

Atlanta Middle School Handbook



Atlanta Middle School

Preface

Welcome to Atlanta Middle School. The coming year offers many opportunities and challenges for each student. You are encouraged to take advantage of each opportunity that is offered. Get involved in all the worthwhile activities of the school. Do your part to make this school a good place to get an education.

As you strive to take full advantage of the school year, you may need some guidance to help you. With that in mind, this handbook was prepared for you.

In case of conflict between Board policy or the Student Code of Conduct and any provisions of student handbooks, the provisions of Board policy or the Student Code of Conduct that were most recently adopted by the Board are to be followed.

We strongly recommend that parents review the entire handbook with their children and keep it as a reference during the school year. If you or your child has questions about any of the material in this handbook, please contact a teacher, the counselor, or the principal. Also, please complete and return the parental acknowledgement and consent/opt out forms so that we have a record of your choices.

The faculty and administration extends to you best wishes for a very successful school year.

Parents Are Encouraged to Visit Our School

Conferences with teachers can best be set up, during the teacher planning period/conference period by calling 903-796-7928 and setting up the appointment.

ALL VISITORS MUST CHECK IN AT THE MAIN OFFICE UPON ARRIVAL FOR A CONFERENCE OR FOR ANY OTHER REASON. VISITORS MAY NOT COME ON ANY PART OF THE CAMPUS BEFORE CHECKING IN AT THE OFFICE.



AMS FIGHT SONG:

*We are the rabbits, yes we are,
We are here to win this game.
Though others try with all their might,
We won't give up without a fight.
Fight, fight, fight, fight, fight.*

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation, under God indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Honor the Texas Flag

"Honor the Texas flag: I pledge allegiance to thee, Texas, one state under God, one and indivisible."

Directory

Atlanta Middle School	903-796-7928
Atlanta Middle School Fax	903-796-7290
Atlanta Middle School West Office	EXT. 4000
Atlanta Middle School Band Hall	EXT. 4060
Atlanta Middle School Cafeteria	903-799-1007
Atlanta Superintendent of Schools	903-796-4194

Jay Wylie, Principal
Pam Boyce, Assistant Principal
Rebecca Geletka, Counselor
Sandy Horne, Librarian

Kara Delay, School Nurse
Connie Wall, Campus Secretary
Kim Striplin, Receptionist
Logan Puckett, Assistant Principal Secretary
Bobbie Wiley, Counselor Secretary

Atlanta Middle School General Information

Attendance

Regular school attendance is essential for the student to make the most of his or her education. To benefit from teacher- led activities, to build each day's learning on that of the previous day, to grow as an individual, and for exposure to the activities that make learning come alive students need to be in class every school day. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. **We agree with this Parent Connection quote: "Children can copy notes or make up an assignment, but they can never get back what's most important; then discussions, the questions, the explanations by the teacher and the thinking that makes learning come alive when they are absent."**

Absences

Your progress in school depends greatly on punctuality and regularity of attendance. Personal sickness, sickness or deaths in the family, emergencies or unusual causes (acceptable to the Principal) are the only acceptable reasons for absence. When parents are in doubt, they should contact the Principal before the absence occurs. If a student is absent for ten or more days or parts of days within a six month period in the same school year, or if a student is absent on three or more days or parts of days within a four week period the student's parent is subject to prosecution under the Compulsory Attendance Law. Even if absences are deemed excused, a student must attend school for at least 90% of the days class is offered. For a student to receive a perfect attendance award they must be in attendance from **bell to bell**. If a student is checked out during the day and does not return with an excused absence from the doctor/dentist, this will count as missing part of a day.

