behavior points.

- DR — Disrespect = 5 points**
- DB — Disruption = 5 points**
- IL — Inappropriate Language = 5 points**
- PDA — Public Display of Affection = 5 pts.**
- CM — Computer Misuse = 5 points**
- HP — Horseplay = 5 points**
- WR — Willful Refusal = 5 points**
- OA — Out of Area = 5 points**
- RP — Redeemed Points**

Important: Any student having 95 points or more at the end of a 9-week grading period may be eligible for Principals Celebrations. Additional eligibility requirement: No Administrative Referrals.

INTRODUCTION

The policies and procedures contained in this handbook have been carefully prepared so that they will help you adjust to our school and become an integral part of it. It is our aim to help you develop and accept the responsibilities and obligations of your education in order that you may become a good citizen in the world of tomorrow. We hope you will set your goals high, participate in our activities, and always do your very best in everything you attempt. Remember, your success at PCMS is directly proportional to your efforts. **YOU ARE THE BEST, AND WE KNOW YOU WILL CONTINUE THAT TRADITION. YOU CAN DO IT. WE BELIEVE IN YOU! GOOD LUCK AND ENJOY THIS YEAR!**

GENERAL INFORMATION

ACCREDITATION

Pickens County Middle School is accredited by the Georgia Accrediting Commission and is fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement.

ATTENDANCE/ABSENCES

Other than a willingness to learn, good attendance is the most important factor to success in school. Parents are urged to see to it that students attend school every day and are on time. **Students go to first block at 7:55 a.m. and are tardy if arriving after 8:10 a.m.** Excessive absences will jeopardize academic success and undermine the development of the appropriate self-discipline so necessary for future success in all aspects of life.

Absences: Regular attendance is necessary for a student to succeed in school. There is a direct relationship between regular attendance and achievement; therefore, the quality and quantity of education depends, to a great extent, on good attendance. The school recognizes that there are times when a student must be absent for reasons that are beyond the control of the student and the parent. Absences of this nature will be excused in accordance with state attendance laws. According to the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law, lawful absences are:

(1) personal illness; (2) serious illness or death in the immediate family; (3) religious holidays; (4) absences mandated by governmental agency, (i.e., summons for court or family military leave); (5) Acts of God; and (6) serving as a Page for the General Assembly. All other absences are considered unexcused.

After each absence, upon returning to school, students are required to furnish a note which must contain the following information: A) the specific reason the student was absent; B) the number of days and dates of the absence(s); C) the student's first and last name; D) parent's or physician's signature. It is the responsibility of the student to bring this note to the attendance office by **8:05 a.m.** on the day the student returns to school.

Any student arriving after homeroom must check in at the front office before going to class. All notes for absences brought in by students become the property of the school and will be kept on file. If a student does not have a note, the absence is unexcused unless a note written by a parent is received within **three** days.

If medically extended absences are necessary, hospital/homebound instruction is available for students who meet the criteria.

Arrival: PCMS opens at 7:30 a.m. and **no students should be dropped off at the school prior to 7:30 a.m.** Students arriving at school at **7:30 a.m.** should report directly to the gym (7th and 8th grade) or to the cafeteria (6th grade). At **7:30 a.m.**, all students wishing to eat breakfast should report to the lunchroom.

Leaving School Early: Students who leave school early must bring a note written by a parent or legal guardian to the homeroom teacher requesting early dismissal. Parents or a legal guardian must come into the school office and sign the student out. **NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE ALLOWED!** The school must maintain knowledge of each student's whereabouts at all times. If a student leaves before 11:30 a.m., he/she will be counted absent for that day. Any student leaving without permission will be subject to disciplinary action.

Tardy: Any student who arrives after **8:10 a.m.** is tardy and must report to the front office before going to class. Only those students who miss less than half of the school day may be considered tardy. Classes missed due to tardiness are governed by the rules for absences. Confirmed doctor and dentist appointments will not be counted toward tardy limits.

ATTENDANCE SUPPORT TEAM (AST) is an inter-agency collaborative effort composed of leading representatives from several state and local social agencies, including the Departments of Health, Mental Health, Children and Youth Services, Family and Children Services, and the school system.

Referrals are made to the AST by teachers, social agencies, and parents. The team is responsible for reviewing, developing, and contracting with students, parents and appropriate agencies an Attendance Improvement Plan to eliminate excessive absenteeism.

The Attendance Officer will contact parent(s) either by phone, home visit or letter to begin an absenteeism evaluation. Parents or guardians are subject to court action (fines, imprisonment) if they fail to have their children between ages 6-16 in school.

