

Forest Middle School

Family Handbook
2008-2009



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August 25, 2008

Dear Parents and Students:

Welcome to the 2008-2009 school year! Preparing for this school year, through a careful review of *Forest Middle School's Family Handbook*, will provide an important foundation for academic success. This handbook has been designed to provide the information needed regarding policies and procedures for the 2008-2009 school year. I encourage you and your child to discuss and review the information included.

At Forest Middle School, we believe your child can and will succeed in middle school and beyond. Our mission is to provide the resources, tools, and information needed to help each student achieve that academic success. Our faculty and staff are dedicated to this mission and look forward to working with you to achieve success.

If you have any questions regarding this handbook, please feel free to contact us. We are here to assist you and your child in making important educational decisions. By working together, we can ensure that your child is prepared to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Sincerely,

Michelle Morgan
Principal

INTRODUCTION

FOREWORD

This handbook contains important information about Forest Middle School (FMS). Each family is expected to become familiar with the contents. Please call your child's teacher or the school administration if you have any questions.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Bedford County Public Schools (BCPS) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in its programs, activities, or employment practices, as required by Title IX, Section 504. The person responsible for coordination of the School Division efforts to meet its obligations under Title IX, Section 504 and their implementing regulations is Dr. James Blevins, Division Superintendent, PO Box 748, Bedford, VA 24523, (540) 586-1045, Ext. 258.

SCHOOL HISTORY

Forest Middle School opened its doors in 1989 in the lower level of Jefferson Forest High School. It served 200 seventh and eighth graders from four elementary schools: Forest, Otter River, Boonsboro and New London Academy. During the next school year, enrollment topped 800 students, and a separate middle school facility was built.

The new facility opened in September 1994, with a total of 797 students in grades five, six, and seven. The enrollment continued to grow, reaching 940 students in the 1999-2000 school year. The 2000-01 school year brought a fifth elementary school, Thomas Jefferson, into the attendance zone allowing all 5th graders to return to the elementary schools. Forest Middle School then became a 6th, 7th, and 8th grade middle school in the 2000-01 school year, with approximately 90 faculty and staff members and over 970 students. Currently our enrollment is 1021 students.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Bedford County School System is to ensure that all children of school age in Bedford County receive the highest quality education appropriate to their individual needs and abilities.

PHILOSOPHY

Forest Middle School strives to successfully meet the educational challenges presented by a technologically advanced society while providing a safe, secure, and enjoyable learning environment for all students. We take seriously the responsibility of helping shape the leaders of tomorrow. The privilege of working with the students in the Forest community helps us grow as professionals and provides us with a great sense of accomplishment. Even though we are a big school, we are made up of individuals; individuals working together for a common goal – helping each individual student be the best he or she can possibly be.

GOALS

Our goals at Forest Middle School are to:

- Provide students with a strong instructional program with an emphasis on basic skills and opportunities to use these skills through oral and written communication and through the use of technological support systems.
- Acknowledge and accommodate the unique characteristics of young adolescents.
- Enhance the development of a positive self-concept in students through achievement in academics along with opportunities to develop emotionally, socially, and physically.

- Encourage students to display characteristics of self-direction and responsibility in their community.
- Teach each student decision-making and problem-solving skills and provide opportunities to develop these skills in a safe and non-threatening learning environment.
- Build a meaningful bond between home and school, thus providing students with the best possible partnership for their achievement and success.
- Establish Forest Middle School as a total learning community where students, teachers, administration, staff, and parents learn and grow together.



INSTRUCTIONAL INFORMATION

Please be sure to read the Bedford County Program of Studies for specific information regarding course preparation leading to graduation. The following is general information pertaining to Forest Middle School.

ACTIVITIES and ATHLETICS

Academic competitions are offered to students throughout the year, such as Math Counts, Geography Bee, Spelling Bee, Science Fair, etc. Students are encouraged to share their talents and good ideas through these local, state, and national contests. The PTA sponsors the Reflections Contest for visual arts, literature, photography, and music. All students are encouraged to enter the competition(s) of their choice.

Seventh and eighth grade students are eligible to participate in Jefferson Forest High School (JFHS) B-team sports programs. Participation in interscholastic competition is strictly governed by regulations of the Virginia High School League (V.H.S.L.). The JFHS Athletic Director can supply a complete list of rules pertaining to individual eligibility for a particular sports program. Generally, the following requirements must be met:

- A student must pass five (5) courses in which he/she is enrolled each semester to participate in extracurricular activities. A student must also satisfactorily complete five (5) courses in which he/she is enrolled on a semester and yearly basis.
- An annual completed "Virginia High School League Physical" form is a requirement for participation in all JFHS athletic events. This includes cheerleading and all other athletic teams, as well as all off-season strength and conditioning programs. A physical form can be picked up in the main office. According to V.H.S.L. policy, the physical can only be administered by persons licensed to practice medicine, osteopathy, or a licensed nurse practitioner. Valid forms for the 2008-2009 school year may be dated May 1, 2008.
- Late arrivals or early dismissals will jeopardize the student's participation in practice or contests on that day unless prearranged by the principal. Four (4) periods of class attendance will be required for participation on each day of a game.

At the discretion of the principal, students may be prohibited from participating in athletic events due to disciplinary problems in school.

Students who have late practices or games after school must go home by their usual transportation and then be transported back to school for the practice or game by a parent. **Students may not remain unsupervised on school property after school hours for any reason.**

ASSEMBLIES and SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Assemblies and special activities, such as guest speakers, field trips, and planned special events to correlate with a unit of study are part of the instructional program. Students are expected to participate and exhibit the same behavior as in the regular instructional setting. If a student opts out of a field trip or special event, the teachers will provide alternate assignments. Missing school on a field trip day is considered an unexcused absence unless the absence is due to an illness or another excusable reason. No child will be denied access to any field trip or special event because of the family's inability to pay any related costs. **No refunds will be made for field trips or special events two (2) weeks prior to or after the event date**, because fees for the trip or event have been paid and /or buses have been chartered.

CHARACTER COUNTS PROGRAM

The Commonwealth of Virginia requires all school divisions to provide a character education program for its students. The Bedford County Public Schools Character Education program contains "6 pillars of character". They are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

These character qualities are defined, discussed, and emphasized by all faculty and staff throughout the school year under the direction of the Guidance Department.

FAMILY LIFE PROGRAM

Bedford County Public Schools implemented the “Family Life Curriculum” in 1989. The State Board of Education developed the standards of learning and curriculum guidelines for a comprehensive, sequential family life education curriculum in grades K through 12. These curriculum guidelines include instruction as appropriate for the age of the student in family living and community relationships, abstinence education, the value of postponing sexual activity, the benefits of adoption as a positive choice in the event of an unwanted pregnancy, human sexuality, human reproduction, steps to take to avoid sexual assault, and the availability of counseling and legal resources. In the event of a sexual assault, the importance of immediate medical attention and advice must be addressed. The requirements of the law and the etiology, prevention, and effects of sexually transmitted diseases with individuals involved must also be stated.

“Abstinence education” means an educational or motivational component which has as its exclusive purpose teaching the social, psychological, and health gains to be realized by teenagers abstaining from sexual activity before marriage.

Family Life Education (FLE) instruction is designed to promote parental involvement, foster positive self concepts and provide mechanisms for coping with peer pressure and the stresses of modern living according to the students’ developmental stages and abilities.