Excused/Unexcused Absences/Parent Notes

The principal or his/her designee shall determine if an absence is excused. If there is a doubt, the parent should check with the Principal before the absence occurs. **STUDENTS SHOULD NOT MISS MORE THAN 9 DAYS DURING A SEMESTER.** Any student not in attendance for at least 90% of the instructional days of the semester shall be referred to the attendance committee to determine whether or not credit for the year will be granted. Student may turn in their missed work three (3) days after returning to school. **PARENT NOTES SHOULD BE TURNED IN TO THE OFFICE UPON RETURN TO SCHOOL OR WITHIN THREE (3) DAYS AFTER THE STUDENT RETURNS TO SCHOOL.** (Parent notes will be accepted for 5 absences per semester)

Compulsory Attendance

In Texas, a child between the ages of 6 and 18, depending on when the child's birthday falls, is required to attend school unless otherwise exempted by law. School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law.

To receive credit in a class, a student must attend 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered cannot receive credit for the class unless the attendance committee finds that the absences are the result of extenuating circumstances.

The District accepts the following as extenuating circumstances for the purpose of granting credit for a class:

1. An excused absence based on personal sickness, sickness or death in the family, quarantine, weather or road conditions making travel dangerous, any other unusual cause acceptable to the Superintendent or Principal.
2. Days of suspension.
3. Participation in court proceedings or child abuse/neglect investigation.
4. A migrant student's late enrollment or early withdrawal.

5. Days missed as a runaway.
6. Completion of a competency-based program for at-risk students.
7. Late enrollment or early withdrawal of a student under Texas Youth Commission.
8. Teen parent absences to care for his or her child.
9. Participation in a substance abuse rehabilitation program.
10. Homelessness, as defined in federal law. If the attendance committee finds there are no extenuating circumstances for the absence or if the student does not meet the conditions set by the committee to earn or regain credit, the student will not receive credit for the class. If a petition for credit is denied, the student or parent may appeal the decision to the Board of Trustees by completing a written request to the Superintendent. A student absent for any reason is encouraged to make up specific assignments missed and/or to complete additional in-depth study assigned by the teacher to meet subject or course requirements.

Attendance Recovery Time

After a student misses 9 days in a semester, the student is afforded the opportunity to recover the lost time. The lost time will be provided during Afterschool or Saturday School Attendance Recovery. For a student to recover 1 day missed, they will need to attend 3 days of Afterschool Attendance Recovery or 1 day of Saturday Attendance Recovery. Attendance Recovery does not remove the absence but is presented to the attendance committee to help determine whether or not credit for the year will be granted. While attending Recovery time a student will be required to complete assignments given by instructional teacher. This time cannot be recovered simultaneously with Afterschool Detention or Saturday School.

Academic Awards Ceremony

The Atlanta Independent School District will honor student's grades 5-8 for academic excellence at a special ceremony at the end of the school year. Students qualifying for the ceremony and their parents will be recognized.

To qualify for the Academic Awards Ceremony, the students must qualify for the A Honor Roll for four of first five grading periods. Students who transfer to AMS will use their previous districts grades to determine eligibility.

Bicycles

Bicycles are to be parked upon arrival at school and are not to be used until the end of the school day.

Boy/Girl Relations

Inappropriate touching at school or school sponsored events will not be allowed. Such inappropriate touching includes but is not limited to kissing, long embraces, sitting in each other's laps or fondling. The Principal or Designee will have discretion to determine whether any touching is inappropriate.

Cafeteria Info/Prices

According to USDA guidelines sharing food is prohibited. **This includes students sharing food with each other and parents providing food for anyone other than their own children.**

Student Breakfast: \$1.85

Lunch: \$2.55

According to Child Nutrition Program guidelines, students qualifying for reduced price meals can expect to pay \$.30 for breakfast and \$.40 for lunch.

In accordance with Atlanta I.S.D. Food Service policy students are allowed to charge up to ten days for meals only to their lunch account without being in danger of being denied a meal. However, once the ten days limit for meals only has been reached, the student may be served an alternate meal until the charges have been paid. May 4th, 2018 will be the last day for student charges. If a student does not have money available after that date, they will be served an alternative meal.

Cell Phones

Although we respect the need for some students to have cell phones, their use during school hours is prohibited except before school, between classes and during lunch. During allowed time, students are not permitted to make or receive phone calls from their cell phone. All phones must be off and kept out of sight during class time, unless the teacher has allowed for educational value. The phone will be confiscated and returned after parent contact is made. A \$15 fee must be also paid for the second and subsequent offenses.

