

Parent & Student Handbook



The East Aurora Middle School

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For the most up-to-date information, please refer to the EAMS website or call the school for a recent copy.

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

This handbook of practices is a readily available resource summary to increase your knowledge and understanding of how East Aurora Middle School operates and of the basic educational philosophies which serve as our guide.

The rules, regulations and information in this book are drawn from the East Aurora Union Free School District Policy Manual compiled by the Board of Education. The purpose of this book is to bring the policies to you in a user-friendly format to help build a cooperative team approach between school and home. It has been found that only when schools and families work together to educate children can maximum results be achieved.

Please take the time to sit down as a family to review and familiarize yourself and your child(ren) with what is contained in this handbook.

On behalf of the entire staff of East Aurora Middle School, we would like to thank you for your continued support. We welcome the responsibility with which you have entrusted us and promise to provide your child(ren) with a meaningful and quality education experience.

Your Partner in Education,

Matthew J. Brown

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District Mission Statement

The East Aurora School District will provide environments, experiences, materials and professional talents to help each student prepare to live in society as a contributing, self-fulfilling and caring citizen. The school will endeavor to develop, in each student, a lifelong desire for knowledge and the skills to acquire it. The school will promote learning in the context of common sense, hope for a better future and a deep respect for humanity.

Middle School Philosophy

East Aurora Middle School is committed to being among the best Middle Schools in Western New York. While the main focus of school is academic, the development of the whole person cannot be ignored. We are here to help students grow in knowledge, wisdom, and maturity. We guide them to a better knowledge of themselves and the world around them. We work to enkindle in them their passion, give them the tools to achieve their goals, and help polish the skills and talents that they possess.

East Aurora Middle School is a place where many of our students work through the problems of growing from childhood into young adulthood. Students learn how to relate to and to communicate with other children, to work with adults, to form friendships and to resolve conflicts. They learn to work as members of groups and teams. Perhaps one of the most important experiences students have in our school is sharing common academic learning with others of varying backgrounds.

Our school is not just a link between the elementary school and the high school. It has a purpose all its own. The Middle School provides an environment that:

- acts as a stabilizing force in the lives of early adolescents
- equips students with the necessary academic and social knowledge skills and attitudes to succeed in the middle-level grades, high school and beyond
- serves as a special place for students - a refuge and a support during a time of dramatic change
- establishes in students a connection with school and with its purpose,
- instills in students a sense of positive self-worth, self-respect and self-confidence and a belief that each can succeed
- provides opportunities for self-exploration, self-definitions and self-development in the cognitive, affective and physical domains and
- provides opportunities and experiences for students to develop and practice responsible personal behavior, individual accountability and initiative and a respect for others.

A Safe Learning Environment

The number one priority of East Aurora Middle School is to be a safe learning environment for everybody who comes into the building. To this end, the school makes rules that:

- 1) Ensure the safety of children, faculty, and staff (physically, mentally, and emotionally)
and
- 2) Ensure that East Aurora Middle School remains a learning environment (free from any and all distraction).

To this end, we have developed five core principles to guide all student behavior:

In addition to making safe and non-violent choices, EAMS students have the responsibility to:

- 1) Show respect for your teachers and your peers by being polite, friendly, and honest.
No bullying.
- 2) Show respect to your school by cleaning up after yourself and not damaging or stealing property
- 3) Do not be a distraction to the learning environment. Report to class on time and prepared to learn.
- 4) Be appropriate. Make good choices with the language you choose and the clothing you wear.
- 5) Follow any classroom or school rules and all reasonable requests that a teacher makes.

As part of a larger learning community, students should realize that every administrator, teacher, aide, staff member, substitute, secretary, coach, nurse, bus driver, and maintenance worker at East Aurora Middle School is entrusted with every child's safety, health, and education. All of these adults are to be respected at all times, including anywhere in the building or on the grounds, at off-campus school sponsored events, field trips, and sporting events. Any student who is disrespectful or disobedient towards any of the above mentioned persons, who violates any safety rule, or threatens another individual's basic rights will receive disciplinary action.

Furthermore, as active and involved members of the community all students also have a responsibility to help others make good, safe choices. They should report to school personnel when they have knowledge of others not making or planning not to make good choices. Students also have an obligation to seek out help to deal with their problems or anger.

Absences

School attendance is mandatory in New York State from the age of seven (7) until the age of sixteen (16). By law, parents are held responsible for their child's unexcused absences.

Excused Absences, Tardy and Early Departures are: Personal illness, Illness or death in family, Unsafe travel condition (may not be used when busses are running), Religious observance, Medical appointment, Quarantine, and Required court appearance

If your child is ill or unable to attend school, parents are to call the school office at 687-2453 before 8:00am. If we have not received a phone call, the school attendance secretary will call home and/or the parent's place of employment to determine the reason for absence. Working with the Erie County Health Department, we may ask if your child shows signs of a particular illness that the DOH may be tracking.

Within 48 hours of returning to school, state law requires parents to provide a written note excusing your child for the days they missed. The note must include child's name, reason for absence, date and signature of legally responsible person (parent or guardian). Any absence without a note is considered unexcused. Parents will be notified when their child's excessive unexcused absence and/or tardiness rate rises to a level of concern

If students are absent due to illness, they will be expected to complete all work that was missed. The student will be responsible for meeting with teachers upon his/her return to identify and gather necessary assignments.