ATHLETIC CONTRACT

PCMS offers interscholastic activities in baseball, basketball, cross country, football, band, chorus, wrestling, tennis, golf, soccer, softball, cheerleading, Math Bowl and Helen Ruffin

Reading Bowl. Students from all grade levels are encouraged to participate. The primary emphasis of middle school interscholastic activities is not winning, but on developing skills, knowledge of the sport, good sportsmanship, and a sense of fair play.

Students involved in interscholastic activities in grades 6-12 must comply with the Georgia No Pass/No Play regulations by not failing more than one subject for the previous semester. Students ineligible to participate in interscholastic activities may not practice or dress out with the interscholastic team but may participate in an awards banquet, upon approval of the principal and the appropriate activity sponsor.

All students who participate in interscholastic athletic activities in grades 6-12 must have on file at the school a current, valid annual physical examination and be covered by the school athletic insurance policy or show proof of other insurance **before** trying out or beginning practice. Practices and games occurring on a school night (Monday-Thursday) cannot begin until the end of the regular school day and must end by 7:30 p.m.

Athletes are representatives of not only the sport they participate in and their coaches, but also the entire athletic program and Pickens County Middle School. Participating in athletics is considered a privilege. Each player will be held accountable for his or her actions on and off the court/field; in and out of the classroom; and on and off campus. Please read the following statements very carefully. Both players and parents need to be aware of the consequences for violating school rules.

Athletes assigned ISS or OSS cannot attend practice or games until the sentence has been served.

Students counted absent for a school day may not participate in practices or games for that day.

CAFETERIA INFORMATION

The school cafeteria provides students and faculty with a breakfast and lunch program daily. Students are offered a variety of healthy food items daily and are encouraged to eat a complete balanced meal. They may, if they choose, decline some items, but must pick up at least three (3) food items at each meal. The price of the meal remains the same whether all food is accepted or only part of it (Offer-versus-Serve policy). Students that do not wish to buy a school lunch need to bring their lunch to school. Students are not allowed to order food in or have food delivered to school during school hours by any food establishment unless prior approval has been obtained from administration. **Breakfast is served from 7:30-8:00 a.m. only. Students who arrive at school after 8:00 a.m., unless riding a bus that was late, will not have time to eat breakfast.**

Convenient pre-payment is available. Students may pre-pay for school meals. Each student will have an account that will accept any amount of pre-payment money. Students will be assigned an I.D. number. All students will be required to enter their I.D. number at the cashier's station regardless of their eligibility status (full paid, reduced, or free). Their name will appear on

the computer screen and be verified by the cashier who will total the purchase of meals and/or side items. This amount will be deducted from their account. In the past, extra side items (Fruitopia, Bottled Water, Gatorade, extra fries, extra milk, etc.) could be purchased for cash only. You may now send money, and students can apply it to their accounts and purchase meals or side items.

Students are encouraged to pay by the week, month, or year. Pre-payments and/or daily cash payments are made as students go through the line at breakfast or lunch. Student account records will document all payments and purchases made by the student. **Checks may be written to the Pickens Co. Middle School Cafeteria. The total amount of the check will be applied to the student's account.** No change will be returned for payment by check.

A maximum of \$10.00 in meal charges will be allowed. When students reach their limits for charges, no more regular meals will be served until charges are paid. Students with excessive charges may be served a peanut butter sandwich lunch. A charge letter will be sent home with students as a courtesy to assist parents in knowing that charges are accumulating. All charges must be paid in full by the end of each grading period before report cards will be released. Students could be declared ineligible to participate in certain student incentive programs such as Principals Celebrations if they owe cafeteria fines.

Applications for Free or Reduced-price meals are sent home on the first day of school and as requested anytime during the school year. Please remember that if the student qualified for free or reduced meals last year, you must complete a new application within the first 30 days of the new school year. If you have any questions, please contact the cafeteria manager, Mrs. Joan Goss, at the Pickens County Middle School Cafeteria, 706-253-1830.

Breakfast & Lunch prices for 2015-2016 (subject to change) are as follows:

	<u>Full Price</u>	<u>Reduced Price</u>
Breakfast	\$ 1.35	\$.30
Lunch	\$ 2.10	\$.40

Teachers/Staff lunches will be \$1.50 (breakfast) and \$3.00 (lunch) for the coming year.

Extra Milk will be \$.50.

Visitor adults will now be \$3.50.

A **second** student lunch at the same meal period will be \$2.75 or more (since reimbursement cannot be claimed but for one meal per student per meal period).

The breakfast and lunch program offered at PCMS complies with the nutrition standards for school meals as set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid, which together summarize the best available scientific and medical knowledge on nutrition.

