



CRANBERRY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Dr. Jamie Johnson
Principal

STUDENT HANDBOOK - 2025-26

6230 Highway 19-E
Elk Park, North Carolina 28622
Telephone: (828) 733-2932
FAX: (828) 733-6863

Chasing Excellence, Choosing Kindness, Learning Together



Parents and Students:

Welcome back to a new school year! We are excited to see our halls filled with energy, enthusiasm, and smiling faces once again. Our CMS team has been working hard to prepare for a fantastic year of learning, growth, and connection.

Parents, you are always welcome to come by and see me if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions.

We can't be successful without your support. Let's work together and have a fantastic year of learning and growing!

Sincerely,

Dr. Jamie Johnson, Principal

School Hours

The teacher's school day is 7:45am until 3:15pm. We will have someone here by 7:30am to supervise students.

OFFICIAL SCHOOL DAY is 8 am until 3 pm

7:30-7:55 am	Buses unload/breakfast
8 am	School begins/Students in TAG
3 pm	Students load buses and car riders report to their designated pickup area

ATTENDANCE

A student's attendance is a determining factor for his/her success. At CMS, we will emphasize the importance of good habits involving attendance. Communication and collaboration between home and school will be critical to ensuring good attendance for each student. We appreciate the support of our families and community concerning the significant importance of good attendance.

TARDIES

Classes will begin at 8 am. Please note, any student arriving to TAG after 8 am will be counted tardy. Tardiness creates disruptions of valuable instructional time for the student who is tardy and for all other class members as well. Students are expected to be at school on time. If your student is tardy, we ask parents to walk them into the office for safety reasons.

Thank you, parents, for your help with this!

EARLY MORNING ARRIVALS

The instructional school day for students begins at 8am and the day concludes at 3pm. Staff members will be at school by 7:30am to supervise students. Students will report to either the cafeteria or gym for supervision until 7:55am. PLEASE do not arrive at school prior to 7:30am. No one will be available to supervise students before then. Your cooperation ensures the safety of our students.

EARLY DISMISSALS

We encourage students to attend regularly and remain in school from 8am until 3pm. Early dismissals disrupt classes and your student will miss important instruction. We do realize

there are situations when it is necessary to pick your student up early, such as a doctor or dentist appointment, the student is sick, to attend a funeral, etc. When this occurs, a parent/guardian **must** sign the student out through the office. The school secretary will call for your student to come to the office. This is for everyone's safety. If someone other than the parent/guardian is picking up a student, the parent **must** notify the office – preferably in writing, but at the very least we must have a phone call at (828) 733-2932. Any dismissal before 3pm is considered an early dismissal.

VISITATION AT SCHOOL

Communication between school and home is essential to your student's success. We invite you to visit our school and your student's teacher. Due to the importance of our instructional time, we ask you to please set a time after 3 pm or during the teacher's scheduled planning time. Disruptions during instructional time are costly to both teachers and students. When you visit our school, we require that you stop by the office and go through our sign in process – this is for the safety of everyone at Cranberry Middle.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

We welcome any person who would like to donate time to our school. We have a great need for volunteers in a variety of areas. In addition, we are in the process of creating and maintaining an active PTO program. If you are interested, please contact the office. We would greatly appreciate it!

PARENT CONCERN PROCEDURES

Parental concerns should first be shared with the Teacher before being taken to the Principal. Concerns that are more general in nature should be brought to the Principal.

INFORMATION HOME TO PARENTS

PARENTS: PLEASE check your student's CANVAS page OFTEN to be informed about their progress and to be aware of any important info that teachers may share. Please explain to your student it is their responsibility to check CANVAS daily and share info with you! We will also use phone messages, FaceBook, Instagram, Remind, and the School web page to communicate.

DISCIPLINE and RESPONSIBILITIES

At CMS, we use our Wildcat PAWS Principles to direct our school-wide behavior. You can find a matrix of those expectations at the back of our handbook.

Students, Faculty, Staff, Volunteers and Visitors at CMS will abide by the following School-wide Behavioral Expectations:

- I will treat everyone with kindness and respect.
- I will not use inappropriate language toward anyone.
- I will not tease, name-call, or bully another person.

CELL PHONE POLICY

To help us provide the best instructional environment possible, cell phones may not be used in classrooms and must remain out of sight during instructional time. In accordance with NC legislation, beginning January 1, 2026, cell phones must be powered off during the instructional day. At CMS, students will store their phones with their TAG teacher during the day.

Cell phones are not permitted in restrooms at any time.

Airpods/earbuds/headphones are not allowed in hallways during class transitions and should not be worn in classrooms during instruction without teacher approval.

The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal belongings. Any personal items brought to school, including cell phones and earbuds, are brought at the student's own risk.

