



Glens Falls Middle School

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Christopher Reed, *Principal* • Laurie Parker, *Assistant Principal*

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Dear Middle School Parent:

Welcome back to another school year. I hope you have had an enjoyable summer and are getting ready to shift back into “school mode”. The 2017/2018 school year should be a great one in the Glens Falls Middle School. We have many new staff members joining the ranks and several new initiatives we are undertaking. This letter will serve to update you on a number of changes and adjustments to our middle level programming. As usual, some of the things we need to discuss are required for me to share with you each year and they are noted by the following bullets:

- Code of Conduct Summary
- Attendance Policy/Dress Code
- Sex Offender Notification

Briefly, here is a general summary of each item:

Code of Conduct Summary

Before our first day of school, we are obligated to provide parents with a summary of the Code of Conduct for the middle school. For your convenience, I have enclosed a summary of the code.

Attendance Policy and Dress Code

We firmly believe that students cannot be successful academically unless they are in regular attendance at school. Research confirms that one of the best predictors of a successful K-12 educational experience is consistent and regular attendance. I can't stress enough the importance of excellent attendance for your child. We will be increasing our efforts to ensure that all students are in school every day. Our attendance office will be monitoring attendance closely and we will utilize guidance, social work, nursing and administrative staff to minimize absences.

Please help us present a united front on the issue of dress. I have enclosed a copy of the middle school dress code for your review and encourage you to read it carefully. Not everything is mentioned in this dress code (there will be more detailed information in the student handbook) but I urge you to ensure that common sense is used. As always, school can be a social place but our efforts will be to keep the focus on instruction and not on fashion.

Sex Offender Notification

The New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services notifies us when convicted sex offenders move into or out of the school district's geographical area. If you would like to be alerted to these moves, please sign up for the School News Notifier at <https://snn.neric.org/gf/>. By signing up for the “District News” email notifications, you will automatically receive updates on sex offender relocations.

What are the changes in the Middle School you can expect for this year?

I'd like to update you on some of the changes to our school since the kids went home in June. Most of this year's changes are positive and exciting changes which reflect our commitment to proactive and research-based growth.

- **Technology:** District-wide, we are continuing our new technology initiative. Through other mailings you will be notified of our *Device Agreement Form*, the *Acceptable Use Policy* and the Middle School *BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) Policy*. The latter policy revision provides students with the opportunity to bring their cell phones and/or iPods for use with teacher permission while engaged in instruction and during their non-instructional times as well (lunch, study labs). In the 2017/2018 school year we are continuing the District's innovative technology policy. Every student in grades 5 – 8 will be assigned their own Chromebook for in-school use. While 5th and 6th graders will have to dock their devices in a charging station in their respective homerooms at the end of the school day, 7th and 8th graders will still be expected to take their Chromebooks home on a daily basis for use in the completion of homework and conducting of research.
- **District Website:** Just as a reminder, please note that we are continuing with our eSchool Data Parent Portal as a highly detailed manner in which parents may connect with their children's teachers. ESchool is a secure web application through which parents may access their child's class schedules, attendance information, progress reports, report cards, discipline incident information, and more. The district generates user names and passwords for all families so please stop by the Guidance Office if you haven't gotten a login yet. You will need to bring your driver's license when you come in. Once you have your login information, click on the "eSD Parent Portal" icon on the district web site at www.gfsd.org. Parents can log in at any time to stay informed about their child's progress, allowing for enhanced teacher-parent communication and quicker trend-spotting within a student's academic performance or behaviors. To ask questions or check account information, contact the GFMS Guidance Office.
- **Staff Changes:**

I am excited to announce some middle school teacher staffing changes:

 - ✓ **Michele Truax**, 5th and 6th grades special educator has retired. We will be shifting **Jody Harrington** from her position as 8th grade special education teacher to take over Michele's position. I am very pleased to announce that **Lauren Loschiavo** has been hired to take over Jodi's position as 7th and 8th grade special educator.
 - ✓ **Joy Muller-McCoola** has retired as middle school art teacher and has been replaced by **Jennifer Girard** who is eager to continue the long-standing history of art excellence in Glens Falls.
 - ✓ **Jennifer Martell** has been hired as an additional 5th grade teacher. Jen brings experience and a successful teaching history with her as she joins our instructional team.
 - ✓ **Jill Donohue**, previously an elementary teacher from Big Cross, will join the middle school in a new position as 7th and 8th grade Tier 3 ELA RtI teacher. We are excited to have Jill join the middle school team.
 - ✓ **Katie Arney**, 7th and 8th grade ELA teacher and 7-12 ELA department chairperson, has transferred to the high school for the 2017/2018 school year. **Rich Kline** has chosen to return to the middle school as an ELA teacher to replace her. Rich previously taught in the middle school for many years.