For lunch each day, PCMS students may choose from several different menus. These may include a choice of traditional hot lunch or sandwich, salad bar, or sack lunch with a sandwich of the day and multi-grain chips or pretzels. At breakfast, in addition to milk and fruit or fruit juice, we offer a variety of choices that may include sausage, ham, or plain biscuit, cold cereal, and sweet rolls or muffins.

The meals served at PCMS provide our students with the nourishment that is important to their immediate well being because it is nourishment that affects their growth, physical performance and academic achievement.

Parents are invited to occasionally visit the cafeteria for lunch or breakfast with your children.

Behavior in the cafeteria is expected to be respectful, cooperative and courteous. Specific guidelines for cafeteria behavior can be found in this handbook under the section on Student Guidelines for Conduct.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Pickens County Schools Code of Conduct provides detailed information regarding expected student behavior and possible consequences. If a discrepancy is found between the Code of Conduct and this PCMS Student/Parent Handbook, the Code of Conduct will prevail.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS & PRIVACY ACT

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) (“the Act”), parents and guardians have a right to:

- 1) Inspect and review, within 45 days of a request, the education records of a student who is your child, or in the case of a student who is eighteen (18) years of age or older, or those who are emancipated, your own education records. Parents or eligible students should submit to the principal a written request identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and provide notice of such arrangements.
- 2) Request the amendment of the student’s education records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy or other rights. To request the school district to amend a record, parents or eligible students should write the school principal, specify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy or other rights. If the district decides not to amend the record, it will notify the parents or eligible student of the decision and inform them of their right to a hearing. Additional information regarding the hearing procedure will be provided with the notification of the right to a hearing.
- 3) Consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s records, except to the extent that the Act and the regulations promulgated pursuant to

the Act authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is to school officials with legitimate educational interest. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member; a member of the school board; a person with whom the district has contracted to perform a specific task (such as attorney, auditor, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee (such as a disciplinary or grievance committee). A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility. (Optional: Upon request, the school district forwards educational records without prior consent to another school in which the student seeks or intends to enroll).

FERPA SCHOOL DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The Pickens County Middle School has designated the following information as directory information:

- (1) Student's and Parent's name, address, and telephone number;
- (2) Student's date and place of birth;
- (3) Student's participation in official school clubs and sports;
- (4) Weight and height of student if he/she is a member of an athletic team;
- (5) Dates of attendance at the Pickens County School System schools; and
- (6) Awards received during the time enrolled in Pickens County School System.

Unless you, as a parent/guardian or eligible student, request otherwise, this information may be disclosed to the public upon request. You have the right to refuse to allow all or any part of the above information to be designated as directory information and to be disclosed to the public upon request. If you wish to exercise this right, you must notify the principal of the school at which the student is enrolled in writing within 10 days after the beginning of the new school year or new enrollment.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

Counseling services are available to all students, and faculty at PCMS. The school counselor is available for scheduled individual and group conferences or special sessions as needed. The goal of our counseling department is to help each student make adjustments necessary to face the challenges of middle school years and feel good about himself and his school experience. A student or parent should feel free to make an appointment with a counselor at anytime. Students can contact their teachers for assistance in making appointments with the counselor. Parents may make an appointment to talk to the counselor about their child by calling the school office.

IMMUNIZATION RECORDS & MEDICATION

It is mandatory that each child have an adequate, updated Georgia certificate of immunization on file in the school office. These certificates may be obtained from the local health department or your family physician. First time Georgia residents have 30 calendar days to comply with these regulations. Failure to comply with this STATE law may lead to suspension from school.

Parents wishing to exempt their children from this law due to religious convictions must obtain those forms at the local health department and present the school with a copy.

All students entering a Georgia school for the first time must also present records of proper eye, ear, and dental exams from the local health department (DHR Form 3300) within 120 days of entering school.

Students are prohibited from carrying or possessing medication of any kind, including Tylenol, aspirin, or any over-the-counter medication. If it is necessary for any student to have and take medication at school, a parent or guardian must bring the medication to the school nurse in the original prescription bottle, with instructions. If a parent or guardian is unable to bring the medication to school, please contact the school office at 706-253-1830. Exceptions must be approved by the school nurse and administration (i.e., epipens and inhalers).

All students participating in an interscholastic sports program must have a physical examination each year, a copy of which must be filed in the school office prior to trying out or practicing.

LOST AND FOUND

Lost and found items should be reported to and/or turned in to the front office or yellow bins. Students needing to check for turned in lost items should contact the school office personnel, after getting permission to go to the school office with a signed student agenda. After several weeks, lost and found items will be donated.