Every parent or guardian has the right to review the complete family life curricula, including all supplemental materials used in any family life education program. A complete copy of all printed materials and a description of all audio-visual materials will be kept in the school library or office and made available for review to any parent or guardian during school office hours. The audio-visual materials will be made available to parents for review, upon request, on the same basis as printed materials are made available.

An opt-out procedure is provided to ensure communication with the parent or guardian for permission to excuse the student from all or part of the sensitive content lessons. Parents are encouraged to contact the Family Life teacher and review the lesson plans at each grade level of the FLE curriculum before exercising the opt-out procedure.

Parents may exercise the opt-out procedure for any of the FLE sensitive content lessons by returning the opt-out form to the school *at least five days prior to the teaching of the opted-out lesson*. Information letters about the program including opt-out procedures will be sent home two weeks before the instruction begins.

Students who are opted out will be offered alternate assignments that relate to the health curriculum and health SOL for the appropriate grade level.

GRADING and REPORTING TO PARENTS

Classroom teachers are responsible for recording each student’s grades and reporting these to parents. These reports include both academic achievement and conduct. Report cards are sent home after each **nine** weeks grading period. In addition to report cards, each week, students will bring home a collection of class work in the Tuesday Folder for parents to review. All students will receive interim progress reports in the four core subjects of English, math, science, and history after the **fourth** week of each grading period. Students who are performing below a “C” average will receive a second interim progress report at the end of the **seventh** week. **All interim progress reports are to be signed and returned to each individual teacher.** Related arts and elective classes will only send an interim if the student is earning a “D” or “F”.

Academic recognition is given through two Honor Rolls – an all “A” or “AB” Honor Roll with no grade below a “B”. In addition, the student’s citizenship grade **may not** be unsatisfactory in order to receive this recognition.

GUIDANCE PROGRAM

The guidance program offers instruction specific to student needs such as decision-making, problem-solving skills, career choices, study skills, and drug and alcohol abuse. The school counselors are available to talk with students and parents as needed. Parents and guardians are invited to call the school office to speak with one of the school counselors.

Each student is assigned to a particular counselor by the following method:

- Ms. Gilley Students in the 8th grade
- Ms. Waldmann Students in the 7th grade
- Mrs. Becker Students in the 6th grade

HOMEWORK

Homework is an important part of the instructional program. Students will have homework almost every night. Homework can be in many forms: written, reading, projects, etc., and is designed to give the student an opportunity to practice and use a skill that he/she is learning. It is the student's responsibility to do homework and make up the work when he/she is absent.

We encourage students to select a "study buddy" in each class. When a student is absent, the "study buddy" will get the homework assignments and the "buddies" can contact each other. Due to the high volume of daily requests we receive for homework assignments, we ask that parents call the school office to receive homework information only when the absence is more than two (2) days. The office must receive requests for assignments by 9:00 A.M. in order to have the materials available by 3:45 P.M. the same day. Teachers post weekly lesson plans and assignments on www.schoolnotes.com.

LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER

The Library Media Center (LMC) is integral to and supportive of our school's curriculum. It also serves as an extension of the classroom. The Library Media Center is a place where students may explore classroom subjects that interest them. They may expand their imaginations, delve into areas of personal interest, and develop the ability to think clearly, critically, and creatively about the resources they have chosen. In addition, the Library Media Center provides a setting where students develop the research and decision-making skills they will use to further their education as adults. They learn to locate, analyze, evaluate, interpret, and communicate information and ideas. The Library Media Center features traditional resources such as books and magazines, as well as technologies, such as CD-ROMs, the electronic catalog, and circulation systems. Books may be checked out for two weeks and renewed as needed. Magazines and reference materials may be checked out on an overnight reserve.

ONLINE HOMEWORK RESOURCES

Forest Middle School and/or Bedford County Public Schools subscribe to several online databases for students to access at home. These homework resources provide students reliable information to search when completing homework assignments, writing research papers, etc. The listing below is not all-inclusive. These and new resources will regularly be added to the Forest Middle School website for your child to access.

Virginia Schools –

Infopowering the Commonwealth

URL: http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itweb/va_s_010_1211

Password: schools

Virginia View

URL: www.vaview.vt.edu

World Book Online

URL: <http://worldbookonline.com>

User Name: bcswbo

Password: Bedford

Bedford County Public Library Website

URL: <http://www.library.bedford.va.us>

Select "Information Gateway"

Select a database

URL: www.vaview.vt.edu

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parent contacts will be made throughout the school year. At least two (2) conferences with parents are scheduled during the school year to share information concerning a student's progress and to plan for a student's program. Parents may request a conference at any time to meet with teachers to discuss their child's progress or concerns. Please contact your child's teacher to schedule a conference as needed. Teachers are not able to meet with parents while students are under their supervision. Parents are asked to call or e-mail to make an appointment to speak with teachers. It is the policy of FMS to respond to parent phone calls and/or e-mails within 24 hours.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The physical education program is designed to promote overall health and fitness through a variety of exercises and sports. Students are encouraged to progress at their own ability levels. Each student is required to wear athletic shoes and shorts or long pants for instruction. Nonparticipation will adversely affect a student's grade. Grades are based on effort, participation, cooperation, and an awareness of the importance of physical fitness. Generally, students who are physically fit also have higher achievement in other areas of their life.

Each student will participate in state required physical fitness testing in October and May. Students who have medical reasons not to participate are to provide their instructor with a physician's excuse or a note from a parent.

STUDY SKILLS

How to Be a Successful Student:

1. Attitude is important. Think positively; work independently; seek help when you have explored all your resources.
2. Learning requires concentration. Keep your mind on your work.
3. At home, have a definite, well-lit place to study.
4. If the assignment is a long-term project, do a little of it each day. It will be easier and you will do a better job.
5. Keep an assignment notebook. It is required. Write your assignments in it each day. Check them off as you complete them.

How to Take a Test:

1. Prepare before the test. Study a little each day. Don't wait until the night before.
2. During the test, relax and forget other people around you.
3. Read the directions carefully and then follow the directions completely.
4. Read the whole test first to see what is asked and to know how to spend your time.
5. Think before you write.
6. Read over your paper carefully after you have finished.

How Parents Can Help:

1. Make sure your child has a place to study and a regular time to study.
2. Provide your child with the needed supplies, including an assignment notebook.
3. Keep close communication, first with your child, and then with the teachers.
4. Visit the school. Have lunch with your child. Attend parent-teacher conferences. Join and attend PTA meetings.
5. Make your child's success in school the number one family priority. Academics must take precedence over sports, dance, and other extra activities.

TESTING PROGRAMS

Spring Testing Program

	6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade
6 th Grade Reading SOL	*		
6 th Grade Math SOL	*		
U.S. History 1877 to Present SOL	*		
6 th Grade Writing Predictor BCPS	*		
7 th Grade Reading SOL		*	
7 th Grade Math SOL		*	
Civics/Economics SOL		*	
7 th Grade Writing Predictor BCPS		*	
8 th Grade Reading SOL			*
8 th Grade Writing SOL			*
8 th Grade Math SOL		Selected Students	Selected Students
8 th Grade Science SOL		Selected Students	Selected Students
*** World History Part 1 SOL			*
*** Algebra 1 SOL			Selected Students
*** Earth Science SOL			Selected Students
*** Foreign Language SOL			Selected Students

*** Students passing End of Course tests earn verified high school credits. Refer to the [Bedford County Program of Studies](#) for an explanation of verified credits and other high school graduation requirements.