Parents may contact the school office and request missed assignments in cases of prolonged absence (3 or more days). On the third consecutive absent day, please call the Main Office to request missed work. Work will be available in the Main Office after 2:30pm.

If a student misses a class due to a music lesson, field trip, special activity, etc., he/she is responsible for checking with his/her teacher(s) PRIOR to this absence to obtain work that will be covered that day. Each student will be expected to complete all work that was missed.

When class is missed for an excused reason, students cannot be penalized for missing class but may be required to make up missed work. It is at a teacher's discretion to offer opportunities to make up school work missed during an unexcused absence.

Studies show that regular attendance is one of the most essential elements to academic success and every effort should be made to schedule appointments outside of the school day.

Academic Intervention Services (AIS)

Specialists help students become successful in the classroom by providing academic intervention primarily in the area of English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. Instruction may occur within the classroom or in small, pull-out groups. By collaborating with the classroom teachers, a variety of teaching strategies and parallel tasks are used to help prepare students for success on all NYS assessments. Students usually remain in the program throughout the school year and are

reevaluated each year. Students scoring below proficiency on the state assessments are required to participate in academic intervention services.

Advanced Placement

Advanced Placement options are available for Math (7th & 8th) and Science (8th). Recommendations come from a student's current and/or previous teacher(s) and are based not only on performance in that subject but on quality traits that a student holds as well.

The following criteria listed includes, but is not limited to, the characteristics that teachers look for when considering students who should be recommended for advanced placement:

- Sustains grades in the range of mid 90's -100 every marking period in the previous two years
- Demonstrates quality homework completed in a timely manner
- Maintains mastery level performance in all core areas
- Is self-motivated: seeks help when necessary and takes initiative
- Demonstrates exemplary reading comprehension skills
- Sufficiently interprets and analyzes data on graphs, charts and tables

If you are interested in your child's placement in these classes, it is the parent's responsibility to begin a dialogue with the particular teacher about what it would entail. Note: Due to class size limitations, classes may be closed. Late summer parent requests will not be honored.

Students who begin advanced placement in the middle school typically continue with advanced placement courses throughout middle and high school. Please be advised that student performance will be assessed quarterly to determine the continuation of advanced placement.

Averages

Quarterly Average for a Class: Grading systems are developed by individual teachers. They should inform students of the method they will use at the beginning of the course and post their grading formula on their teacher website.

Overall Quarterly Averages are determined by adding the class quarterly grades and dividing by a number which reflects what percentage of the quarter each course met.

Final Average for a Class is determined by using the following formula:

For non-Regents classes: The final exam is factored into the 4th quarter as a doubled test grade. All four quarters are then averaged with each quarter weighing 25%.

For Regents classes: Each quarter counts as 20% and the Regents exam grade counts as 20%.

Final Average for the Year is determined by adding the final quarterly grades and dividing by a number which reflects what percentage of the year each course met.

Note: Class averages are rounded to the nearest whole number, final averages are not.

Bell Schedule

It is essential for the smooth running of the school that students familiarize themselves with the bell schedule. Students are expected to be at their assigned location and in their seat ready to learn when the bell rings. *For times of the current bell schedule, see school website.*

Bicycles, Rollerblades, Skateboards and Scooters

For safety's sake, bicycles must be walked on school grounds. Bicycles must be left in the bike rack and it is the rider's responsibility to make sure they are secured. Rollerblades, scooters, and skateboards must not be used on school grounds. Students should use the building's sidewalks and are never allowed to walk or ride through the school parking lot.

Birthday Celebrations

We recognize that each child's birthday is a special occasion. How these days are celebrated can vary from teacher to teacher. If you wish to send in a treat with your child or send in balloons, please contact the teacher first to check on possible food sensitivities or latex allergies. They will work with you on how they would like the treat to be distributed. Often other students will come in before school to decorate a child's locker on the day of his/her birthday celebration. These decorations of wrapping paper and bows/ribbons are permitted and will be left up for two days and then must be removed. Please note that the school cannot accept flower or balloon deliveries for your child.

The administration would prefer that birthday party invitations be mailed or given to students outside of school so that no child feels left out. If a birthday party is planned for after school, please make arrangements to get the children to your house or the party location without disrupting the normal flow of dismissal traffic. In order to ensure a safe environment in the parking lot, limousines are not permitted to pick up students at the end of the day.

Bullying and School Violence

At EAMS, we believe that everybody has a right to a safe and enjoyable day. The prevention of any and all bullying behavior (including cyber) and all acts of violence is a priority. This can include pushing, shoving, hitting, name calling, picking on, making fun of, laughing at, verbal threats and/or excluding someone. Bullying causes pain and stress to victims and cannot be justified or excusable as "just teasing" or by any other rationalization. School administration and the counseling staff will take all reports of bullying and violence (including threats of violence or bullying) seriously. Depending on the nature and severity of the bullying or violence, the School Resource Officer may be involved.

Bus Behavior

Conduct on the school bus is an extension of the courteous behavior expected of our students everywhere. The student's responsibility for behavior begins at the point of pickup and continues until he/she returns home, to the school or school sponsored event, and leaves the bus. Students have duties and obligations, which contribute to their safe and orderly transport. They are under the supervision of the bus driver while riding the bus.

When on the bus, children are to remain in their seats. Throwing items, littering and being noisy are forbidden on the bus. Children may not bring onto the bus items such as glass containers,

pets, large class projects, hockey sticks, skateboards, skis and/or poles, kites, baseball bats, etc. These are potential sources of distraction or danger.