Cheerleading Qualifications

1. Must be a seventh or eighth grade student to serve as cheerleader.
2. Must have passed the proceeding semester as well as receiving acceptable citizenship markings as defined by the cheerleading constitution.
3. Must comply with UIL guidelines to remain eligible. If they fail the last six weeks of school they will be eligible for the fall semester provided they meet the credit for each Grade level.
4. Must attend cheerleader camp and obtain required uniforms for cheerleaders. Must participate in fund raising activities.
5. Must be able to give two afternoons per week and any other necessary time to practice for cheers, prepare programs and decorate the gym during football season.
6. Practice for summer will be scheduled by the sponsor. Excused absences are at the discretion of the sponsors.
7. Must attend Atlanta Middle School snapshot day for STAAR proceeding the semester of tryouts.
8. Any other questions related to cheerleader qualifications should be directed to the cheerleader constitution.

Certificate Ceremony

8th graders will participate in a certificate ceremony to recognize their attendance in eighth grade. The ceremony does not constitute completion of requirements to promote to the ninth grade. The ceremony tentatively will take place the Thursday before the Atlanta High School graduation. Students are expected to attend in dressy casual attire. Campus administrators will have the final decision if the clothes meet expectations to allow students to participate. If a student or parent is uncertain, please meet with a campus administrator. Students must attend the practice held on the day of the event in order to participate. Students on the DAEP campus will not participate in the ceremony. All fines must be paid prior to the ceremony in order to participate.

Closed Campus

We operate under a closed campus policy. Students must stay on the school grounds from the time they arrive, even if the first period has not yet started, until dismissal or until they are picked up by the bus or parent. Students are not permitted to drive vehicles to school. A student will not be released from school at times other than regular dismissal hours except with the principal's permission or according to the campus sign-out procedures. The teacher will determine that permission has been granted before allowing the student to leave.

Communication with Students During the Day

School telephones may be used by students only in case of emergency as determined by the principal or secretary. Except in the case of emergency, classes will not be interrupted to deliver messages to students or to call them to the telephone. **Any time your child's routine way of getting home is changed, please inform him or her before school if at all possible or call the office before 2:00 p.m.**

Conduct

Students will receive a conduct mark each 6 weeks. The students will be assigned a conduct for each class. Student earning a U will not be eligible for the A or A/B honor roll.

- Extemporary 0-3
- Satisfactory 4-7
- Needs Improvement 8-11
- Unsatisfactory 12+

Counseling

Counseling service is available to all students. Many problems concerning both school and one's personal life can be helped by counseling with a competent person. The school counselor or your teacher will be happy to try to help you with these problems. Appointments can be made by requesting a pass from your teacher, the office personnel, or the counselor. In the case of custody disputes please make sure the counselor and school receives appropriate court documentation.

End of the Year Trips

To be eligible to attend the end of the year trip, students must not have been assigned to DAEP or assigned more than 3 placements in ISS. Students may also not have accumulated more than 20 tardies on the year.

Flower/Gift Deliveries

Any deliveries to students made to campus will be accompanied with a \$1 fee.

Food/Drink

No food will be allowed in the classrooms or hallways. Drinks will be allowed in the classroom or hallways only in a clear plastic twist top container. Water is allowed in a clear twist top bottle/container.

Forgery, Fraud and Concealment

A student who forges the signature of another person, misrepresents himself or herself, or falsifies information presented to school officials to identify themselves to school employees will be subject to disciplinary action.

Grading System Grades 5-8

Report Card Grades 5-8

Teachers will have a minimum of two grades per week. There will be a minimum of three major grades per six weeks. Grades should be updated weekly by Monday mornings at 8:00 A.M. In the event a six weeks grading period is shortened due to unexpected school closure, the amount of major grades may be reduced at the principal's determination.