TEXTBOOKS

Each student is provided with the textbooks needed for all classes **at no charge to keep at home for the duration of the school year**. Students are responsible for maintaining the condition of the book. Students who lose their books should check the lost and found bins by the cafeteria and/or see someone in the office. If students fail to find their lost book in a reasonable amount of time, they will be charged a fee for the replacement cost. Students who damage a book will also be charged for the repair or replacement cost. Students are requested to provide a non-adhesive book cover for all books issued.

Students are expected to write their names clearly in the front of each of their textbooks at the beginning of the year. This will assist everyone in locating and returning misplaced textbooks. Any student that is found to be in possession of another student's textbooks may be subject to disciplinary action.

GENERAL INFORMATION

BREAKFAST/LUNCH PROGRAM

Breakfast and lunch are served each day in the school cafeteria. Students must report to the gym before going to breakfast.

Students are expected to maintain good order, display good manners, and keep the cafeteria clean for those who follow. Students are responsible to clean all trash off the table and off the floor before leaving the cafeteria. Teachers on lunch duty will dismiss a couple of tables at a time. Students are not to be dismissed until the teacher on duty directs them. Students are to sit in their assigned location. Students sit with the class with whom they come to lunch.

No food or drink may be taken out of the cafeteria following breakfast or lunch.

Student Breakfast	\$1.00
Reduced Breakfast Price	\$0.30
Student Lunch	\$2.00
Reduced Lunch Price	\$0.40
Ice Cream	\$0.60

Juice varies from	\$0.40 to \$0.50
Milk (extra/separate)	\$0.50
Adult Breakfast	\$1.25
Adult Lunch	\$2.25
At lunchtime, a' la Carte items are available.	

Cafeteria meals may be paid by the week, month, or year with a check made payable to Forest Middle School or in cash. Students may not charge breakfast. A \$10.00 service fee will be charged for all checks returned to the School Nutrition Program due to insufficient funds. If a check is returned to the School Nutrition Program, the school cafeteria will not accept any more checks as a form of payment for the child's lunch account until payment has been made on the returned check. If the School Nutrition Program receives three returned checks from the same person, the school cafeteria will not accept any more checks from that person. All future payments to the school lunch accounts will have to be paid either in cash or money order.

Students who wish to bring lunch from home may not have glass containers. Carbonated soft drinks are not permitted at lunch. Students are not permitted to use the vending machines during breakfast and lunch. Drink and snack machines are only available for use after school. No food or drinks may be consumed in the gym.

Students who are allergic to certain foods should have a physician's note on file in the school's clinic. The cafeteria manager and parents may work together to substitute food items. If a student is allergic to milk, juice will be substituted at no extra charge provided a physician's note is on file.

More information about the BCPS Nutrition Program, as well as links to the Café' Prepay (an internet-based service where you can pay for your child's breakfast and lunch purchases using your Visa, MasterCard, Discover Card or American Express Card), may be found at http://www.bedford.k12.va.us/menus/school_nutrition.htm.

CHARGING CAFETERIA ITEMS

The School Nutrition Program is totally self-supporting and relies on the funds generated each day in the school cafeteria. In an effort to assist with uncollected lunch charges, the school nutrition program does have a meal charge policy. Middle school students are allowed to charge up to \$6.00, which is the equivalent of three lunches. Students are not allowed to charge extra items such as bottled water or ice cream, only lunch meals.

If a student comes to the cafeteria to eat lunch and has reached their charge limit, cafeteria staff will offer the student a peanut butter & jelly or cheese sandwich and milk for lunch. This will ensure that the student does receive something to eat and does not go hungry. When parents send in money for their child's account, if the child has any charges on the account, those charges will be satisfied first and the remainder of the money will be added to the child's account. It is imperative that parents keep track of their children's account balance and keep it in good standing.

Contact the school cafeteria manager or Karen Carter, School Nutrition Supervisor at (540) 586-1045 ext. 224 with any concerns.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT and SCHOOL SAFETY

Forest Middle School is committed to providing a safe and secure learning and working environment for all students and staff. To fulfill that commitment, a comprehensive school safety and crisis management plan has been developed to comply with and enforce state and federal laws, rules, and regulations. The plan includes preventive measures and procedures to handle emergency situations that include severe weather and traumatic or catastrophic events. The “Forest Middle School Crisis Plan” includes periodic drills to instruct students on safe and proper procedures in the event of an emergency. An annual audit of the school facility and programs is conducted to recommend updates to the school safety and crisis management plan.

Evacuation Drills

Evacuation drills are held weekly during the first month of school and monthly thereafter. All personnel and students will leave the building in an orderly and quiet manner. Evacuation maps are posted at each classroom doorway. Students are to leave the building immediately by the nearest exit, depending on their location at the time of the evacuation notice. If a drill occurs at a transition time, students should immediately go outside by the nearest exit and line up with their home-base teacher on the soccer field. Cars should not enter the parking lots when students are evacuating the building.

Lockdown Drills

The Lockdown plan will be utilized when appropriate, such as when an intruder may be in the building or on the property, and the building needs to be secured with the students and staff inside. This plan will be initiated by a message stating that a “lockdown” is in effect. Specific information will be given over the intercom as needed.

Weather-related Drills

- An announcement regarding the Weather-related Drill will be made via the intercom.
- Following the announcement, students and staff should move immediately to their pre-determined locations. Students should sit facing away from exterior glass with their heads lowered and faces protected.
- Classroom window blinds should be lowered and closed.
- Classroom doors should be closed.
- Classroom lights should be turned off (unless you are in a location with no exterior windows and the room would be dark otherwise).
- Teachers should take class attendance and immediately report any missing students to the office via the intercom.
- Teachers should have something “calming” available to read to their students if needed.
- An announcement concluding the drill will be made via the intercom.
- Resume the regular schedule following the announcement concluding the drill.

EIGHTH GRADE COMMENCEMENT

Forest Middle School will sponsor an 8th grade commencement program at the end of the school year. Due to the size of the 8th grade class and the limited seating available, each student will be allowed two (2) adult guests at the commencement. Student dress for the occasion is semi-formal:

- Boys – collared shirt, slacks (no jeans), shoes
- Girls – dress or dress pants and blouse, shoes.

FEES

- Textbooks: Book fees will not be charged to any student.
- Food: There is a charge for breakfast and lunch.
- Special Events: There may be costs associated with field trips or special events. If a

parent is not able to pay an instructional activity cost, the parent should contact the child's home-base teacher or an administrator. No child will be kept from participating in a special event due to his/her inability to pay a fee. **No refunds can be made for field trips or special events two (2) weeks prior to or after the event date**, because fees have been paid and /or buses have been chartered.

- Insurance: Both accident and dental insurances are available. Students will receive this information during the first week of school.

PICTURES and YEARBOOKS

Each year in the fall, individual student pictures will be made for the student's scholastic record and the yearbook. Parents will have an opportunity to buy these pictures in a variety of packages. This is a fund-raiser for the school. Pictures will be offered on a prepay basis. Students absent on picture day will be photographed at a later date. Spring pictures are also taken and offered to parents for purchasing.