MAKE-UP WORK/ HOMEWORK

Make Up Work: It is the student's responsibility to obtain and complete all make-up work immediately upon their return after an absence. Students have three school days to request make-up work from teachers; teachers will have three (3) school days to provide the requested make-up assignments. Teachers may initiate the make-up assignments and may also require alternative assignments from students who have been absent.

If a student is absent and needs his/her assignments, parents are to call the office by 9:00 a.m.; if not called in by 9:00 a.m., it may not be possible to obtain assignments that day. A 24 hour notice is the general practice for obtaining assignments from the teachers.

Homework: As a rule students should have some homework each night. In accordance with board policy, homework should be limited to **30 minutes** of work from each teacher per day. Homework assignments are given through your child's team of teachers. We believe homework is of value in helping students to learn self-discipline, self-direction, organization, and time management. Students are expected to complete all homework assignments when due.

MEDIA CENTER

The media center's purpose is to serve the students and teachers at PCMS. It provides a wide collection of books and audiovisual materials and is considered the hub for academic progress. Students will be allowed to go to the media center as needed with permission. An assignment sheet and a signed student agenda from their teacher is needed for each visit. Media center personnel can assist students in locating and using media center materials. Print books are checked out for a two-week period and renewable for two additional weeks unless another patron has requested the item. DUE DATES are stamped in the book at time of check out. OVERDUE NOTICES are distributed occasionally as an accommodating reminder for the students. Students are responsible for returning books on or before the due date. LATE BOOKS and over due fees will cancel a student's privileges. Privileges will be restored once books are returned and fees are paid in full. Students could be declared ineligible to participate in certain student incentive programs such as Principals Celebrations if they owe book fines. **Students must pay for any material damaged, lost or not returned.** Students are expected to be respectful both to media center materials as well as others utilizing the media center. Please remember that the media center, as is in a classroom, is a place for discovery and focus. Therefore, you are expected to be considerate of others and utilize the facility in a quiet, controlled manner.

PARENTS' RIGHTS, PARENT RESOURCE CENTERS and PARENT CONFERENCES

Any individual, organization or agency ("complainant") may file a complaint with the Georgia Department of Education ("Department") if that individual, organization, or agency believes and alleges that a local education agency ("LEA"), the state educational agency ("SEA"), or an agency or consortium of agencies is violating a federal statute or regulation that applies to a program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date that the complaint is received, unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered systemic or ongoing. For more information, please visit www.pickens.k12.ga.us or call the Federal Programs Director, at 706-253-1700.

PCMS **parent resource/information centers** include: school website and Facebook page; a data board and a school information kiosk system located in the front lobby; and a marquee sign located near the highway in front of the school. The school website provides information regarding the school calendar, teacher web pages, Parent Portal, school contact information, and other student support information. The front lobby parent resource center contains parenting skills books and pamphlets for parents to check out or take home for use. The student/parent data board provides school information regarding academics, discipline, and attendance data. The kiosk system and marquee sign provide information to parents, staff, and students regarding the upcoming school events.

Communication between parents and teachers is essential to the growth and success of your child at PCMS, and we encourage this interaction. However, due to the amount of parental involvement we expect of our teachers, we ask that you not "drop in" to the school for a parent conference. If you will call the school, we will schedule an appointment for you. We will

schedule conferences for approximately thirty minutes. Parent/teacher conferences may be held from 3:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. Other parent/teacher conferences to be held during teacher planning periods should be scheduled directly with the child's teacher during school hours. Please follow this time allotment so that all parents may have time with their children's teachers.

"Drop in" conferences will not be accepted unless it is a real emergency. Teachers are encouraged to meet with parents, as a team, because we feel this is the **student's "family"** while at school.

PARENT'S RIGHT TO KNOW TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

In compliance with the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act statute the Pickens County School District informs parents that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teachers. The following information may be requested:

- 1) Whether the teacher has met the Georgia Professional Standards Commission requirements for certification for the grade level and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- 2) Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or other provisional status through which Georgia qualifications or certification criteria have been waived;
- 3) The college major and any graduate certification or degree held by the teacher;
- 4) Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.

If you wish to request information concerning child's teacher qualifications, please contact the personnel director at (706) 253-1700.

PROGRESS REPORTS & REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued at the end of each nine weeks. Progress reports, to alert parents of any problems, will be sent home at mid-term.

GRADING: A=90-100; B=80-89; C=70-79; F= BELOW 70.

RENAISSANCE ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

PCMS STAND UP FOR EXCELLENCE. Students can achieve significant individual privileges as a result of attaining specific levels of achievements in three areas of emphasis: academics, behavior and attendance. These privileges will be obtained by earning a privilege card differentiated by color: platinum, gold, silver, and red.