No student is permitted to leave the bus except at his/her regular stops unless written permission has been given by the parents and/or guardian and the principal.

The bus driver is responsible for the safe operation of the bus. A child, who persists in misbehaving and violating the code of conduct for riding the bus, shall be denied the privilege of bus transportation until such time as school authorities have received assurance of good conduct from the child and the parents.

Cafeteria

A hot entrée, soup, salad, sandwiches, a la carte snacks and beverages are available for purchase for students on a daily basis. A monthly calendar is sent home with the menu.

EAMS participates in the Federal Free and Reduced Breakfast and Lunch program. Information and eligibility forms are sent home at the beginning of each school year.

No student is to go hungry: Should a student forget his/her lunch money, he/she is to report to the cafeteria lunch line, where he/she will be given an IOU to be repaid the following day. IOU's are not given for snacks. This is a courtesy to be used on an emergency basis only. Parents are also able to set up an account to pre-pay for lunches.

The school cannot permit the delivery of pizzas or other food/desserts/treats intended to feed multiple students. This rule is in effect even if the order is pre-paid.

If a parent of a student in grades 5 or 6 wishes to celebrate a special occasion with a treat, they must coordinate with the child's homeroom teacher.

Cafeteria Rules

Students must make choices to maintain a safe, clean eating environment. It is expected that students will:

- remain seated except when purchasing food or disposing of garbage
- keep their eating area clean
- dispose of their trash in a proper receptacle
- refrain from excessive noise
- not throw or play with food

In short, they should follow all basic kitchen/restaurant rules. No glass bottles are permitted.

Cheating/Plagiarism

It is expected that all students will perform their academic endeavors with honesty and integrity. Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance, including plagiarism, is considered cheating.

For more information, please review the EAMS Academic Honesty pamphlet found on the EAMS website. The pamphlet also can be obtained by calling the school office.

If it is suspected that a student cheated on a Regents exam, it is at the principal's discretion to determine if the student automatically fails the exam.

Classroom Placement

East Aurora Middle School is a high performing school with a strong and caring faculty. We work diligently to make class placement decisions based on the academic, social, and behavioral needs of every student in addition to required support services, and gender balance. We ask that you trust our judgment in this process by not requesting a particular teacher. Parent requests for teachers offset our careful planning process and, therefore, will not be accepted. If, however, there are legitimate, documented, extenuating circumstances that may alter our decisions, please describe these circumstances in writing and send them to the school principal. Do **not** request a specific teacher. We encourage you to help your child understand that he/she needs to get along with everyone and learn how to make new friends in all situations.

Classroom Telephones

Teachers are not able to receive phone calls during the day unless a pre-arranged appointment has been made. Calls for teachers will be put into the teacher's voice mailbox.

Computer Acceptable Use Policy

All members of East Aurora Middle School (faculty, staff, and students) are required to have on file with the computer teacher a signed copy of the "Acceptable Use Policy" (AUP) which outlines an understanding of appropriate/inappropriate use of computers and the internet.

Students will sign an AUP at the beginning of 5th and 9th grade and when a new student enters the District. Once signed, the document remains in force throughout a student's entire time at EAMS.

Student passwords are unique and will follow a student throughout his/her career at East Aurora. These passwords are never to be shared as students are responsible for all computer activity while signed in under their own name.

Cooperation with Law Enforcement

EAMS will cooperate fully with law enforcement and any other appropriate legal or governmental authority.

Counselor

The Middle School counselor works closely with students, parents, teachers and the administration to help promote a positive atmosphere in the Middle School. School counselors help students with making good decisions, developing friendships, adjusting to school, high school planning, family situations and relationships. Parents can schedule an appointment with a counselor at any point of the year. Students are encouraged to connect with their school counselor during the school day if they are experiencing any social, academic, or emotional difficulties.

Detention

At times, student behavior merits detention. At the principal's discretion, detentions are served either during a student's lunch time or after school. During detention, students are to sit quietly in their seats. They may work individually on assigned projects/class work but may not talk to others.

Parents will be notified when students receive detention for disciplinary actions. If a student skips an assigned detention, he/she will receive the original day plus an additional day's detention.

The rules of detention are as follows:

1. Students will remain seated.
2. Students will remain quiet.
3. Students must bring a pen or pencil.
4. Students will complete an EAMS "Think Sheet."
5. Students will work the entire period.
6. Students will not eat, chew gum, drink or sleep in detention.
7. All regular school rules are in effect during detention.
8. Use of electronics is not permitted.

District Code of Conduct

An entire copy of the Code of Conduct is available for parent/student review by contacting the Middle School office or at www.eastauroraschools.org.

"Do the Right Thing" Program

The "Do the Right Thing" Program is a school wide character education program. The program was developed to educate and recognize students who make good choices and demonstrate good character traits. At the end of each month, the students who have been nominated will be recognized in a celebration.

Dress Code:

All students are expected to give proper attention to their appearance and personal hygiene. Students should dress appropriately for school and school functions. Teachers and all other district personnel will reinforce acceptable student dress to help students develop an understanding of appropriate appearance.