For the yearbook, candid and school activity photographs will be taken throughout the year. Yearbooks will be sold on a prepay basis. Students purchasing yearbooks will receive them during the last week of the school year.

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER (SRO)

The Bedford County Sheriff's Department provides a full-time School Resource Officer (SRO) based at Forest Middle School to assist the students and the staff. The SRO assists with school safety, is used as an instructional resource for teachers, and welcomes students' questions about a variety of concerns. The school resource officer also conducts investigations when warranted.

Sixth and seventh grade students will participate in the "Gang Resistance Education and Training" (G.R.E.A.T.) program as a part of the "Character and Careers" related arts class. Our school resource officer will be the instructor for this program.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Students are requested by classroom teachers to have the supplies needed for daily assignments and projects. Teachers will distribute a suggested supply list for their classroom. The generic supply list is posted on the school website at <http://www.bedford.k12.va.us/fms/>. **Assignment notebooks/agendas are required and may be purchased at school for \$5.00.**

Students may purchase pens, pencils, paper, notebooks, assignment books/agendas, and various school supplies each day from the school store.

STUDENT COUNCIL ASSOCIATION (SCA) OFFICERS

The Student Council is an effective educational instrument and is a unique agency for genuine learning far beyond basic concepts of civics. It requires commitment and individual involvement. The student council is a group of elected officials in a school who meet together regularly to promote citizenship, scholarship, leadership, public relations, and cultural values. SCA elections are held each spring for students in grades six and seven. These five offices are available to students who meet the eligibility requirements as stated in the SCA Constitution for Forest Middle School: president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, and reporter.

Each home-base class will elect a representative in September who will attend all meetings and act as a courier of information for students in their home-base. During the monthly meetings, school projects are planned which include Spirit Days, After-school Socials, a fund-raiser, and community service activities.

Forest Middle School Constitution, Article IV – Officers and Duties

Section 2

The president and vice-president shall be in the eighth grade. The secretary, treasurer, and reporter shall be seventh or eighth graders. All officers must maintain a "C" average and have no unsatisfactory marks on their report cards at the time of election and throughout the school year.

Section 4

Any officer failing to maintain a "C" average will be placed on probation for a nine-week period of time, at the end of which he or she will be removed if the grades are still below a "C" average. Also, any officer who is suspended or disciplined with the Modified Instructional Program (MIP) will automatically forfeit

their privilege as a member of the Student Council Association. The office will be filled by reelection of that particular office or by the original runner-up from the school wide election. The principal and the student council advisor, as described in Article VII, will declare the final decision. All policies and procedures at Forest Middle School will be in accordance with local, state, and federal regulations.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ACCEPTABLE COMPUTER SYSTEM USE POLICY, BCPS POLICY IIBEA

Each teacher, administrator, student, and parent/guardian of each student shall sign the "Acceptable Computer System Use Agreement" before using the Division's computer system in accordance with School Board Policy IIBEA. **Signed Computer System Use Agreements must be returned to the school by Friday, August 29th.** Students without a signed computer system use agreement on file will not be permitted to use the computer system at Forest Middle School. The failure of any student, teacher, or administrator to follow the terms of the aforementioned agreement, this policy, or accompanying regulation may result in loss of computer system privileges, disciplinary action, and/or appropriate legal action.

The School Board provides a computer system, including the Internet, to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. The term computer system includes hardware, software, data, communication lines and devices, terminals, printer, CD-ROM devices, tape drivers, servers, mainframe and personal computers, the Internet, and other internal or external networks.

All use of the Division's computer system must be (1) in support of education and/or research or (2) for legitimate school business. Use of the computer system is a privilege, not a right. The Superintendent shall establish administrative procedures, for the School Board's approval, containing the appropriate uses, ethics, and protocol for the computer system, including the prohibition of illegal materials, prevention of access to material harmful to juveniles, and measures to enforce this policy and regulation. Any communication or materials used on the computer system, including electronic mail or other files deleted from a user's account may be monitored or read by school officials.

Use of the School Division's computer system shall be consistent with the educational or instructional mission or administrative function of the Division as well as the varied instructional needs, learning styles, abilities, and developmental levels of students. The Division's computer system is not a public forum.

The School Board is not responsible for any information that may be lost, damaged, or unavailable when using the computer system or for any information retrieved via the Internet. Furthermore, the School Board will not be responsible for the unauthorized charges or fees resulting from access to the computer system.

The Superintendent shall submit to the Virginia Department of Education this policy and accompanying regulations biennially.

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Students will need written parental permission to stay after school. An after school permission slip signed by the parent is to be given to the home-base teacher. To ensure student safety, students may not remain after hours unless permission is documented. When a student stays after school, the parents are responsible for transportation. The school must have parental permission from each student's parent if a student is to ride with anyone other than his or her parents. Students on disciplinary probation may not participate in after school activities or SCA sponsored social events.

Special programs offered after school may include sports, art, music, and clubs. Students will be notified of after school opportunities through program flyers sent home in the Tuesday Folder. Due dates will be established for signing up for special programs. Students will not be able to sign up after the due date. Parents must complete and sign an after school permission form for a student who chooses to participate in a special program. Forms may be obtained from the home-base teacher. Students who are not picked up on time may lose the privilege of future participation in after school

activities or special programs.

AFTER SCHOOL SUPERVISION

Students are dismissed for all after school activities on the last bus bell. Students remaining after school for athletics, club activities, or other necessary reasons must immediately report to their sponsor, coach, or teacher after the last bus bell. Any student participating in an after school activity must take all necessary books, etc. to the activity or detention area. Students must remain with their sponsor, teacher, or coach until a parent or guardian picks them up. Students are not permitted to remain on school grounds until the start of evening athletic events such as practices and games. Any student found on the grounds unsupervised after the final bus leaves will be required to call home to be picked up.

ATTENDANCE

Students may not arrive on the school grounds before the first bus arrives at 7:50 A.M. Students who arrive before 8:15 A.M. are to wait in the gymnasium until being dismissed to home-base. Supervision will be provided during the arrival and dismissal of buses.

The Bedford County Public Schools attendance policy is explained in the Code of Student Conduct. Parents are asked to notify the school office by 9:00 A.M. when they know their child will be absent from school. When the student is absent from school for an entire day, or for one or more class periods, a parent or guardian must notify the school by phone, a written note, or e-mail. The notification shall contain the reason(s) for and the date(s) of the absence(s). Medical documentation may be required. **The principal will be the judge of the validity of any excuse.** When the student returns to school, he/she must present the home-base teacher with a written excuse signed by the parent or guardian stating the date(s) of the absence and the reason for the absence. All absences are considered unexcused until a written note is received from the parent. Excused absences and tardiness include:

- death in the immediate family,
- a subpoenaed court appearance,
- previously approved absence, and/or
- a verified medical condition.

It is the student's responsibility to arrange for all make-up work. Students with excused absences may make up work accordingly: absent 1-2 days will have 3 school days to make up work; absent 3-5 days will have 6 school days to make up work; absent 6+ days will talk with the teacher to establish a date for the work to be completed.

Because of the high volume of daily requests we receive for homework assignments, we request that parents call the school office to receive homework information only when the absence is more than two (2) days. The office must receive the request for assignments by 9:00 A.M. in order to have the materials available by 3:45 P.M. the same day.