Report card grades are determined as follows:

Daily Grades 50%

Major Grades 50%

Daily grades may consist of the following:

- Daily work
- Homework assignments
- Quizzes
- Participation
- Performance assessments

Major grades may consist of the following:

- Formal assessments
- Projects
- Term papers
- Extended assessments
- Performance assessments

Grade Reporting Schedule

	1st 6-Wks (6)	2nd 6-Wks (5)	3rd 6-Wks (5 ½)	4th 6-Wks (7)	5th 6-Wks (6)	6th 6-Wks (6)
Six Weeks Begins	8-21-17	10-2-17	11-6-17	1-8-18	2-26-18	4-16-18
End of 3 weeks	9-8-17	10-20-17	11-29-17	1-26-18	3-16-18	4-27-18
Send Progress Report	9-13-17	10-25-17	12-6-17	1-31-18	3-21-18	5-2-18
End of 6 weeks	9-29-17	11-3-17	12-20-17	2-23-18	4-6-18	5-25-18
Send Report Card	10-4-17	11-8-17	1-10-18	2-28-18	4-18-18	5-25-18
A & A/B Honor Reception	10-5-17	11-10-17	1-12-18	3-2-18	4-20-18	5-25-18

Class Rank/ Honor Graduates

The grade point system used at AMS was approved by the A.I.S.D. Board of Trustees and is used at Atlanta Middle School to determine the selection of the top two AMS students in each grade level. The top two students will be the students with the highest grade point averages. To be eligible as an eighth grade student, the student must have been enrolled in Atlanta Middle School for his/her entire 7th and 8th grade years. He/she must be enrolled and attending class by the last day of the first six weeks of his/her 7th grade year to be eligible. Any student making a change in class assignment will be given the grade weight of the class in which he/she was enrolled at the end of the semester. The top two students will be determined at the end of the fifth six weeks. In case of a tie, students will share the honor.

The standing of the top two students in fifth, sixth and seventh grades will be determined by their cumulative grade averages from the start of the current school year. For a student to be eligible for this honor, they must be enrolled and attending class before the first third-week progress report of the current school year. The top two students will be determined at the end of the fifth six weeks. In case of a tie, students will share the honor.

Class rank for seniors shall be based on a weighted grade point average using semester grades for all courses offered for high school credit. These semester grades shall be converted to grade points according to the District's weighted grade point scale. Policy EIC (local)

Grade average chart is used in figuring class ranking and 8th grade honors. Honors courses will receive honor grade points, regular courses will receive regular grade points, basic courses will receive basic grade points. These will be figured on all courses in middle school excluding band and athletics. Points are never added to grades for report cards.

		GRADE AVERAGING CHART					
		HONOR COURSES		REGULAR COURSES		BASIC COURSES	
		Grade	Grade Points	Grade	Grade Points	Grade	Grade
Points							
	xx		06.0	xx	05.0	xx	04.0
	99		05.9	99	04.9	99	03.9
	98		05.8	98	04.8	98	03.8
	97		05.7	97	04.7	97	03.7
	96		05.6	96	04.6	96	03.6
	95		05.5	95	04.5	95	03.5
	94		05.4	94	04.4	94	03.4
	93		05.3	93	04.3	93	03.3
	92		05.2	92	04.2	92	03.2
	91		05.1	91	04.1	91	03.1
	90		05.0	90	04.0	90	03.0
	89		04.9	89	03.9	89	02.9
	88		04.8	88	03.8	88	2.8
	87		04.7	87	03.7	87	02.7
	86		04.6	86	03.6	86	02.6
	85		04.5	85	03.5	85	02.5
	84		04.4	84	03.4	84	02.4
	83		04.3	83	03.3	83	02.3
	82		04.2	82	03.2	82	02.2
	81		04.1	81	03.1	81	02.1
	80		04.0	80	03.0	80	02.0
	79		03.9	79	02.9	79	01.9
	78		03.8	78	02.8	78	01.8
	77		03.7	77	02.7	77	01.7
	76		03.6	76	02.6	76	01.6
	75		03.5	75	02.5	75	01.5
	74		03.4	74	02.4	74	01.4
	73		03.3	73	02.3	73	01.3
	72		03.2	72	02.2	72	01.2
	71		03.1	71	02.1	71	01.1
	70		03.0	70	02.0	70	01.0