Student dress should be safe, appropriate, and not a distraction to the learning environment:

1. Extremely brief garments, such as tube tops, net tops, halter tops, spaghetti straps, plunging necklines (front or back), short shorts, and see-through garments are not appropriate.
2. Underwear must be completely covered with outer clothing.
3. Footwear must be safe and appropriate.
4. Sleepwear and pajamas are not appropriate for school.
5. Hats, hoods, and headgear are not permitted.

Clothing may not include items that are vulgar, obscene, libelous, or denigrate others on account of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or disability. Nor may

clothing promote and/or endorse the use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs and/or encourage other illegal or violent activities.

A basic rule of thumb is that if there is any doubt whether an item is appropriate for school, chances are it is not. Students who violate the student dress code shall be required to modify their appearance by covering or removing the offending item and, if necessary or practical, replacing it with an acceptable item.

Early Arrival

Students are not allowed in the building before 7:30am. Students must wait in the cafeteria until 7:50 (when the busses arrive) before they are allowed into the main building.

Early Release of a Student

Except in cases of emergency, written notice of early dismissal must be sent in the morning of the dismissal. No student will be released without written note or being signed out of the main office by a parent or legal guardian. Verbal permission over the phone is not acceptable.

Emergencies at School

If there is an emergency at school, it is very important that students remain with their teacher while quickly and quietly following all directions without question or hesitation.

District personnel will follow the District Safety Plan in assessing and dealing with the situation.

<p>It is essential that the school have updated parental contact names and numbers. Any change in this information must be reported immediately to the office.</p>

Extended Learning Time (ELT)

When it may benefit a student to spend additional time working on material with a teacher, a teacher may assign ELT to a student. ELT runs from 2:35 – 3:15 Tuesday through Friday. At 3:15 students may take the late bus, walk or be picked up. No students are allowed in the building after 3:15pm.

ELT may be assigned for remediation or to make up missed work. ELT is not disciplinary. ELT happens with the teacher in his/her classroom. Because it involves arranging schedules, if a student assigned to ELT does not attend without prior notification, it will be treated as if he/she skipped a class and detention will be assigned.

If a student believes that they would benefit from extra time with a teacher, he/she may request and schedule it at a mutually agreeable time.

Extracurricular Activities

Students are given the opportunity (and encouraged) to participate in the life of East Aurora Middle School outside of their academic schedule. A list of available clubs and sports is posted on the school webpage each fall.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)

(See Appendix II)

Field Trips

The use of field trips to supplement the educational process is encouraged. If parents are asked by the classroom teacher(s) to serve as chaperones, other siblings will not be allowed on the trip. A signed permission slip must be provided to the teacher prior to any child being allowed to go on a field trip. Without a signed permission slip, the child will remain at school where he/she will be assigned school work. *No verbal permission will be allowed.* All students are expected to demonstrate correct and proper behavior while representing East Aurora Middle School on a field trip.

Final Exams

Each June, students participate in cumulative final exams. Exams are given the last week of school and are designed to summarize the knowledge taught throughout the year.

Fire Drills

During fire drills, students are expected to walk quickly and quietly with their class. The fire drill does not end until all students have returned to their classrooms and an announcement has been made.

Food and Drink

Students should refrain from eating food and/or drinking beverages outside of the cafeteria. In warm weather, students are allowed to bring water in a clear, sealable plastic container to class. Food and drink should not be stored in a locker for any length of time.

Foreign Language

Students entering 7th grade will begin studying a foreign language. Students will be polled for their preference of French, Latin, and Spanish. Effort will be made to give students their first choice.

Gum and Candy

Gum and candy are not permitted in East Aurora Middle School.

Health Services

A health professional is always available to students. Students needing to see the nurse should ask their teacher and report directly to the health office.

For the safety of your child, any piece of relevant health information should be kept on file with the nurse. This information is kept confidential.

Any request for an elevator key, short term physical education excuse, or any questions regarding health policies and procedures should be referred to the health office. If a student is to be excused from Physical Education for more than two weeks, a physician's note is needed.

In the hopes of controlling the spread of illness, please keep your child at home if he/she exhibits any of the following symptoms:

- Temperature in excess of 100 degrees
- Acute sore throat
- Stiff neck or swollen glands
- Rash on the skin
- Earache or drainage from the ears
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- Inflammation of the eyes or crusting of the eyelids
- Lice, chickenpox or other communicable diseases

All accidents and injuries occurring in the school building, on school grounds, on the bus, or during a school-sponsored activity are to be reported to the school official in charge and the school nurse, as soon as possible. An accident report will be completed.

Should your child become ill at school, the school nurse will contact you at the contact numbers provided. No student will be allowed to leave the building without an authorized adult

Home Instruction

The East Aurora Union Free School District makes available home instruction for students who are ill and must be confined to their homes or a hospital for a period of more than three weeks from the date Home Instruction is requested.

Home Instruction requests must be made by the parents of the child, in writing to the Director of Pupil Services. The parent request must be accompanied by a written statement from the attending physician requesting Home Instruction. The attending physician's statement must include:

- 1) The nature of the illness
- 2) Whether the illness presents any health risks to a visiting teacher
- 3) The approximate date of the student's expected return to school. (Note that the child must be expected to be absent for ten days after the request is received.)

All information furnished to the school will be held in strict confidence. Requests for Home Instruction are subject to approval by the Director of Pupil Services and the School Physician. Students receiving Home Instruction will be given as complete a program as is practical. Emphasis will be placed on basic academic subjects. Home Instruction will not be offered for subjects requiring specialized equipment or spaces. Students in grades K-6 receive instruction five hours per week. Students in grades 7 – 12 receive instruction ten hours per week.