Tardiness

Students must be in class at 8:20 A.M. to be considered on time. Students will not be considered tardy due to late buses. Car riders should be dropped off **prior** to 8:15 A.M. in order to be in class and ready for morning announcements. Students who are tardy to school must stop by the office to receive an admit slip to enter class. The reason for being tardy must be stated. All tardiness is considered "unexcused" until a note is received from a parent. Getting to class on time throughout the day is required. Tardiness disrupts classroom instruction and will be treated as a disciplinary and/or truant matter.

Early Dismissals

No student shall be permitted to leave the school prior to the 3:05 P.M. dismissal bell without the written permission of the parent or guardian, except by a police officer with judicial authority. All parents and guardians of a student may have access to the student or may grant permission to allow the student to leave the school unless the school has evidence that there is a legally binding instrument or court order which provides to the contrary. Without written permission, the students will go home at the regularly scheduled time.

Parents who need to pick up students before the school dismissal time must sign the student out in the office. Parents are strongly urged not to disrupt classes toward the end of the day with early dismissals. Please try to arrange after school appointments to prevent classroom disruptions from 2:30 to dismissal time. Classes will not be interrupted to call students except in emergencies; therefore,

- Parents must arrange for the student to meet them in the office by sending a note with the student to the home-base teacher.
- **Students must present all notes from their parents concerning early dismissal to their home-base teacher when they arrive in class in the morning.**
- Students will receive an early dismissal pass from their home-base teacher.
- Students must show at the beginning of the period the early dismissal pass to the teacher from whose class he/she will be dismissed.
- Students must remember to go to the office at the designated time.

Repeated dismissals from class disrupt classroom instruction and will be treated as a disciplinary and/or truant matter.

Perfect Attendance

Forest Middle School recognizes the importance of classroom attendance. Students who have had perfect attendance each nine weeks are recognized in a variety of ways. In order to be recognized with this prestigious honor, students must have been marked present for all classes throughout the day.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Parents who have a change in their mailing address and/or phone number should report the change immediately to the office so records can be corrected and kept current. This is especially important in case of an emergency.

ENROLLMENT/WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

The guidance clerk will enroll a new student. The school counselor will determine the correct classroom placement for that student, create a schedule, and provide assistance to the new student and his/her family during the transition to Forest Middle School.

We request students to obtain a withdrawal form from the guidance clerk when transferring to another school. The parent/guardian, teachers, librarian, cafeteria manager, and school counselor must sign this form. This form will be returned to the guidance clerk. We will send the student's records to the transfer school upon their official written request.

HEALTH

An “Emergency Medical Card” is to be completed for each student. These forms will be distributed during the first week of school and must be signed to complete registration. The forms are submitted to the home-base teacher by the first Friday of the school year. Emergency contact numbers in addition to parents’ phone numbers must be provided and kept up-to-date. Virginia law requires all students enrolled in public school to present a current, valid immunization certificate. No student will be enrolled without proper immunization documentation. **Students currently enrolled in school may be denied continued attendance if immunizations expire or are not kept up-to-date.**

Clinic Use

Students are responsible for notifying the teacher immediately if an injury occurs. In the case of a serious injury or illness, the clinic office will notify the parent.

Elevator

An elevator is available at Forest Middle School for use by students with a temporary or permanent disability. Verification from a physician is requested indicating the duration a student will need to use the elevator. An elevator key must be signed out from the main office. The key must be returned at the end of each day. Students must ride the elevator alone. Arrangements can be made, if necessary, for a second student to ride to assist with books, etc. This must be done in the office at the time the key is signed out. Students may not give the key to any other student to use. Students will be charged \$5.00 to replace a lost elevator key. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in disciplinary action.

Emergency/Medical

Parents who have a child with any medical concerns, physical handicap, asthma, diabetes, heart or seizure disorder, food or bee sting allergy, etc. need to notify the clinic. It is important that the required papers are completed so we can assist the child with any medical needs that may arise during the school year.

Immunization

All students must have proof of having immunization or a medical or religious exemption.

Medical Insurance

Medical insurance is available through FAMIS. Contact the nurse for more information.

Medication

Please adhere to the following medication distribution procedures:

- The parent must bring the medication to the clinic, complete, and sign an “Authorization to Administer Medication” form. This form is valid only for the current school year. The form must be **signed** before any medication may be given. Parents are responsible for completing the proper forms to obtain special permission for a student to keep medication in their possession. Only in a life threatening emergency situation will nursing judgment be used regarding administering emergency medication without written permission.
- If your child is on medication, please request a separate bottle from the pharmacy for the school clinic. All medication must be in the original container. A physician’s

authorization is required for all prescription medication. Any changes in medication dosage must have a physician's order. Each medication requires its own medication form.

- Please do not send medication to school with your child. A parent or guardian needs to bring the medication to school.
- Medication must be picked up at the end of the school year; any medication not picked up will be discarded.
- Asthmatics may carry and self-administer medicated inhalers if the required paperwork is completed. All inhalers must be properly labeled. A backup inhaler for the clinic is strongly suggested for emergency use. Students may also carry Epi-pens if the proper paperwork is on file in the clinic.
- Acetaminophen pain reliever and emergency use antihistamine are available in the clinic for occasional student use. Written parental permission is necessary before the medication may be given. Forms may be picked up at school. Non-prescription medication will be administered as instructed on the box unless accompanied with a physician's order instructing to do differently.

Screenings

Student screenings for vision, hearing, scoliosis, height, and weight are scheduled during their physical education class in October. Students in seventh grade and any student who has transferred to FMS, been home schooled, or attended a private school will be screened. If any medical concerns are identified, parents will be notified by letter or telephone call. Parents may opt a child out of the nurse's screenings; however, a note from the parents must be received as soon as possible to be kept on file. Any child regardless of the grade will be screened if a request is submitted in writing or by phone from the parent.

Sickness

Any student who feels ill must obtain a pass from his/her teacher. If the student becomes ill between classes, he/she should alert the next period teacher so the teacher is aware of the student's location. Parents will be called when necessary. A fever is a temperature of 100 degrees or more. A child needs to be fever free or on antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school.

LOCKERS

Students will be issued a locker. A combination lock is built into the locker. Students should not share the combination to his/her locker. Students will be able to go to lockers at designated times during the school day. Teachers will monitor locker area behavior.

All personal items and books, when not in use, are to be kept in lockers. Lockers should be kept clean and neat. Students are responsible for the condition of their lockers. Stickers may not be placed on lockers. Permanent decorations may not be attached to the outside of lockers.

Do not leave large amounts of money or other valuable personal belongings in a locker. A student is not to open a locker that is not assigned to him/her. School lockers are the property of the school, and the school administration has the right to inspect and search any and all lockers.

LOST and FOUND

A box of "Lost and Found" items is maintained near the cafeteria. At the end of each month, unclaimed items are given to a local charity. "Lost and Found" money, glasses, and valuables are kept in the Main Office until the end of each marking period. Students are urged to mark personal items with their name.

MOMENT OF SILENCE and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The 2000 session of the General Assembly amended Section 2.1-203 of the Code of Virginia to require daily observation of a moment of silence, not to exceed one minute, in every classroom in the public schools of Virginia. The teacher is to ensure that all students remain seated and silent and make

no distracting displays during this time. Students may engage in any silent activity that does not interfere with other students.