Retesting Procedure

Reteach

Reteach is defined as a different presentation of content, usually to provide an additional opportunity for a students' mastery of content. Re-teaching is an integral part of the lesson cycle and may occur in different modalities. Some re-teach opportunities include:

- During direct teach while the teacher checks for understanding
- During guided practice while the teacher monitors progress
- During independent practice as students work individually on in a cooperative learning group
- Small group instruction
- Individual or group tutorials
- In an accelerated class
- As a re-assessment

Retesting Guidelines

A student who earns below a 70 on a test, will be given the opportunity to retest after participation in the re-teaching process within a reasonable amount of time. A student who refuses to participate in an initial

testing administration will be denied retesting opportunities. Retesting is designed for those students who have yet to master the material covered/presented.

- Students will be allowed 1 retest per subject area per six weeks grading period
- Student are responsible for initiating retest opportunities
- Teachers are required to prescribe a reasonable amount of work that must be completed prior to the student being able to take a retest: attend a tutoring session, complete a review, accelerated instruction, etc.
- Retest shall be conducted at a time designated by the teacher: during regular class period, before/after school, etc.
- Unless otherwise approved by the teacher, retests shall be completed within 7 calendar days from the time the student is notified of the failing grade
- No retest will be given for semester finals/examination.
- High School Advanced Placement, Dual Credit, and 8th Grade Algebra I are not eligible for retest opportunities
- The new grade recorded will be the higher of the two tests (initial test and retest) up to a maximum of 70

If a majority of the students tested (50% or higher) do not make a 70 or higher on a major test, the teacher will conclude that either the test construction was faulty or an error in judgment concerning students' readiness was made. In such cases, the teacher will reteach and retest the entire cohort without a grade penalty.

When students receive a failing major grade for a product (writing assignments, research papers, lab practical, and projects), it is not necessary to reteach and retest.

Hall Procedures

No student may be in the halls during class time without a pass. The following rules must be observed by all in order to assure and maintain proper order and safety.

1. Students are allowed four minutes to travel between their classes.
2. There is to be no congregating in the halls or restrooms.
3. There is to be no loud noises or running in the halls.
4. Students must clear the buildings within 15 minutes at the close of each day, unless they are with a teacher.
5. For your protection, while you are pursuing your education in your school, we are videotaping from a remote location in the common areas.

Tardy Policy

A student is tardy when they are not in the classroom when the bell rings. Excessive tardies shall be handled in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct Discipline Grid following school procedure. Tardies are cumulative, not individual per class. Tardies will start over each semester.

Tardy Consequences

1,2	Warnings
3,4, 5, 6	Lunch Detention
7,8,9,10	After School Detention
11,12,13,14	Saturday School
15+	ISS 1 day and Parent Conference

Atlanta Middle School Advanced Placement Policy

For Grades 5, 6, 7 and 8

Selection Process

Advanced courses offered in 6th, 7th and 8th will use the following criteria: 80% or above on the individual course averages for the subject they are requesting, attendance, and behavior to evaluate student placement into advanced courses. Algebra I will also require students to take an algebra aptitude test provided by the school to see the students readiness for the course.

If a student does not qualify for an advanced class, his/her parent may request a conference to discuss placement with the principal, the counselor, and/or the subject department chair. If the student is placed in the course, they will start the class on probation.

Maintenance Criteria- 5th and 6th Grade, 7th and 8th

Every three weeks, all advanced placement students' averages will be checked. If a student has an average below 80% in any advanced class, the following actions will be taken:

1. The 1st time a student's grade is below the required average, a note will be sent home as a warning, and the student will be placed on probation.
2. During the probation period a student's grade is below the required average; the student may be removed from the advanced course and placed in a regular class.