DRESS CODE

According to [ACS Board Policy 4304 entitled Student Code of Conduct](#), the following applies to students in grades 6-12:

- Appearance or clothing that is disruptive, provocative, indecent, vulgar, obscene, or which advertises illegal drugs or displays obnoxious or indecent signs, symbols, or drawings, or which endangers the health or safety of students or others, is prohibited.
- TRACK SHORTS, TANK TOPS, "SAGGING PANTS", OPEN MIDRIFF, SPANDEX (BIKE SHORTS), SEE-THROUGH SHIRTS OR BLOUSES, AND RAGGED CLOTHING ARE INAPPROPRIATE.
- *Unacceptable Tank Top: T-shirt w/ narrow straps and large arm holes. *Open Midriff: A garment (shirt/blouse) shorter than waist length exposing abdomen. *Inappropriate Short, Skirt or Dress Length: Shorter than mid-thigh)

BUS RULES

- Listen carefully to the driver's directions
- Talk quietly
- Keep your bus clean
- Keep items, hands and arms inside the window
- Remain in your seat at all times

*Bus riding is a privilege that may be revoked. Parents are urged to support any disciplinary action taken and to talk to your student about how to prevent further issues.

CAR RIDERS

- If you bring your student to school by car, please circle and drop your student off on the CMS side of the building. If you need to come in with your student, you are asked to park your vehicle in a space on the Freedom Trail side
- If you have students in both CMS and FTE, you may drop them off on the FTE side to allow our younger students the safest route to their class.

- If you need to pick your student up before 3pm, please park in a parking space, not along the curb on the Freedom Trail side.
- Car rider pick up is at the curb near the gym exit. We will call students to specific areas marked by colors depending on the order of cars in line.

ATTENDANCE

Regular, consistent attendance is essential to student success. The Avery County Board of Education and the State of North Carolina also believe regular attendance in school, along with responsibility in studying and participation in school activities, are essential to the learning process. Once a pupil arrives at school, he/she is expected to attend each class and remain throughout the day. The State's [Compulsory Attendance Law 115C-378](#) states "Every parent, guardian, or other person having charge of a pupil in the school system, between the ages of 7 and 16, shall cause such student to attend school continuously for a period equal to the time which the public school to which the student is assigned shall be in session." All students are under the jurisdiction of the school during normal hours. This includes when the student boards the bus or arrives at the school by car until he/she is picked up or exits the bus in the afternoons. This also includes any school-sponsored trips.

[Avery County Board Policy #4400](#) states "The student's Report Card is considered notification of absences, early dismissals and tardies. Letters of notification will be sent to parents informing them when their student has accumulated three (3), six (6), and ten (10) unexcused absences per school year." All absences due to illness and extenuating circumstances must be documented with the school.

ACS Board Policy also states that "Principals may refer a student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) to mediation at a Community Mediation Center to attempt to resolve attendance issues in cases in which:

- A student has 3 or more unexcused absences
- A student has noticeable or suspicious absences that seem to follow a pattern
- A student has more than 10 tardies or early releases
- A student has an excessive number of excused absences

We ask that you contact the school if your student is going to be absent for any reason.

BUS RIDER CHANGES

Each student will be assigned a bus to transport them to and from school. If there is ever a need to ride a bus OTHER than the assigned bus, a parent/guardian must write a note stating which bus the student is to ride, and where they are to get off, or who they are to get off with. This note must be brought to the school office by 1:30 pm to get a pass to ride a different

bus. Without parent permission, a bus rider change will be denied. This also applies to students that are riding, walking, or going to a place other than their assigned drop. If your student asks to get off the bus anywhere other than their normal stop, the bus driver will not honor that request.

CAR RIDERS CHANGES

If your student is going to ride home in a car with anyone other than their parent/guardian, we need a note from you stating this. If the change happens during the day and you do not have an opportunity to write a note, you **MUST** call the school office and inform us (733-2932). Please try to handle this by 1:30 pm at the latest. For student safety, we will not let a student ride home with other parties without verifiable notification from a parent/guardian.

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROGRAM

Breakfast and Lunch are open to any student who would like to participate. Breakfast will be served from 7:30 to 7:55 am prior to students reporting to TAG. Each grade level is assigned a time to go to lunch. We encourage participation in our Breakfast and Lunch program. For the 2025-26 school year, all students will receive both breakfast and lunch free of charge.

Additional food may be purchased if it is available. If you would like to put funds on your student's account, make a check payable to "Avery Food Services" and send it in a sealed envelope with the student's name on the outside. If you pay for more than one student in the same check, please put ALL STUDENTS' NAMES ON THE CHECK and on the Envelope.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

When severe weather creates hazardous conditions, the regular school schedule may be delayed or suspended to ensure students' safety. If you have provided a current phone number to the school, you will receive an automated phone call informing you of the status of school that day. Please let our office know if you aren't receiving these calls. Other options are listed below and should be informed of the current status of school by 6 am:

WEBSITE, FACEBOOK and INSTAGRAM

District website: www.averyschools.net/

Search @cranberrymiddleschool on FB; cms.wildcats on IG

TELEVISION

WBTV 3 Charlotte, WCYB 5 Bristol, WSOC 9 Charlotte, WJHL 11 Johnson City

SAFE SCHOOLS

All Avery County Schools students and adults have the right to learn and work in a safe school environment. Avery County Schools have policies to ensure that this occurs. Policies include: School Safety, Code of Civility, Student Behavior and Discipline, Harassment Defined, Sexual Harassment, Alcohol and Tobacco and Drug-free Workplace, along with others. All policies can be found on the Avery County Schools District Web Page under "School District". If you do not have access to the internet to view these policies, please contact us and we will be happy to assist you.