The legislation states, "All students shall be required to learn the Pledge of Allegiance and to demonstrate such knowledge." The legislation further stipulates that each school board "shall require the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in each classroom of the school division." No student will be compelled to recite the pledge if there is an objection based on religious, philosophical, or other grounds. Students who are exempt are to remain quiet.

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTAL RIGHTS

The General Assembly added section 22.1-279.4 to the Code of Virginia, which specifically allows non-custodial parents to participate in school related activities. The law states that unless there is a court order to the contrary, non-custodial parents cannot be denied the opportunity to participate in school activities such as lunch breaks, parent-teacher conferences, and extracurricular activities. In fact, the law states that non-custodial parents should be allowed to participate in any activity that is supported or encouraged by school policy. If there is a court order denying access, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide a copy of that order to the school.

STUDENT RECORDS

The Bedford County School Board has adopted Management of the Student's Scholastic Records in the Public Schools of Virginia (Revised, 1989) as the formal procedures and regulations regarding the management of all student records. Any questions regarding the management, access, or release of student information should be directed to the building principal or Office of Student Services. All students will have a scholastic record that is housed in their base school. Some students will also have confidential folders as part of their permanent records with copies housed in the Central Office.

Student records shall be available to help plan the child's education and authorized school personnel shall have access to these records. The student's teachers shall use these records carefully and for the benefit of the student. Under no circumstances shall third parties view the student record without written consent of the student's parent or legal guardian and the building principal's knowledge and consent.

Upon appointment, the parent or legal guardian may see his or her child's scholastic record with authorized school personnel present. By the time a student spends his tenth year in school, he may view his permanent record under the supervision of authorized personnel. Any student 18 years of age or older has access to his records. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request, which identifies as precisely as possible the record or records he or she wishes to inspect. Access must be given in 14 days or less from the receipt of the request.

The Family Educational Right and Privacy Acts (FERPA) has developed a "Management of Student Records Notice", which is provided on page 22 of your handbook for review.

Directory Information

Directory Information may include the name, gender, address, telephone listing, date, place of birth of a student, the student's major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, the weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees or awards received by students, and photographs.

You have the right to refuse the use of your child's directory information by sending a letter to the principal before September 29, 2008.

TELEPHONE/WEBSITES/E-MAIL

The school telephone number for Forest Middle School is (434) 525-6630, Fax: 525-1284; School Board Office: (540) 586-1045; School Closings and Announcements: 586-1045 *333. The website address for Bedford County Public Schools is www.bedford.k12.va.us. Forest Middle School's website address is www.bedford.k12.va.us/fms.

The office telephone is used for school business or for student emergencies with the permission of a teacher or an administrator. Students will not be given messages except in an emergency. Student

use of cell phones during the school day is prohibited. Cell phones must be turned off and stored in the student's locker during the school day.

All teachers and professional staff may be contacted by e-mail. In most instances an employee's e-mail address consists of the person's first initial and last name @bedford.k12.va.us. Example: Michelle Morgan's e-mail address is mmorgan@bedford.k12.va.us. If this does not work in a specific case, feel free to call the school for any employee's e-mail address.

TRANSPORTATION

All students are provided transportation to and from school on school buses. Riding the bus is a privilege, not a right, and this privilege may be withdrawn for inappropriate behavior to assure the safety of all riders. Complete bus conduct regulations are included in the Code of Student Conduct.

A student is to ride the bus assigned to him/her. Whenever a student is to ride any other bus, there must be written permission from the parent given to the home-base teacher. Students are to give all notes to their home-base teacher when they arrive in the morning. Most of our buses are close to capacity. No more than two students may ride home with any one individual. If a student is to ride a bus home with another student, a note from both students' parents is required. Each student will be given a bus pass. These passes are matched in the office. Bus passes must be submitted to the bus driver upon boarding the bus. The bus driver will allow students to depart the bus only at their designated stop without a bus pass approved by the office.

In case of inclement weather, the Superintendent may make a decision to cancel school or close early. All major radio and television stations will announce this information as early as possible. Call (540) 586-1045 *333 or check the website address www.bedford.k12.va.us for up-to-date information.

When parents provide transportation, they are asked to be extremely careful in the parking lot and driveway when students are on the grounds. Students riding cars home are to load only in the yellow striped areas of the driveway. Students may only be dropped off in the front of the building in the designated area. Parents may not drop students off on Route 221 to walk up the driveway nor are they to be dropped off in the back of the building. Cars are not permitted in the bus loading area.

VISITORS

People with business at school, when students are present, must report to the main office for approval and obtain a visitor's sticker before entering other sections of the building. *All visitors must wear a visitor's sticker when on school grounds. All faculty and staff have been directed by the principal to send any person without a visitor's sticker to the office immediately.* This includes parents, volunteers, former students, and guest speakers.

Though communication between parents and teachers is encouraged, it is important that classrooms not be disturbed during the school day. Parents **must** schedule appointments with teachers.

No student visitors or siblings are allowed on the school grounds during the school day. Parents and guardians are the only persons permitted access to their child during the school day. This includes eating lunch with their child. All other persons must have written permission from a parent or guardian in order to visit or eat lunch with a student. The principal must approve all such visits at least two (2) days in advance. Exceptions to this policy include law enforcement, social service, and/or court appointed officials.

DISCIPLINE AND SCHOOL RULES

At Forest Middle School (FMS), we are committed to fostering an environment in which all students can learn. The primary purpose of the school is to successfully prepare students for effective citizenship and promote successful life skills. School rules are designed for the safety and security of all.

At Forest Middle School, we believe in the philosophy of "Choices have consequences. Make wise choices." Unwise choices of behavior will have disciplinary consequences, including loss of privileges, detention, suspension from school, or an alternative education school. The county discipline policy is found in the *Code of Student Conduct*. In addition to the school rules, each teacher will develop a set of appropriate rules of behavior for his or her students. Students who choose not to follow the county, school, or classroom rules will receive appropriate consequences. Each student will be made aware of the consequences for misbehavior. Parents will be notified when a teacher or administrator is concerned about a student's repeated behavioral problems.

The goal of discipline is to prevent behavioral problems in a proactive way. This can be accomplished through clear rules and consequences and avoidance of power struggles. Opportunities will be provided for students to learn ways to solve problems in a nonviolent, positive, and productive manner. We urge students to seek adult help when needed. Frequent contact between the school and home is encouraged to promote home/school communication and help prevent student misconduct.

BACKPACKS/COATS/BOOK BAGS

Students are to store backpacks, book bags, and coats in their lockers throughout the day. Backpacks/book bags may not be carried from class to class nor may large, baggy coats be worn in the building during the instructional day. These items are to be stored in the student's locker during the school day.

BULLYING

A student, either individually or as part of a group, shall not harass or bully others. Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, physical intimidation, taunting, name-calling, insults, or any combination of prohibited activities. Prohibited conduct also includes verbal conduct consisting of comments regarding the race, gender, religion, or physical abilities, characteristics, or attributes of the targeted person.

Aggressive touching, inappropriate words or threats, and any display of aggression toward others will be dealt with in a serious manner. Students and/or parents should report incidences of continuous bullying to a teacher, school counselor, or administrator.

BUYING/SELLING

Students are not allowed to buy, sell, or trade food, candy, fund-raiser items, games, CDs, tapes, or any other items at school.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

Your school belongs to you. The school building, grounds, and equipment were designed and selected to enhance your educational opportunities. The appearance of FMS reflects the character of

those who attend. Destruction of school property will result in disciplinary action for the student. Additionally, charges will be assessed to replace/repair damaged school property. Students who do not show respect for school property may be required to provide community service to the school.