Platinum Awards: 3 CONSECUTIVE GOLD CARDS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR

Gold Card: 94% AVERAGE OR ABOVE, MAX. 3 UNEXCUSED ABSENCES, 3 UNEXCUSED TARDIES (includes early departure), and NO ISS OR OSS.

Silver Card: 90% AVERAGE, NO GRADE BELOW 70, MAX. 3 UNEXCUSED ABSENCES, 3 UNEXCUSED TARDIES (includes early departure), and NO ISS OR OSS.

Red Card: 80% AVERAGE, NO GRADES BELOW 70, MAX. 3 UNEXCUSED ABSENCES, 3 UNEXCUSED TARDIES (includes early leaving), and NO ISS OR OSS.

FOR RENAISSANCE COUNTS: Leaving school early or arriving late due to documented doctors, dental appointments, or funerals will not be counted in the tardy counts. Hospital stays will not be counted in the Renaissance attendance counts. All other absences and tardiness **WILL** be in the counts.

Students will receive these privileges based upon their performance during the previous nine weeks and will be expected to adhere to the **RENAISSANCE COMMITMENT PLEDGE** which includes the principles of THE RENAISSANCE. Cards will be issued at an assembly during the second, third and fourth nine weeks.

Privilege Card Benefits:

GOLD CARD

1. Free admission to socials.
2. Free admission to home athletic contests at PCMS and 1 free popcorn at games.
3. Area business discounts (from businesses that support Renaissance).

SILVER CARD

1. Free admission to home athletic contests at PCMS and 1 free popcorn at games.
2. Area business discounts (from businesses that support Renaissance).

RED CARD

1. Area business discounts (from businesses that support Renaissance).

RETENTION AND PROMOTION

Middle School (Grades 6-8) Criteria for Promotion

To be promoted to the next grade level, students in grades 6-8 must pass year-long language arts/reading and math classes, and may not fail more than one other core academic class (e.g. science, social studies, or averaged final grade from each connections class). A student's final grade in

each connection class (e.g. art, band, chorus, etc.) will be averaged to equate one core academic class.

Students who do not meet these promotion criteria will be required to **successfully** complete a credit recovery program. If the student does not successfully complete the assigned credit recovery program, the decision to promote or retain the student will be made by a school placement committee.

A placement committee is composed of the principal or his/her designee, a parent or guardian of the student, and an academic subject area teacher. A decision to place the student in the next grade level must be a unanimous decision of the placement committee.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

In the event of severe weather conditions or mechanical breakdowns, school may be closed or starting time delayed. The same may also necessitate early dismissal. School closing, delayed starting time, or early dismissal will be announced over local radio stations and TV channels 2, 5 and 11. The county information line (706-253-1710) will have pertinent information regarding school closings as well.

SCHOOL VISITORS

All parents and visitors must enter the school through the main entrance and report to the school office to sign in and receive a visitor's pass before going to any classroom. If parents would like to schedule a conference with a teacher, they should call the school office; we will be glad to make those arrangements. According to Board policy, students may not have visitors at school.

STUDENT COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

From time to time, if conditions arise within the school or school system that need improvement, parents and students have the right to appropriately express concerns. These concerns shall be resolved in an orderly process and addressed first at the particular level of concern that is directly with the person involved, i.e., classroom teacher, principal, etc. Complaints and grievances shall be approached in the following manner:

- 1) the opportunity shall be provided any student or his/her parents to first discuss with his/her teacher a decision or situation which he/she considers unjust or unfair;
- 2) if the matter remains unresolved after discussing it with the teacher involved, the student or his/her parents, or the teacher, may then bring the matter to the principal's attention for his/her consideration. Official grievances to the principal may be made in writing.
- 3) if the matter remains unresolved after discussing it with the principal, it may then be brought to the Superintendent or a designee for his/her consideration;

Complete procedural directions for filing a grievance or complaint may be obtained from the principal's office.