Some Basic Reminders of School Systems and Policy:

- **Early Release of Students – a reminder:**

We are very focused on the safety and well-being of our students. The middle school staff takes great pride in the safety of your child while he or she is in our care during the school day. When it is necessary for a parent or guardian to request the early release of their child we have formalized a process that will ensure proper accountability. This process requires a parent, guardian, or adult with authority to come to the Attendance Office to sign the child out of the building. A note from home letting the Attendance Office know in advance of the appointment is still required. In the event of an unplanned appointment, a phone call to the Attendance Office prior to coming to the middle school is helpful. We have a phone number that rings directly to attendance (to report your child being late, absent or to notify the school of an early release during the school day). The number is 832-4531.

- **Supplies:**

We have provided fairly standardized supply lists for all of our grade levels and by now you should have received a copy in the mail. The lists are also available on the district's website. If you do not have internet access, please call the Guidance Office at 793-3410 to request a copy of the supply list.

- **Hours:**

I'd like to provide one final reminder about our hours of operation. Students should not arrive at the middle school campus prior to 8:05 AM as outdoor supervision does not begin until that time. Doors will open promptly at 8:23 AM and students need to be in their Advocacies by 8:28 AM. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday, school officially ends at 3:03 PM. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, teachers will be in their classrooms until 3:33 and may choose to extend school hours until that time. Of course your child may call home to advise you of the need to stay after school.

- **Charging Policy for School Breakfast and Lunch:**

I would like to review the charging policy for the school breakfast and lunch program in the Glens Falls City School District. In the middle school, students can charge up to 5 meals including breakfast and lunch. Once they have met their charge limit, we will still provide them with meals. No a la carte items can be charged including milk. No money will be refunded from a student's account. The only exception is if they leave the district. If anyone has any questions, please contact Larry Young, Food Service Director at 798-1910.

- **5th grade Ice Cream Social:**

A reminder to parents of incoming 5th graders...the Ice Cream Social will be held on Thursday, August 31 at 6:00 PM in the middle school cafeteria. This is a nice time to take a final walk around the building, meet some of your child's teachers and to enjoy an ice cream on a warm summer evening. It would be great if you could plan on attending this event with your child (siblings and families are welcome).

- **PTSA:**

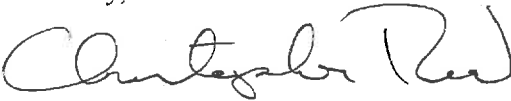
The middle school has an active and vibrant Parent Teacher Student Association and they meet each month (usually on the 2nd Thursday) at 7:00 PM in the middle school Library/Media Center. This is a great opportunity to learn about what is going on in the school as well as become involved in the planning and implementation of many events and fund raising activities. Please note the PTSA flyer included with this packet.

- **Pick Up and Drop Off:**

Please be reminded that the middle school parking lot is restricted during school hours and you should make arrangements to drop off and pick up your child in other areas. We have a sidewalk from the back of our parking lot over to Grant Ave. that many families use for drop off and pick up. This is a great place where students may arrange to meet their rides. Again, please do not enter the school parking lot at the beginning or end of the school day unless your child requires handicap access.

Thank you for your patience in reviewing all of the above information. We are extremely excited about the upcoming school year and hope that you will join us in a united effort to provide a high quality educational experience for your child. Throughout the school year, please feel free to call Mrs. Parker or me at 793-3418 if you would like assistance on any matters. We would be pleased to help out.