DISPLAY OF AFFECTION

Displays of affection in school or on school grounds are not allowed.

DRESS CODE FOR BEDFORD COUNTRY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Bedford County Public Schools along with the School Board has developed and approved a dress code for the middle school student. These rules are outlined in the Code of Student Conduct, which every student will receive upon entering BCPS. Each family is encouraged to take the time to read, discuss, and adhere to these rules.

DRUG/ALCOHOL POLICY

Student use, possession, distribution, sale, or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances, look-alike drugs, steroids, or possession of drug paraphernalia on school premises or at any school function (home or away) is strictly prohibited. Penalties for this violation require a suspension to the Superintendent and/or court intervention through the School Resource Officer.

The first tobacco offense will result in detention or MIP and a parent conference. Succeeding violations will result in an out-of-school suspension and a referral to the School Resource Officer.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES, MECHANICAL, and OTHER DISTRACTING MATERIALS

Electronic devices, collector paraphernalia, toys, and other similar personal items not necessary for the instructional day are not allowed in the school building without teacher permission. **The school will not be held responsible for loss, theft, or damage of personal communication devices brought to school or on the bus.**

CD players must be stored in the student's locker during the school day. Headphones may not be worn at any time in the school building.

While cell phones, pagers, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), and other communication devices are allowed on school property, they must remain turned off and stored in the **student's locker** during the school day. If a student possesses such a device other than as permitted in this policy, in addition to other disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed, the device may be confiscated from the student and returned only to the student's parent. If the confiscated item is not picked up by the last day of school, the items will be discarded.

Students are not to possess laser pointers on school property.

GUM

Students may not chew gum at school. Gum left in water fountains, stuck under desks, discarded on sidewalks, and in many other inappropriate places poses a health risk.

HALL PASSES

It is the responsibility of each student to secure a pass to leave an assigned area during class periods. Teachers are to fill out a hall pass when a student must leave the room during class time. The student's name, destination, time leaving, and teacher's signature must be included on the pass. Hall passes will be requested from students who are in the hallway during class time. All students are urged to refrain from excessive noise in the halls and walkways. Running in the halls is not permitted.

REST ROOM USE

There are student rest rooms on each hallway, in the gym, and near the cafeteria. Rest rooms are for the convenience of students, not a place to socialize or play. Students share a certain amount of responsibility for keeping their rest rooms clean and in good condition. Students should report any

damage to a teacher immediately. The teacher determines use of the rest rooms during class time.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

A student who is determined to be sexually harassing another person will be disciplined accordingly. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct or comments of a sexual nature. All cases of harassment will lead to disciplinary action. Students should tell a parent, teacher, school counselor, and/or administrator if they feel that they are being harassed.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Code of Student Conduct

The Code of Student Conduct specifically outlines eleven major categories of behavior and states subsequent consequences that may occur as a result of misconduct. A student will have the right of due process when referred to the principal's office for a serious infraction. This entitles the student to tell his version of the accusation of misconduct that has been cited. After hearing the different descriptions cited in the referral, the principal (or designee) determines if any infraction of school rules has occurred. All rules and policies outlined in the Code of Student Conduct will be strictly enforced.

Community Service

Community service normally consists of assisting the custodians in their daily routines. After school community service may consist of duties such as: sweeping sidewalks, weeding landscaped areas, washing lockers, vacuuming halls, cleaning desktops, etc. Parents are notified in advance before a student serves after school community service. Parents are responsible for transportation for any after school community service.

Detention

According to school board policy, an administrator or teacher may schedule after school detention with prior notification provided to the parent/guardian. Detentions are given as a consequence for repeated student behavioral problems and are used as a short-term intervention technique until the problem is solved or more serious consequences are established. Parents are responsible for transportation. During detention, a student may work on a learning packet designed to correct inappropriate behaviors. Community service may also be required during after school detention. It is the student's responsibility to serve detention when assigned. If a student does not attend an assigned detention, an additional detention period will be assigned or an out-of-school suspension may need to be utilized.

Disciplinary Probation

Students on disciplinary probation may not participate in after school activities or SCA sponsored social events at FMS. After school activities include programs such as clubs (art, running, photography, cooking, etc.) or spectator sports (attending FMS sports events as a spectator). If a student is enrolled in academic or remediation programs; however, he/she will be allowed to participate in this program. A student may be placed on disciplinary probation at the discretion of an administrator for one or more of the following reasons:

- Written disciplinary referrals
- Written bus disciplinary referrals
- Students whose behavior results in a placement in the modified instructional program (MIP)
- Students whose behavior results in an out-of-school suspension

Parents will be notified in writing when a student is placed on disciplinary probation. The administrator will determine the duration of the disciplinary probation.

Lunch Detention

Teachers or administrators may assign lunch detention as a consequence for inappropriate behavior. Lunch detention is normally held in a classroom under the supervision of a teacher. Lunch detention is a consequence for minor infractions of school or classroom rules.

Modified Instructional Program

Administrators may assign students to MIP as a disciplinary action. This is also known as in-school suspension. Students will be removed from the regular classroom to an alternate setting to complete the normal classroom work. Community service is also a part of the MIP program.

Saturday School

The purpose of Saturday School is to provide a positive educational experience and a meaningful misbehavior deterrent for those students who repeatedly violate school rules. Students who attend Saturday School will receive academic assistance as they complete homework and make-up work. This two-hour program will be hosted at FMS and will begin at 9:00 A.M. and end at 11:00 A.M., will be supervised by a teacher, and will consist of a community service project and a character education component.

MANAGEMENT OF STUDENT RECORDS NOTICE

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)* is the federal law designed to protect the privacy of a student's scholastic records. The law applies to any public or private educational agency or institution that receives federal funds under any programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education. All K-12 public schools are covered by FERPA, as well as some preschool programs and private schools, and virtually all colleges and universities.

FERPA grants four basic rights to parents with respect to their children's scholastic records. These rights transfer to the student, or former student, upon reaching the age of 18 or attending any school beyond high school level. Students and former students to whom the rights have transferred are called "eligible students." These rights are as follows:

- The right to inspect and review the student's scholastic records within a reasonable time period but not to exceed 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access;

Parents or eligible students should submit to the principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

- The right to request the amendment of the student's scholastic records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading;

Parents or eligible students may ask Bedford County Public Schools to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.

If the school division decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school division will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in a student's scholastic records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent;

One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the division as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and

law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the division has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school division discloses education records without consent to officials of another school division in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. [Note: FERPA requires a school division to make a reasonable attempt to notify the student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.]

- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school division to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

Schools are required to notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The annual notice may be made by any means that is likely to inform parents and eligible students of their rights, including a special letter, student or parent handbook, bulletin, newspaper, or by any other means that will assure notification to the student's home. Schools are required to effectively notify parents and students who have a primary or home language other than English the name and address of the Office that administers the FERPA is Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20202-4605.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student before releasing any information from a student's education record; however, the law allows schools to disclose educational records, without consent, to the following:

- School employees who have a need to know;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring or plans to enroll;
- Certain government officials in order to carry out lawful functions;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- Individuals who have obtained court orders or subpoenas;
- Persons who need to know in cases of health and safety emergencies;
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory information" such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, the school must inform parents and eligible students about the types of information the school considers directory information. Schools are required to allow parents or eligible students a "reasonable amount of time" to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Directory information is not generally considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.

PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

Forest Middle School offers the opportunity for parents to participate in a Parent/Teacher Association, the PTA. The group will meet regularly to lend support to FMS students and teachers. The meetings usually fall on the second Monday of every other month beginning in September at 7:00 P.M. in the cafeteria. All parents and interested members of the community are welcome to attend. Students are urged to attend meetings and become active in the group.

MISSION

The mission of the PTA is three-fold:

- To support and speak on behalf of children and youth in the schools, in the community, and before governmental agencies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children;
- To assist parents in developing the skills they need to raise and protect their children; and
- To encourage parent and public involvement in the public schools of this nation.

WHAT IS THE PTA?

The National PTA is the largest and most powerful volunteer association in America, working for the education, health, and safety of all children. The PTA's basic goals are as follows:

- to help parents, teachers, and other interested persons
- to gain knowledge about the growth, development, and needs of the child
- to foster study as a basis for action
- to encourage and contribute whatever is needed to promote the welfare of children and youth.

The local PTA units are self-governing bodies that work independently to plan programs and activities and to provide services in order to meet the needs of children and youth in their own communities. They work with principals, superintendents of schools, and the school boards to insure that their concerns are heard and met.

The Forest Middle School PTA executive committee consists of a president, a vice-president, a secretary, a treasurer, and chairpersons of standing committees. The president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer are elected by the membership on an annual basis and according to local unit bylaws may not serve more than two consecutive years in the same office. The committee chairpersons are appointed yearly and may not serve more than two consecutive years in the same position. The school principal and a faculty representative also serve on the executive committee.

MEMBERSHIP

It is the goal of the PTA to build an informed, participating membership familiar with its objectives, policies, and programs and to be aware of the concerns of the school community. Traditionally, parents, teachers, and school administrators have been the most likely persons to join the

PTA. We encourage grandparents, business leaders, or anyone who cares about children to become members as well. Certainly we encourage YOU to join. The PTA is YOUR vehicle to insure that your child has the best education possible.

There is no better value than a membership in the PTA! At Forest Middle School, it costs each member, parent, grandparent, guardian, or teacher only \$5.00 per year, which includes membership in the local unit with voting rights and membership at the county, state, and national levels. Our goal this year is to acquire at least 100% membership, which means one membership per child in the school. Please consider joining today. Your children and we need your involvement. There are several ways to join the PTA:

1. During Open House Day,
2. Contact membership chairperson(s),
3. Sign up at any general membership meeting during the year, or
4. Obtain a membership kit from the school office.

PTA COMMITTEES

Committees are the working machinery of the PTA and are vital to its chairperson(s) serving as members of the executive committee. On occasion, a special committee is formed to work on a specific project and is dissolved when its assigned task is complete. Listed below are the standing committees and a description of their responsibilities.

Arts in Education

The goal of the Arts in Education Program is to encourage students to enjoy and participate in the arts, emphasize the need for childhood experiences in literature, visual arts, music and classroom study, as well as for extracurricular activities.

The Forest Middle School program will include:

1. The fall PTA Reflections Art Contest,
2. Local artists, and
3. Additional cultural events throughout the year.

Directory

The Directory Committee is in charge of producing and distributing the yearly Student Directory, which includes the students' and parents' names and telephone numbers. One copy of the directory is given to PTA members' families free of charge. Additional copies may be purchased for \$5.00 each from the Directory chairperson(s).

Hospitality

The Hospitality Committee provides activities and favors for the teacher and staff to show appreciation for their efforts and support throughout the school year. Sign up at the Hospitality table on Open House Day or call the Hospitality chairperson(s).

Newsletter

PTA Newsletters will be distributed approximately a week before each general membership meeting. They serve to keep parents informed about the workings of the PTA.

Nominating

The Nominating Committee recruits for nomination an eligible person for each vacant PTA office for the coming school year. The committee consists of at least three members (one

appointed by the president from the executive committee and two volunteers from the general membership). The committee is announced at the January general membership meeting and serves until the regular meeting in March, when it reports its nominees.

Programs

Program chairpersons plan programs for the general membership meetings. This year's theme and programs are listed on the PTA calendar. Meetings will consist of general business matters of the PTA, speakers, and student presentations. Watch for information on additional programs in the newsletter.

Volunteers

The purpose of the Volunteer Program is to enlist and strengthen the cooperation of parents in the education of children, to provide volunteer help for the individual needs of the children and teachers, and to develop an environment that encourages friendly two-way communication between home and school.

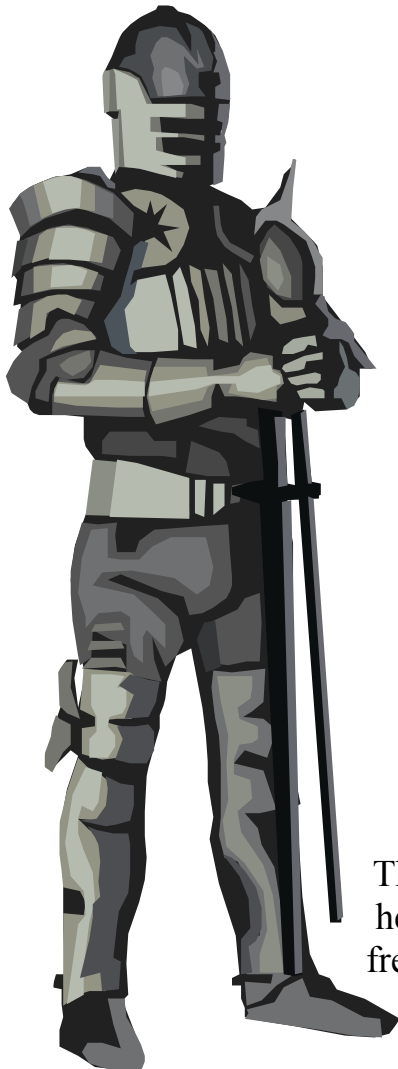
We encourage you to become a volunteer. Regardless of how much time you have to give, there is a place and a NEED for YOU! Sign up at the Volunteer table on Open House Day or contact the volunteer chairperson(s).

Ways and Means

The primary responsibility of the Ways and Means Committee is to raise funds to purchase needed supplies and equipment and to make available services and programs to the school, not otherwise provided, in order to further promote the highest quality education possible for our children.

A major fund-raiser is held in the fall. All families are encouraged to participate. School apparel will be made available for sale through the Ways and Means Committee. An additional fund-raiser may be held in the spring if desired.

Forest Middle School's PTA information and a list of the officers can be found on the FMS website at www.bedford.k12.va.us/fms.



Forest Middle School
Family Handbook
2008 – 2009

The Forest Middle School Family Handbook is meant to be helpful to students and parents. It should answer the most frequently asked questions. In addition to this information, a school newsletter is sent home with each report card.

Should you have a question, please do not hesitate to call the school office, your child's teacher, or any administrator.

Please sign below and return this page to your child's home-base teacher by September 2, 2008, so we know you have received, read, and discussed a copy of this handbook with your child.

Student's Printed Name: _____

Student's Signature: _____

Parent's Signature: _____

Date: _____