Homework

Homework is assigned to help reinforce a skill or concept that was taught that day, review a previously learned concept, or introduce new information. If your child struggles with a particular assignment at home and cannot complete it, we advise that you contact the teacher to explain the difficulty your child experienced. Teachers need to be aware that your child made a sincere attempt to complete the assignment, but was confused and could not go on. If your child

has worked an exorbitant amount of time on one task, tell him/her to stop and get some rest. Call the teacher the next day and describe your child's struggle.

Honor Society

Each year, 7th grade students who excel in the areas of Academics, Leadership, Service, Character and Citizenship are invited to be a member of the EAMS Honor Society. The moderator informs students of the criteria necessary to be considered for entry. Members are expected to meet high expectations and may have their membership suspended or discontinued if there are issues concerning academic achievement, behavior, or drug/alcohol use.

Inappropriate Material

At no time may anyone bring materials of a suggestive or pornographic nature, material that promotes the use of alcohol or drugs or material that endorses or encourages any illegal activity to East Aurora Middle School. A violation of this will result in stern disciplinary action. "Bring in materials" includes access via the computer/internet.

Late Bus

The late bus runs for eligible students at 3:15 Tuesday through Friday. Students who are riding the late bus must have a pass from their teacher. There are only two late buses in the district and therefore the time the route takes will vary.

Late to Class

If a student is detained by an adult and late for the next class, she/he must request a signed pass from that adult. It is the student's responsibility to submit the late pass to the next teacher. A student late to class without a pass from a school counselor, administrator or the teacher of the previous class, will be considered tardy. Each time a student accumulates three (3) tardies to class in a quarter, they will receive a detention.

Library

Students at East Aurora Middle School will have access to the library during regularly scheduled classes (5th and 6th grade), with their class for an assignment (all grades) or before/after school by agreement with the librarian. Students are to treat all library media with care. They will be responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged material.

Lockdown (Drill)

During a lockdown and/or drill, students are expected to move quietly to an internal wall of the classroom and sit quietly until the drill has ended. No activity should take place during a lockdown.

Lockers

Each student is assigned a locker. It is the student's responsibility to keep his/her locker orderly, clean (both inside and out), and locked. As each combination is unique, students should never share their locker combination with anyone. Lockers are property of the school district. Students should have no expectation of privacy.

Loitering

Both during and outside of the school day, students are not to congregate unsupervised in hallways, stairwells, restrooms or on school property.

Lost and Found

Students are responsible for their own personal property. A clothing lost-and-found is kept in the cafeteria and both locker rooms where located items will be held until the end of the school year.

Medication in School

Oral medications, including non-prescription drugs, may be administered by the school health office if a parent submits a written request for administration of medication to the school nurse.

The following procedure MUST be adhered to:

- The child's physician must request in writing: specific medication to be given, the dose to be given, the time and duration of the treatment, and the reason for the medication.
- The parent is to sign and date a note requesting that school personnel give the medication. **The medication is to be delivered directly to school personnel in the office by the parent or guardian in its original container.** Do not send the medicine to school with your child. Under no condition is a child's medication to be given to a classroom teacher.
- The medication must be clearly labeled with adequate instructions and child's name.
- The medication will be kept in a secure place in the health office.
- Most antibiotics can be taken before and after school, at dinner, and at bedtime. Ask your doctor to establish times that a medication can be taken at home instead of during school hours.
- Items such as cough drops may be necessary during school hours. In such cases, a written note, signed and dated by the parent must be submitted to the office with said item. The note must contain the following information:
 1. Name of health item
 2. Reason for having said item
 3. Permission from parent for child to have and take said item

*School personnel cannot distribute any medication that is not labeled with the name and accompanied with a parent note. Students are **never** to carry medications with them during the day.*

Music Lessons

Students are excused from their assigned class when necessary for instrumental instruction. Students are responsible for adhering to their lesson schedule, informing the teacher and making up all missed work.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The East Aurora Union Free School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, handicap in any educational program, service or activity operated by the district or supported directly or through contractual arrangements by the district.

This policy of non-discrimination includes the following areas: recruitment and appointment of employees, employee pay and benefits, counseling services for students, student access to programs, and methods of instruction and evaluation.

The Board of Education also realizes that, as a recipient of federal financial assistance, the District must comply with federal and state regulations governing vocational education. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Director of Pupil Services.

Outdoor Safety Rules

Students should:

1. Not be in the parking lot. Use sidewalks.
2. Refrain from running on school grounds.
3. Remove rollerblades, walk bikes, and carry skateboards.
4. Lock bicycles at appropriate racks.
5. Not throw objects on school grounds.

Parent Conferences

Parent conferences to discuss a student's progress during the first quarter will be scheduled. Outside of this time, parents are always encouraged to reach out to their child's teacher directly to discuss their child's progress. To meet with a teacher, you must schedule an appointment.

Parent Portal

The Parent Portal is a web-based tool which allows parents to monitor their child's academic progress throughout each quarter of the school year. This tool helps the district to improve school-home communication, keeps parents informed about their child's progress, and better enables parents to take a more active role in their child's education. The Parent Portal provides pertinent information regarding grades, attendance, school announcements and activities.

Specifics on the scope and capabilities of the Portal as well as your responsibilities will be forwarded to you by the Technology Department.