Pickens County Schools System Grievance Coordinators are listed below:

Title VI Coordinator	Personnel Director	(706) 253-1700
County Title IX Coordinator	Personnel Director	(706) 253-1700
PCMS Title IX Coordinator	PCMS Assistant Principal	(706) 253-1830
Section 504 Coordinator	Special Ed. Director	(706) 253-1700
ADA Coordinator	Personnel Director	(706) 253-1700
Food Service Dept.	Food Service Director	(706) 253-1706
Transportation Dept.	Transportation Director	(706) 253-1727

STUDENT DRESS CODE

Each student is expected to observe a code of personal conduct, dress, and appearance that in no way interferes with or disrupts the educational opportunities of others. Policies and regulations are made and enforced to assure the efficient operation of the school; also, to protect rights of the great majority of students who want to learn and help build an outstanding school. We will operate with a specific dress code. In doing so, we appeal to students to use good judgment and to avoid extremes in dress and personal appearance. Students should show enough pride and self-respect to dress appropriately and to present a neat, clean appearance. The dress code becomes an issue only when certain individuals are unwilling to be reasonable and cooperative. Each student has the responsibility to dress appropriately for the school environment. **Clothing and hair color/style shall be such that it does not disrupt the classroom atmosphere, become unusually distracting, or violate health and safety rules of the school.** All dress and grooming shall conform to rules relating to health and safety. The current local board policy or rules regarding acceptable dress in Pickens County Schools is located in the Student Code of Conduct book provided to students at the beginning of the school year or when they enrolled into school.

It is recommended that a 3" x 5" index card be used to help determine appropriate length of dresses, skirts, shorts and shirts over leggings. Dresses and skirts should be no more than 3" above the top of the knee; shorts and shirts over leggings should be no more than 5" above the top of the knee. Also, shoulder covering should be at least 3" wide.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND WITHDRAWAL

Enrollment: A parent or guardian must accompany any student wishing to enroll at PCMS. The parent or guardian should check in at the school office and obtain the necessary forms for enrollment. A student who is currently under suspension or expulsion from another school system will not be enrolled.

Any student returning from an outside disciplinary facility, i.e. YDC, Boot Camp, Psycho-education or an assigned alternative setting, must attend a conference meeting with the school administration and/or IEP committee before returning to classes.

Students will be given a reading and math placement test.

Withdrawal: Students who are withdrawing from school must (1) provide written parental/guardian permission, (2) complete an official Withdrawal Form obtained from the school office, (3) account for and/or pay for all textbooks and library books, and (4) pay any other monies or fines owed by the student. Failure to comply with all of the above could mean your school records will not be released to another school.

STUDENT INSURANCE

Student accident insurance is available at the beginning of the school year for a nominal fee. Two plans are available. One is for accidents at school; the other covers students on a 24-hr. basis. Any student trying out or participating in football, basketball, cheerleading or any other interscholastic sport must obtain athletic insurance through the school at the student's expense or show proof of other insurance.

Accidents occurring on school grounds, athletic practices, or at any athletic event sponsored by the school must be reported immediately to the person in charge and to the school office as soon as possible.

STUDENT RECORDS

Pickens County Board of Education policy and PCMS procedures require that accurate and complete student academic and discipline records be maintained for each student. Confidentiality of student records shall be preserved while access is provided to parents, eligible students (those over 18 years of age or enrolled in post-secondary institution), professional educators with legitimate educational interests, and those federal or state officials whose access is authorized in connection with an audit or evaluation of federal or state supported education programs for the enforcement of compliance with federal legal requirements related to those programs. Parents and eligible students also have a right to obtain a copy of the school system's policy on access to student education records in relation to rights under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. For further information about records, contact the registrar or counselor.

STUDENT SERVICES

Pickens County Board of Education, in compliance with public law 94-142, provides all services for exceptional children. These are: speech, hearing impaired, gifted, behavior disorders, learning disabilities, psychological services, and all physical and mental handicaps.

STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM (SST) and RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

The Student Support Team (SST) is a Tier 3 intervention of the Georgia Student Achievement Pyramid of Intervention and Response to Intervention (RTI). The SST is a process of examining a student's needs in order to improve his/her school progress. This team can be composed of teachers, parents, counselor, or administrators. Any student who experiences difficulty in school is eligible for SST services. The SST is not a special education service. Questions concerning this service may be answered by consulting the school counselor.

TELEPHONE USAGE

Students should ask to use the office telephone only when sick or in emergency situations as deemed necessary by office personnel. Students should not come to the office without a signed student agenda from their teacher. Students should never use the telephone in the classroom without the teacher's express permission. **We ask that parents refrain from calling or texting messages to their children during school hours.** In our efforts to provide your child with the best and least interrupted education possible and to protect your child to the fullest of our capabilities, we will not call them to the phone unless it is a real emergency situation, and the caller is a parent or guardian. We will be glad to take a message for your child. Please understand that this is in your child's best interest.

To avoid interrupting the instruction of other students in the class, parents should call their child's teacher only during the teacher's planning time.

TESTING

Group standardized tests are given annually to students at each grade level. The purpose for these tests is to help determine strengths and weaknesses in skill areas and to provide information for use in planning instructional programs. Parents who want assistance in interpreting test results may contact the classroom teacher, the Guidance Counselor, the Assistant Principal, or the Principal.