Sincerely,



Christopher Reed, Principal
Glens Falls Middle School

Enclosures

Code of Conduct

Introduction

The mission of the Glens Falls City School District is to provide a safe, positive and stimulating environment... one that fosters self-growth, a passion for continuous learning, confidence and the ability to succeed in a changing world.

We promote excellence through high expectations and evolving standards for students, staff, parents and community. The challenge is to reach personal best while respecting each person's individuality.

We make it our responsibility to be accountable for the implementation of this mission and to model behaviors that are influential to the characters as well as the mind.

The Glens Falls Board of Education, the administration, and staff recognize that the enrichment and in fact, the very survival of any group, come about only as its individual members practice self-discipline and demonstrate behavior which does not infringe nor intrude on basic rights and freedoms of others. Responsible exercise of individual freedoms means respect for the democratic process and for the rights of all. Only in an atmosphere of mutual respect, self-restraint, civility, and trust among all can these freedoms flourish.

The administration and staff are committed to the task of school management in a manner consistent with the legal and moral rights of all, but will neither tolerate nor condone actions or conduct in violation of this "Code of Conduct." In setting forth the following Code, nothing contained herein is intended nor shall be constructed to limit or restrict freedom of speech, nor peaceful assembly, nor any constitutional or legal individual right.

The Code shall not prevent or limit communication between and among students or relieve the Glens Falls City Schools of its special responsibility for self-regulation in the preservation of public order. The Code does not prevent nor restrain controversy and dissent. However, the Code does prevent abuse of individuals and thereby maintains the stable environment appropriate to a public school.

This Code is in compliance with the requirements of the Project SAVE legislation, Education Law 2801, and section 100.2 of the Commissioner's regulations. Unless otherwise indicated, this Code applies to all students, school personnel, parents and other visitors when on school property or attending a school function.

Definitions

For purpose of this code, the following definitions apply:

"Disruptive student" means a student under the age of 21 who is substantially disruptive of the educational process or substantially interferes with the teacher's authority over the classroom.

"Parent" means the biological, adoptive or foster parent, guardian or person in parental relation to a student.

"School property" means in or within any building, structure, athletic playing fields, playground, parking lot or land contained within the real property boundary line of a public elementary or secondary school, or in or on a school bus, as defined in Vehicle and Traffic Law 142.

"Student function" means any school sponsored extra-curricular event or activity.

"Violent student" means a student under the age of 21 whom:

1. Commits an act of violence upon a school employee.
2. Commits, while on school property or at a school function, an act of violence upon another student or any other person lawfully on school property or at a school function.
3. Possesses a weapon while on school property or at a school function.
4. Displays, while on school property or at a school function, what appears to be a weapon.
5. Threatens, while on school property or at a school function, to use a weapon.
6. Knowingly and intentionally damages or destroys the personal property of any school employee or any person lawfully on school property or at a school function.
7. Knowingly and intentionally damages or destroys school district property.
8. A student that is verbally aggressive to other students or faculty

"Weapon" means a firearm as defined in 18 USC921 for purposes of the Gun Free School Act. It also means any other gun, dagger, dirk, razor, stiletto, switchblade knife, gravity knife, brass knuckles, sling shot, metal knuckle knife, box cutters, cane sword, electronic dart gun, Kung Fu star, electronic stun gun, pepper spray, or other noxious spray, explosive or incendiary bomb, ammunition, imitation ammunition or exploding substances, or other device, instrument, material or substance that can cause serious physical injury or death when used as a weapon.

"Time Out" is considered that period of time when a teacher employs informal strategies to refocus a student toward positive behavior (less than one class period).

"Suspension" is defined as a severe penalty which may be imposed only upon students who are insubordinate, disorderly, violent, or disruptive, or whose conduct otherwise endangers the safety, morals, health or welfare of others.

Attendance Policy

Attendance

Regular attendance in school is required by law.

Perfect Attendance

Each June, students with perfect attendance are given an award. To receive this award you must attend school each day and be on time. Religious observations, legal matters and appointments with doctors and dentists during school hours will not hurt a perfect attendance record when the student brings in a written note from a parent or guardian.