Please keep the following points in mind:

The Parent Portal is a powerful tool to improve communication between parents and their children.

- If you have a question about a grade, please discuss the assignment with your child.
- If there is still a question, empower your child to use his/her self-advocacy skills and speak to the teacher. Please allow this step to happen prior to any parental contact
- Grades are updated as time allows and the portal may not be a fully accurate reflection of your child's work to date.

Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

Recognizing that the most effective learning environment is created when parents and teachers work together, the Middle School has a PTO. The PTO works toward improving the school experience by performing fund-raising so that it can implement educational initiatives, faculty

appreciation and special events for students. *All parents are encouraged to become involved in the PTO.*

Personal Electronics (including cell phones)

As they often serve as a distraction to the learning environment, personal electronics (cell phones, i-pods, mp3 players, gameboys, etc) are not permitted to be used during the school day. Students must leave all personal electronics turned off and in their lockers. Due to the value of some of these items, it is highly recommended that students do not bring them to school at all. Personal electronics being used in the school will be sent to the office for later retrieval by the student or parent.

Problem Resolution

Parents are urged to bring any issues or concerns that they have directly to the teacher in question by e-mail, phone or by setting up an appointment. If a resolution cannot be found by this procedure, parents should next contact their child's counselor in the hope of finding mediation. Only after these steps, should issues be brought to the administration's attention. Any and all information shared with the principal or assistant principal can and will be shared with the teacher.

Registration

Registration for incoming 5-8 grade students (who are not coming directly from Parkdale Elementary) is done by the Middle School counselor. Please contact the school's main office and ask to speak to a counselor.

Report Cards and Progress Reports

Report Cards and Progress Reports will be delivered electronically to parents via the Parent Portal unless requested otherwise. Reminders will be sent home to check the portal.

Sale of Items

As it can be a distraction to the learning environment and often involves carrying amounts of cash inappropriate for school, students are discouraged from bringing in fundraising items to school to sell. Furthermore, due to the number of requests they receive and a desire not to cause hurt feelings, students are not allowed to solicit from teachers/staff.

School Closing (Emergency/Weather)

When school is cancelled due to inclement weather, families will be notified via local television and radio stations (WBEN 930, WGRZ Channel 2, WIVB Channel 4 and WKBW Channel 7). Closings will also be posted on the district website. The website also has a subscription feature for immediate notification via e-mail and text messaging. Individuals must sign up for this option. Do not call the school to see if school is open.

Please remember that we live in a large district with varied weather patterns. The primary factor in making these determinations is pupil safety.

School Hours

The regularly scheduled school day for students is 7:50am – 2:30pm. Each day, breakfast is served from 7:30 – 7:50am to any child who wishes to participate in the breakfast program. Students may remain in school for a pre-approved, supervised reason (ELT, detention, and/or intramurals) until 3:15 each day. Following ELT, detention and/or intramurals, the late bus leaves the school at 3:15pm Tuesday through Friday. There is no late bus on Monday. All students should leave the building immediately following their final scheduled activity for the day.

School Property

Our school buildings and equipment cost the taxpayers to construct, purchase and maintain. As such, students are to take care with all equipment, furniture, decorations and other items owned by the East Aurora Union Free School District. This includes the buildings (indoors and out), property, busses, and the cafeteria. Students found intentionally breaking, misusing, damaging or defacing school property will be subject to disciplinary action and/or restitution for damage done.

School Psychologist

EAMS is fortunate to provide students and parents the additional support of a full time school psychologist whose primary role is to tailor his/her services to the particular needs of each child and situation. Consultation, assessment, intervention, prevention, education, research and planning along with health care provision are available to help parents and teachers address many of the challenges faced by children today.

School Records

Consistent with the provisions of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, official records, files and data directly related to their child(ren) are available to parents upon request of the principal and must be reviewed in his/her presence in the school office. (For additional information, see Appendix II)

If parents change their address or telephone number, the school office must be notified *as soon as possible*. If a family has an unlisted number, be sure that the school has this number in case of emergency. It is important that parents can be reached where they are working.

School Resource Officer (SRO)

East Aurora is proud to have a member of the EAPD assigned to the district. This officer creates a solid link between the school and the community and helps build trust and relationships between students and the police. The SRO is also responsible for teaching the D.A.R.E. curriculum. The administration works closely with the SRO in cases when there may be legal implications.

Searches

School administrators are free to enter a child's desk, back-pack or locker at any time to search for questionable items. The following materials may not be brought to school:

- Alcoholic beverages of any type
- Drugs
- Weapons of any type

- Fireworks
- Immoral or pornographic materials
- Other items inappropriate for school.

If found items are illegal (e.g. drugs, weapons, fireworks), they will be turned over to law enforcement authorities. Other items will be given to the child's parents.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 is an Act which prohibits discrimination against persons with a handicap in any program receiving Federal financial assistance. The Act defines a person with a handicap as anyone who:

1. has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (major life activities include activities such as walking, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working).
2. has a record of such an impairment; or
3. is regarded as having such an impairment.

In order to fulfill its obligation under Section 504, the East Aurora School district recognizes a responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and students. No discrimination against any person with a handicap will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs and practices in the school system.