TEXTBOOKS AND LOCKERS

Textbooks and lockers issued to students are the property of Pickens County Board of Education. Textbooks should be used with care and returned in good condition. Students are responsible for and must pay replacement cost for textbooks and library books that are lost, stolen, or damaged beyond use. Each student is assigned a locker by his/her teacher. To insure the safety of the contents of each locker, locks are installed on each locker. Students are responsible for the contents of their locker and are expected to keep it in an orderly fashion. Teacher or administration may inspect contents of lockers at any time. Students may not write, mark, or use tape in or on lockers.

TITLE I FUNDING NOTIFICATION

Money is provided by the federal government to support student academic achievement. Pickens County Middle School (PCMS) is currently a school-wide Title I school and must specify how Title I funds are to be spent. At PCMS, Title I funds are primarily expended to support student achievement through the addition of academic coaches and connection courses in supplemental academic instruction. Remaining Title I funds are used to purchase supplemental reading, writing, and math materials and software. Computer technology may be purchased to promote differentiated instruction for Title I students. For more information, contact the school principal at 706-253-1830.

STUDENT CONDUCT

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of each student to manage their behavior and conduct himself or herself in a cooperative, courteous and respectful manner in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. This means that you do not impose on others space or rights; you follow all school rules and show respect for the property of the school and others.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITY

Discipline is the primary responsibility of the parents. It is the parent's obligation, by teaching and example, to develop in the student good behavior habits as well as proper attitudes toward the school and others rights. To ensure success, parents should visit the school and check with school personnel concerning their child's behavioral progress on a regular basis.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY

It is the school's responsibility to provide learning experiences free from distractions and misbehavior. Administrators, teachers, and others connected with PCMS will be positive role models who are observable as good examples for students.

SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE PLAN

PCMS has a school-wide PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) discipline plan entitled **Be a Dragon**. The **Be a Dragon** plan encourages students to be respectful, responsible and safe. Throughout the school, students are taught how to be respectful, responsible, and safe. "Be a Dragon" signs are posted throughout the school to remind students of appropriate behavior. Students use behavior cards each nine weeks to self-monitor their behavior. Students are also eligible to participate in Principals Celebrations if they demonstrate great behavior each marking period and achieve a 95 or better on their behavior card.

BUS BEHAVIOR

During transportation to and from school, it is the responsibility of each student to conduct himself or herself in a manner which shows respect for the safety of themselves as well as others. This means making sure you know the rules and follow them each and every day.

Briefly, this includes the following:

1. Comply with the Student Code of Conduct, including school specific rules of conduct and consequences.
2. Should be at the bus stop five minutes before the bus arrives, waiting in a safe place, clear of traffic.
3. Help keep the bus clean.
4. Cooperate with the bus driver.
5. Students will cross the roadway 12 feet in front of the bus only after the bus has stopped.
6. Stay in your assigned seat.
7. Keep head, hands and feet inside the bus and keep all personal items out of the aisle.

8. Students will be totally silent at railroad crossing as required by law.
9. Students will signal the driver with a waving motion if something is dropped and wait for the driver to give a signal before picking up the object.
10. Students will refrain from using loud voices, profanity, and or obscene gestures.
11. Do not use any electronic device (e.g. cell phone; pager; computer toy; game box; laptop; handheld; beeper; radio; tape or compact disc player without headphones) in a manner that might interfere with the bus communication equipment or the driver's operation of the bus.
12. Do not use a mirror, laser, flash camera or any other light or reflective device in a manner that might interfere with the driver's operation of the bus.
13. Do not bring any glass bottles or containers on the bus.

CAFETERIA BEHAVIOR

Show good manners, respect for others and follow the rules.

1. Students are to stay in line to get lunch and then be seated at their assigned table during the lunch period (breaking in line is bad manners and will not be tolerated).
2. Noise is expected to be kept within reason as determined by the staff.
3. After the student has chosen a place to sit in the cafeteria, students should avoid getting up and going to other tables to visit with other students.
4. Students should refrain from getting ice, cups, tea, or coffee from the lunchroom.
5. Packets of ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, dressing, etc. are not to be taken from the cafeteria.
6. Students should avoid playing any kind of games at the lunchroom tables.
7. Students should refrain from being behind the serving counters.
8. Students are to put all leftover food in the trashcans near the tray return window and then put the silverware in the drop for washing. Trays are to be stacked in the tray window. Students should refrain from damaging silverware and plates.
9. Students are responsible for picking up trash under their table and eating area.
10. Students are to avoid playing with or throwing food.
11. Students are not allowed to bring soft drinks to school.
12. Students are not allowed to bring food from fast food restaurants for lunch in its original packaging. If bringing leftover food from a fast food restaurant for lunch, it must be packaged in a sandwich bag or other non-identifiable container.
13. Students may bring juice with their lunch from home but all food and drink must be disposed of before leaving the cafeteria. Please avoid putting food in lockers after lunch.
14. Students could be declared ineligible to participate in certain student incentive programs such as Principals Celebrations if they owe cafeteria charges.