Absent

If a student is absent from school, the parent or guardian should call the Attendance Clerk at 832-4531 to explain the absence. When a student returns to school, he/she is **required to bring a written excuse from home to the attendance office**. Legal reasons for being excused from school are: illness, legal or court action, doctor's appointment, or religious observance. All other absences are considered unexcused. Visiting, hunting, vacationing, working and babysitting are examples of unexcused absences. Absences without a written excuse from a parent or guardian shall be deemed unexcused absences. Each day, attendance will be taken on a period by period basis. Parents/guardians will be notified if a student is illegally absent. If absences are chronic and no medical documentation is provided, then a physician's note can be requested. Chronic attendance problems could result in formal notification to Warren County Social Services and/or Probation Department.

Tardy

Attendance is taken in advocacy at 8:28 am. Students arriving after 8:28 are required to report to the attendance clerk to get a pass to enter class. **A written note from home is always needed to explain tardiness**. Legal excuses for tardiness are the same as legal excuses for excused absences. A 6th-8th grade student who has **four** or more unexcused days of tardiness in a semester will be assigned detention. Second semester (February through June) represents a fresh start. Chronic tardiness could result in formal notification to Warren County Social Services Department and/or Probation Department.

Excused During the School Day

Students who must be excused during the school day should bring a note from home to the attendance clerk. Notes should be given to the attendance clerk after reporting to advocacy. Parents need to report into the school building to sign their child out. If the child needs to walk home at an intended time, permission needs to be given by the parent. When the student returns to school, he/she must report to the attendance clerk to be readmitted.

Late For Class

A student who is late to class should have a pass from the teacher of the previous class if he/she was detained by the teacher. If no pass is provided then the student will be required to stay on a Tuesday or Thursday with the receiving teacher to make up the time they missed with that teacher. **No late passes are issued in the main office or health office**. Persistent lateness will result in a disciplinary consequence.

Truant

A student who is absent from school without parent or guardian knowledge is truant. Truancy results in one day of In-School Suspension for each occurrence. Skipping school, leaving the building without permission, and being in the high school building without permission or authorization are three common examples of truancy. Consequences will increase with persistent truancy.

Skipping Class

A student who skips a class must make up that class with his/her teacher on a Tuesday or Thursday and will be assigned detention.

Student Dress Code

All Students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to dress appropriately for school and school functions. Students and their parents have the primary responsibility for acceptable school dress and appearance. Teachers and all other district personnel should exemplify and reinforce acceptable student dress and help students develop an understanding of appropriate appearance in the school setting.

1. For safety reasons, footwear is required and should be worn at all times. Footwear should be safe and fit comfortably in order to prevent injury.
2. No coats or jackets will be worn in the building during the school day.
3. The wearing of hats in the building will not be permitted except for medical or religious reasons. Gang related apparel is prohibited.
4. Clothing which is disruptive or interferes with the educational process will not be permitted to be worn by students in school or on school premises (i.e. flannel/pajama pants, profanity, offensive messages, promotion of drugs, alcohol, and /or tobacco).
5. Attire should not include items that are vulgar, obscene, libelous or denigrate others on account of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, gender, or disability.
6. No jewelry with sharp edges, heavy ornamental chains, dog collars or choke chains will be permitted.
7. No sunglasses will be permitted unless prescribed by a physician.
8. Certain insignias designated or inferred as inappropriate or obscene or in bad taste will not be permitted. This includes prohibition of gang symbols, signs, colors or other related apparel.
9. Boys must wear footwear, pants or shorts and a shirt (no exposed underclothing).
10. Girls must wear footwear, slacks, shorts or skirts of fingertip length, some type of blouse or dress (no bare midriffs; no spaghetti straps; no halter, tube or net tops; no exposed underclothing; no plunging neckline - front or back; and no see-through garments).
11. Excessively saggy pants/shorts are prohibited. Undergarments may not be exposed.

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. Staff will assist in notifying the parent(s) of the student in order to secure alternate clothing (if necessary). Any student who refuses to cooperate shall be subject to discipline, up to and including suspension for the day. The principal/assistant principal will make the final decision about whether clothing is appropriate. Family support is appreciated in these efforts.

Remember this about dress and appearance:

- How you look affects how you feel and behave**
- How you look affects how others feel and behave**
- Use common sense**