The school district has specific responsibilities under the Act, which include the responsibility to identify, evaluate, and if the child is determined to be eligible under 504, to afford access to appropriate educational services. If the parent or guardian disagrees with the determination made by the professional staff of the school district, he/she has a right to a hearing with an impartial hearing officer.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) also specifies rights related to educational records. This Act gives the parent or guardian the right to: 1) inspect and review his/her child's educational records; 2) make copies of these records; 3) receive a list of all individuals having access to those records; 4) ask for an explanation of any item in the records; 5) ask for an amendment to any report on the grounds that it is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the child's rights; and 6) a hearing on the issue if the school refuses to make the amendment.

If there are questions, please feel free to contact the 504 coordinator for the school district at 687-2312.

Self-Injurious Behavior

EAMS has an established protocol to address student self-injury. Parents are immediately contacted, students are assessed by counseling and nursing staff, and students are then excused from school for additional medical and/or mental health follow-up. A physician's statement clearing the student to return to school is required for the student to resume classes.

Sexual Harassment:

Any act of sexual harassment on school property or at a school related event is strictly prohibited. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome flirtation, sexual advances, propositions, continual or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature, using sexually derogatory or suggestive words and/or the display of sexually suggestive or pornographic pictures

Special Education

A student's Individualized Education Plan (I.E.P) is implemented collaboratively by the special education teacher and the classroom teachers. Student needs are met within the classroom environment as well as in the special education classroom.

Parents of students who suspect that their child may have a learning disability are encouraged to contact the Pupil Services Offices at: 716-687-2312.

Student Behavior

The purpose of all school discipline is to change student behavior and to instill the value of thoughtful decision making. While progressive discipline is the preferred method of behavior management, depending on the nature, severity, and frequency of the offense, each incident will be treated both individually and in light of the student's larger behavioral history. Progressive discipline can include, but is not limited to, verbal warnings, written warnings, detention (during lunch and/or after school), and in-school and out of school suspension. Further discipline can be implemented by the Superintendent and/or the Board of Education. Warnings and in-class consequences can be given both by teachers and the principal. Detentions and suspension can only be given by the principal. Parents can be notified at any point in the disciplinary process and may be required to meet with administration to help create lasting change.

An explanation of our Progressive Discipline and minimum consequences can be found in Appendix I

Student Organizational Support Program (S.O.S)

Students who are struggling with organization or need a temporary supportive place while dealing with social/emotional issues can be referred to the S.O.S. program. The S.O.S. program is not for academic remediation – that is the responsibility of the core area teacher. For information on the S.O.S. referral process, contact your child's counselor.

Student Recognition and Awards

Students at EAMS can receive the following recognitions and awards:

- Honor Roll (awarded quarterly to students with a 90.00+ average)
- Merit Roll (awarded quarterly to students with a 85.00+ average)
- Student of the Month (awarded monthly by subject area teachers)
- "Do the Right Thing" (awarded monthly by nomination)
- Perfect Attendance (awarded annually)

*Awards are also given at the annual 8th grade banquet

Suspension

For serious violations of the Code of Conduct or as the result of a pattern of progressive discipline, students may be suspended “in school” or “out of school”. For “in school” suspension, students are required to report to school and will be given a supervised, alternate location to complete their day’s school work. During out of school suspensions, students are assigned to the BOCES Ormsby Center (Center St.) where their work will be provided for them. In both cases, students who are suspended are not allowed to attend any extra-curricular activities (sports, clubs, etc) on any day he/she is suspended. If the suspension is longer than five (5) days, a Superintendent’s Hearing will be scheduled.

Tardiness

Students who are not present in homeroom will be marked absent. Students who arrive after the school day begins will be marked as tardy. A child is not marked tardy if the bus is running late. Parents will be contacted when the amount of or frequency of a student’s tardiness rises to a level of concern.

Telephone

The school telephone is a business telephone. Students will be allowed to use school telephones for emergencies or other approved purposes. In an attempt to help build a sense of responsibility, students should not use the phone to call for forgotten items.

Testing (NYS)

In an attempt to avoid conflicts, each year we publish the district and NYS Education Department testing schedule in advance so families can avoid scheduling vacations, doctors’ appointments, etc., at these times. Students are required to take these assessments. Assessment dates and times cannot be changed to meet family requests. If you child is ill on the day of an assessment, a parent must call school before 8:15am.

Text Books

1. Books are to be covered at all times to protect them (with a non-adhesive cover).
2. Teachers should be notified by a student if they receive a book in which there are marks, rips, pages missing, etc. to avoid being held responsible for replacing that text.
3. A lost/damaged book is the student’s responsibility. Students will be required to pay for lost or damaged books.

Book checks will be held throughout the year. Students will be expected to have all books available for teacher inspection. If a book is lost, it must be reported to the student’s teacher immediately. The lost book must be paid for within five (5) days. A replacement book will be issued upon payment. While they do not need to be covered, the same policies apply to classroom novels, library books and other school media.

Tobacco Policy

Our campus is tobacco-free and this policy remains in effect at all times. Smoking or chewing/spitting and possession of tobacco products will not be tolerated under any condition at East Aurora Middle School and will result in disciplinary action for all students and faculty. We also require that parents refrain from smoking or using any types of tobacco products on campus or at a school sponsored activities.

Our school also prohibits the sale and advertising of tobacco on school property or at school functions. Faculty, students and parents are prohibited from wearing or displaying tobacco-related clothing, gear or other paraphernalia. Our school prohibits tobacco industry sponsorship and marketing (no gifts, funding or parent/classroom educational materials from the tobacco industry).