All Avery County Schools are Drug, Alcohol, Tobacco and Weapon free.

REPORT CARDS, GRADES, AND PROMOTIONS

Report Cards will be issued every nine (9) weeks or after 45 days of instruction. Concerning student promotion, the Teacher, Principal and Parent will make the final determination considering the State's Accountability Policy and the best interest of the student.

TESTING

Testing is a part of our system. It is important that your student stays focused and completes all assignments during the school year. It is also important that you encourage your student to do their best in all areas.

- Students in Grades 6-8 will participate in assessments in reading and math throughout the year.
- In May or June, all students in grades 6-8 will take the NC End-of-Grade Test.

HEALTH SCREENINGS

Health screenings provided at your child's school include vision, hearing, dental as well as height and weight. These screenings are not diagnostic. School health screenings provide a process that allows for the detection of health conditions that might negatively impact a child's learning. Parents/Guardians will be notified of any abnormal screening results. If you have any questions or wish for your child to not participate in any of these health screenings throughout the school year, please contact the school nurse."

CONTACT INFORMATION

Webpage: <https://www.averyschools.net/cranberry>

E-mail: jamiejohnson@averyschools.net

Facebook: search for @cranberrymiddleschool on FB

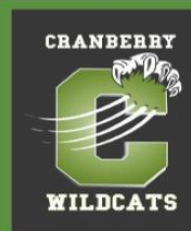
IG: search for cms.wildcats

Phone: (828) 733-2932

Fax: (828) 733-6863

CRANBERRY MIDDLE SCHOOL

SCHOOLWIDE P.A.W.S. MATRIX



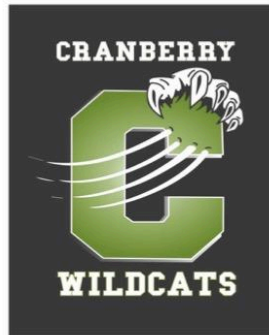
Practice Respect

Always Responsible

Work to Succeed

Stay Safe

	Practice Respect	Always Responsible	Work to Succeed	Stay Safe
ARRIVAL TO SCHOOL/ CLASS	Use kind words Maintain inside voice level at all times Enter classroom at teacher invitation	Turn off cell phones and store appropriately Leave No Trace	Be punctual and prepared to start class Use your time wisely	Stay in your assigned seat Keep body and belongings to self Ask permission before leaving classroom
WALK TIME	Keep hands & feet to self Use appropriate and kind language Follow adult instructions	Collect your belongings Request to leave gym if you need to use the restroom	Walk the entire time Make positive social interactions Have fun!	Go directly to gym/cafeteria upon arrival Move in one direction Walk at a reasonable pace
HALLWAY/ STAIRS	Transition quietly Maintain personal space Respect all CMS/FTE students, staff and visitors	Be efficient Leave No Trace	Walk with purpose and go directly to required destination/location	Walk on right side of hallways/stairwells Don't run, don't jump Lock your locker
RESTROOM	Be quick, clean, and quiet Allow for personal space	Use supplies wisely Leave No Trace	After restroom use, return directly to class	Observe limit of 5 students in bathrooms Report problems immediately to nearest adult
CAFETERIA	Keep hands & feet to self Thank cafeteria staff	Eat your own food Get all items before sitting Use appropriate voice level	Leave your area better than you found it	Ask staff members on duty for help Stay seated in assigned area
INTRAMURALS/ CELEBRATIONS	Include others Demonstrate good sportsmanship Use appropriate and kind language	Return equipment Be accountable for belongings Report issues immediately to nearest adult	Be a team player Encourage others Leave No Trace	Enter/Exit calmly Stay in assigned areas
ASSEMBLY	Be polite for presenters	Ask appropriate questions Leave No Trace	Watch for attention signal	Stay seated and at quiet level Hands to self, feet on floor
DISMISSAL	Be aware of your surroundings Respect personal space	Put cell phones away until you exit building Leave No Trace	Gather all needed materials Help others Walk with purpose	Don't go to car until called Keep body and belongings to self Wait for teacher to dismiss you
BUS	Greet bus driver and say Thank you as exiting	Maintain inside voice level always Use kind words with driver and others	Remain seated Look and listen to driver for directions	Follow posted rules Seat on Seat, Back on Back, Clear the Aisle



Cranberry Middle School
Home of the Wildcats

P.A.W.S.

Pactice Respect

Always Be Responsible

Work to Succeed

Stay Safe