Maintenance Criteria- 7th and 8th Grade

Every three weeks, all advanced placement students' averages will be checked. If a student has an average below 80% in any advanced class, the following actions will be taken:

1. The 1st time a student's grade is below the required average, a note will be sent home as a warning, and the student will be placed on probation.
2. The 2nd time a student's grade is below the required average; the student may be removed from the advanced course and placed in a regular class.

Notes:

- The three times do not have to be in consecutive three-week periods.
- If a student FAILS a six-week grading period, he/she will automatically be removed from the advanced class.
- No student will be removed from an advanced class during the 6th six-weeks grading period.

Physical Education

Physical Education in 5th, 6th, 7th grades is required unless excused by a written request of the family physician. An ARD or 504 Committee will make considerations for exemption. Athletics and Band can substitute for Physical Education in the 7th and 8th grade.

Fees

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided without charge to students. Students are expected to provide their own supplies of pens, pencils, papers, erasers, and notebooks, and may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits.

Check Policy

In the event that a check written to any Atlanta ISD campus, club or organization is returned unpaid by your bank, Atlanta ISD or its agent will redeposit your check electronically. Additionally, you understand and agree that we may electronically collect a returned check fee of \$30.00 plus applicable sales tax. The use of a check for payment is your ACKNOWLEDGEMENT and ACCEPTANCE of this policy and its terms.

Honors

1. Each six weeks and each semester, students making the “A” Honor Roll or the “A-B” Honor Roll will be recognized. In order for a student to qualify for the “A” Honor Roll, he/she must make all “A’s”. In order for a student to qualify for the “A-B” Honor Roll, he/she must make only “A’s” and “B’s” and must have at least one “A.” An Unsatisfactory in conduct will disqualify a student for honor roll. Grades from band, P.E. and athletics will be excluded.
2. The ten-point addition for advanced classes will only apply to Honor Roll and Academic Awards Ceremony. This does not apply to UIL eligibility.
3. Special populations are included on honor rolls based on individual achievement levels, mastery of goals, and conduct.
4. Each 6 weeks students who have not been absent will be recognized with a certificate of attendance.

8th Grade National Junior Honor Society

All students who have an overall average of 90 or above are eligible to be chosen for the National Junior Honor Society. Eligible students are judged by a committee of teachers on the basis of citizenship, service to community, and leadership. Students who meet all standards are chosen for the National Honor Society. Students wishing to qualify for the National Junior Honor Society should request and turn in an application to sponsor.

Insurance

At the beginning of the school year, the District will make available to students and parents a low-cost student accident insurance program. Parents must file on personal insurance policies before filing on the student accident insurance. Claim forms may be obtained in the Principal’s office. The parent will be responsible for sending in premiums and filing claims. **The District shall not be responsible for costs of treating injury.** All students in grades K-12 are covered for UIL activities and field trips. School insurance is secondary to any personal insurance that the family member may have.

Textbooks

It should be remembered that the textbooks are not personal or private property. They are the property of the State. Students with damaged books must pay a fine. All books that are lost, stolen, or damaged must be paid for at the quoted price. A student may get a second book by paying for the one lost or damaged. If the student later finds the lost or stolen book, the money will be refunded.

Promotion and Retention

In grades 5 through 8 promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 in the core subject areas – reading, and/or English language arts, math, social studies and science. In addition, students must make at least a 70 in reading and math.

Students in grades 5 and 8 are required to pass the state assessment in all areas that are tested in order to promote, according to the state’s Student Success Initiative standards. These students have two more opportunities to retest before a grade placement committee convenes to consider promotion or retention.

Students in middle school or beyond who did not perform satisfactorily on a state-mandated assessment or is determined by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year following enrollment in grade 9 will be placed on a Personal Graduation Plan (PGP). The PGP will be designed and implemented by the counselor, teacher or other staff member designated by the principal. The plan will, among other items, identify the student’s educational goals, address the parent’s educational expectations for the student, and outline an intensive instruction program for the student. For a student receiving special education services, the student’s IEP may serve as the student’s PGP and would therefore be developed by the student’s ARD committee.