Tuesday Envelope

The Tuesday Envelope is the main method of communication between school and home. Each Tuesday, your child will be sent home with an envelope containing important information regarding the school or your child. Envelopes are to be emptied, signed and returned the following day.

Visitors

All visitors must sign in with the greeter upon entrance to the building and then report to the school's main office. Visitors will not be allowed in classrooms without prior arrangements with the teacher. For security reasons, please contact the school office the day prior if you desire to have lunch with your child in the cafeteria. Students are not permitted to have peer visitors during the school day.

Website

EAMS has made a clear commitment to keep parents informed about the life of the school and their child's progress. To this end, we invite all parents to be regular visitors to the school's website. It can be found at www.eastauroraschools.org.

The website contains access to the Parent Portal, important school dates and information, links to teacher websites, and interesting stories about what is happening at EAMS.

***Disclaimer**

All policies contained in this handbook serve as a guide and are subject to revision by school administration at any time depending on the nature or severity of a situation. Every effort has been made to align this handbook with district policy. Should a conflict be found, district policy supersedes this handbook.

APPENDIX I

Explanation of Progressive Discipline and Minimum Consequences Guidelines:

While the school embraces a theory of Progressive Discipline (initial offenses are dealt with less severely than subsequent offenses) the principal reserves the right to make any allowable disciplinary decision depending on the nature, severity, and frequency of the offense. Each incident will be treated both individually and in light of the student's larger behavioral history.

Progressive discipline can include, but is not limited to:

- Verbal warnings
- Written warnings
- Parental notification
- Loss of credit (for acts of academic dishonesty)
- Counselor referral
- Behavior contracts
- Removal of privileges and/or suspension from extra-curricular/social activities
- Detention (during lunch and/or after school)
- Restitution
- In-school suspension
- Suspension from district transportation (bus)
- Out of School Suspension (1-5 days)
- Contact with School Resource Officer (whenever there is a possible violation of law)

Further discipline can be commenced by the Superintendent and/or the Board of Education. Students retain their rights as defined by the District Code of Conduct. Students with disabilities will be disciplined with accord to Special Education Law and in consultation with the Director of Pupil Services.

While progressive discipline allows for some latitude in decision making, what follows below are minimum consequence guidelines:

- Any student activity which is **disorderly, insubordinate, or disruptive** (including but not limited to anything which disturbs the normal activity of the school or involves not following a reasonable request made by an adult) shall be dealt with on an individual basis and can involve the entire range of possible disciplinary consequences.
- Any student activity which is intentionally **violent** (including but not limited to fighting, committing a violent act, possessing a weapon, or threatening to use a weapon or commit a violent act) begins with a minimum consequence of one day of in-school suspension.
- Any student activity which **endangers the safety, morals, health, or welfare of others** (including but not limited to bullying, harassment, hazing, discrimination, possession or use of illegal substances, or immoral behavior) shall be dealt with on an individual basis and can involve the entire range of possible disciplinary

consequences. Due to the nature of these offenses impacting more than just another's educational experience, they will be handled with an increased level of severity including possible suspension for first-time offenses.

- Any student activity which involves **misconduct on a school bus** (which includes, but is not limited to creating an unsafe experience for the driver or other riders) can merit the entire range of consequences including suspension from district transportations.
- Any act of **academic misconduct** (including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, or copying) begins with a minimum consequence of no credit for the assignment.

Appendix II

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974

Contained below are your rights under the Federal “Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.” It is the District’s responsibility to notify you of these rights on an annual basis.

Any students eighteen (18) years or older and the parents of any student under eighteen (18) years of age have a right to inspect and review any and all official records, files and data directly related to pupils including all material that is incorporated into each student’s cumulative record folder, and intended for school use or to be available to parties outside the school or school system, and specifically including, but not necessarily limited to, identifying data, academic work completed, level of achievement (grades, standardized achievement test scores), attendance data, scores on standardized intelligence, aptitude, and psychological tests, interest inventory results, health data, observations, and verified reports of serious or recurrent behavior patterns.

Such parents and students are also entitled to an opportunity for a hearing to challenge the contents of such records, to insure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the students, and to provide an opportunity for the correction or deletion of any such inaccurate, misleading or otherwise inappropriate data contained therein. Any questions concerning the procedure to be followed in requesting such a hearing should be directed to the principal of the school which the pupil is attending or to the superintendent.

Under the law, there are restrictions which prohibit the release or use of student records or any material contained therein to persons other than parents or students or persons employed by the school district without the written consent of the parents or students. There are a number of exceptions to this rule, such as school district employees and officials and certain state and federal officials who have legitimate educational needs for access to the records. No personally identifiable information contained in the personal school records shall be furnished in any form to any persons other than those mentioned above unless:

- (a) The following directory information may be released without written consent provided that the student or parent does not inform the district of their objection to such release within 30 days of the mailing of this notice: student’s name, address and telephone listings; date of birth; major field of study; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; weight and height of members of athletic teams; dates attendance; diplomas and awards received.
- (b) There is a written consent from the student’s parents specifying records to be released, the reason for such release, and to whom, and with a copy of the records to be released to the student’s parents and the student, if desired by the parents, or
- (c) Such information is furnished in compliance with judicial order or pursuant to any lawfully issued subpoena, in which event the parents and the students shall be notified of any such order to subpoena in advance of the compliance there with by the District.