CELL PHONES

Students are not permitted to use cell phones unless authorized by a teacher for educational purposes or by administration for good behavior rewards. Consequences for unauthorized cell phone use are as follows (per semester):

1st offense — Parent must pick up cell phone from office.

2nd offense — Parent must pick up cell phone from office and student receives 1 day ISS.

3rd offense — Parent must pick up cell phone from office and student receives 3 days ISS.

4th offense — Student will not be allowed to bring cell phone to school for remainder of semester.

FIELD TRIP BEHAVIOR

Field trips are a privileged part of the instructional process. Students whose behavior is not acceptable or who have had multiple discipline referrals may lose the privilege of going on field trips. Also, the administration reserves the right to refuse students' participation in a field trip as a form of discipline for misbehavior. In certain school-wide or grade-level field trips, additional discipline criteria will be in effect. Students will be ineligible if they have an OSS suspension during the school year or more than one ISS suspension. Also, a student may be ineligible if they are failing all academic classes.

HALLWAY BEHAVIOR

It is the responsibility of each student to show good manners, respect and courtesy toward others when moving through the hallways. The following rules have been established to make the transition to and from class smooth and safe:

1. Students should always walk on the right-hand side of the hall and proceed to their destination without delay.
2. Students should not be in the hallways during class time without a signed Student Agenda from a staff member.
3. Students need to avoid loitering in the halls or restrooms.
4. Students should not trip, push or otherwise touch any student while moving through the hallways.
5. Students should avoid placing posters, advertisements or other objects on the hallway walls without an administrator's approval.
6. Students should walk, not run or jump, through the hallways.
7. Students should avoid touching, removing, or damaging items that have been approved and placed on the hallway walls.

IMPORTANT GENERAL INFORMATION CONCERNING DISCIPLINE

1. A student on his/her way to or from school, while being provided school system transportation, any school function or activity, (or any school related activity), or at any school event held away from the school, under the jurisdiction of school authorities is subject to rules and regulations as stated in the Pickens County Schools' *Student Code of Conduct*.

2. All disciplinary problems involving special education students will be in strict compliance with the law.
3. A student's past disciplinary record will be considered in assessing a discipline penalty.
4. The principal, or his designee, has the discretion to recommend long-term suspension or expulsion, based on the seriousness of the offense. Long-term suspension or expulsion recommendations are heard by the Tribunal Panel unless the superintendent directs it to be heard by the Board of Education first.
5. School administrators are authorized to file criminal charges in their official capacity as an administrator of the school system.
6. Administrators have wide discretionary authority in determining disciplinary actions.
7. The school board is charged with adopting rules to govern the operation of the schools within its district. (1) The courts universally recognize that it is within the power of, and indeed in the duty of, the school board to make needful regulations to control the behavior of the students. (2) In fact, even if the school board does not have a written behavior policy or the rules do not cover the particular activity in question, the school board can still punish behavior which is subversive to good order and discipline in the schools.

NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

The PRINCIPAL retains the right and privilege to issue penalties for acts of discipline not specifically stated herein and to alter any penalties as she considers necessary. The principal also reserves the right to amend any provision in this Handbook that she deems to be in the best interest of the educational process. PLEASE realize that every staff member at PCMS should be treated with respect and dignity just as students and parents should receive the same fair treatment from the staff. It is imperative that the teacher be in charge of the class. **Let's make this school year a special year full of student achievement and learning, and continue our proud history as a Lighthouse School to Watch!**

**Pickens County Middle School
Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA)**

2015-2016 Event Dates

Note: Other events may be added throughout the school year.

July 31, 2015	Open House
September 27, 2015	Dragon Dash
October 23, 2015	Halloween Dance
December 12, 2015	Breakfast with Santa and Santa Shop
May 6, 2016	Spring Luau
May 12, 2016	Teacher Appreciation Lunch

PTSA Meeting Dates

All PTSA meetings begin at 6:15 p.m.

July 14, 2015
August 11, 2015
September 8, 2015
October 13, 2015
November 10, 2015
December 8, 2015
January 12, 2016
February 9, 2016
March 8, 2016
April 12, 2016
May 10, 2016