

# *Grassland Middle School*

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August 2009

Dear GMS Parents,

Welcome to a new and exciting school year at GMS! Our administrators, teachers, and staff are ready, willing and able to create a meaningful educational experience for your child. In order to do this, we want you to be our partner in making this year an effective component of your child's education. Please know that you may contact us any time you have a concern or a question that needs attention. If there is a problem, please let us know. We want all of our students to have a productive and satisfying year. Our doors are always open to you.

In order to help you feel more at ease at GMS, the Parents' Club has developed a Parent Handbook that provides answers to the many questions you may have. Essential information is now available at your fingertips, so **please take time to read through this handbook**. This knowledge will be beneficial to you and your child as you both begin the Grassland Middle School experience.

Again, we are so pleased to have you at GMS! Thank you for entrusting your most precious possession(s) to us.

Sincerely,

*Susan Curtis*  
Susan Curtis, Ed.D.  
Principal  
*Grassland Middle School*  
*2390 Hillsboro Road*  
*Franklin, Tennessee 37069*



# Welcome to GMS: Home of the Generals!

On behalf of the Grassland Middle School (GMS) faculty, administration, and our parent organization, Grassland Middle School Parents' Club, Inc. - Welcome! GMS is a wonderful place to educate your child and to invest in your child's educational experience. Hopefully your transition to our school will be a very smooth one. If not, we are here to assist you during this time.

In this handbook, we have attempted to identify some valuable information about our school and to answer many Frequently Asked Questions for our new families. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact the GMS Parents' Club. We want to make your transition to GMS a smooth one. We look forward to seeing you around this wonderful community!!

## IN General:

Helpful hints are contained in boxes throughout this handbook. We fondly refer to these hints as "IN General" (Important Notices).

IN General:

The Williamson County School System has prepared a detailed Student Handbook. This document may be reviewed and printed via: <http://www.wcs.edu> Click on Parent Resources tab, then Student Handbook.

Grassland Middle School also publishes a student handbook. This document is contained within your student's GMS Student Handbook and Agenda.

This information is also included in the GMS General Information Guide which may be purchased through the GMS Parents' Club at the upcoming Information Fair and Open House events.

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## **GMS VISION**

**By intentionally partnering with our school community GMS will become a world class middle school environment whereby:**

- **Every student and adult will treat others the way they want to be treated**
- **Each student will find his/her voice and become a leader in their generation**
- **Every student will have a place within our community to feel accepted**
- **Every student will have an activity whereby they feel competent**
- **Every student will be viewed as normal within the eyes of their peers**
- **Every student will be academically challenged using state of the art technologies and resources**
- **Every stakeholder actively contributes to the success of the school by insuring a positive attitude, desiring to learn, and maximizing his/her gifts and talents on a daily basis**
- **Every stakeholder will demonstrate the attributes of a strong, moral character through honesty, respect, integrity, compassion, loyalty, trust, and caring**
- **Each student and adult will respond to change in a timely manner by maintaining flexibility, encouraging creativity and embracing teamwork.**
- **Every stakeholder will recognize the significance of the whole as well as that of the individual**
- **Our community will ensure an environment of caring adults; safe places; promoting health; effective education; and opportunities to serve others.**
- **Adequate financial resources are consistently available to ensure continuous improvement and pursuit of excellence for our school's academics, athletics, and arts programs.**
- **Every stakeholder will be invested in the long term success of the school and committed to the development of the adolescent student.**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Grassland Middle School exists to prepare students to be life-long learners and responsible members of society. We accomplish this by providing students an opportunity to engage in an edifying and supportive learning environment and by increasing the protective factors for students while decreasing the known risk factors. As a result students are able to achieve academic success and to demonstrate exemplary character both on and off the GMS campus. These elements will contribute to students' ability to attain at least one year's academic growth as well as to meet or exceed No Child Left Behind (NCLB) average yearly progress as outlined in the district assessment snapshot in the Master Plan for Williamson County Schools.

## **FOUNDATIONAL BELIEFS**

- All students can learn.
- A safe and nurturing environment promotes student learning.
- Learning is the chief priority for the school.
- Students learn in different ways and should be provided with a variety of instructional approaches and activities to support their learning.
- Each student is a valued individual with unique physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs.
- Positive relationships and mutual respect among and between students and staff members enhance a student's self esteem.
- A broad range of assessment approaches is used to measure learning and personal success.

Decision-making is a collaborative effort led by the Building Leadership Team that follows the policies of the Williamson County School System.

## II. OPEN HOUSE

The *GMS* faculty and administration in conjunction with our *GMS* Parents' Club host two nights for our Open House events in an effort to accommodate our large number of families. This event is a great opportunity to meet our fabulous faculty and administration, learn exciting information about our upcoming school year, and make a financial contribution to our "INVEST" campaign.

Our 2009-2010 Open House events will be hosted on the following dates:

August 31, 2009	7:00 pm	7 <sup>th</sup> -8th Grades
September 1, 2009	7:00 pm	6th Grade

**IN General:** This event is for PARENTS ONLY. Please make the necessary childcare arrangements in order to attend this wonderful and unique evening designed to help you start the year off successfully.

The first half of this event provides a *General Information Session* for our parents. This will be held in the gymnasium.

Prior to and at the conclusion of the *General Information Session*, you will also be able to make financial contributions to our annual *INVEST* campaign. You will also be able to sign up for the various volunteer opportunities at *GMS*.

Following the *General Information Session*, parents are dismissed to visit their child's classrooms. At this time you will meet the teachers. Teachers will give you an overview

of their teaching styles and expectations. You will also be able to ask questions.

**IN General:** Open House is one of the largest single events for the start of school. Most school events, including Open House, are heavily attended by our families. Parking can be difficult. You may have to park and walk some distance. Carpool when possible.

### III. ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

GMS students will use several methods to arrive at school and to leave school: (1) school buses; (2) car/carpool; or (3) walking to/from nearby neighborhoods. Our procedures for these methods are detailed below.

#### MORNING ARRIVAL

**BUS:** *GMS* encourages students to use the school buses. Your student's bus route and times may be reviewed via the Williamson County website

<http://www.wcs.edu/busroute/index.htm>. Students who ride the bus to school are dismissed from the bus at 7:15. Students will enter through the "Commons" doorways and will proceed directly to their lockers.

**CARS:** Students will be allowed to enter the school building at 7:00 a.m.; no admittance will be allowed prior to this time. If your child arrives by car, a single line of vehicles is formed in the upper parking lot at the main school entrance. This line circles the upper parking lot.

#### IN General:

Several hundred cars transport students to *GMS* each morning. Arrival prior to 7:15 a.m. avoids extreme congestion.

Exercise caution and consideration for other drivers as you traverse the intersection of Manley Lane and *GMS* driveways. There is not a 4-Way stop at the intersection. Considering this a 4-way stop will ease congestion.

Vehicles in the front of the drop-off line should pull forward to the **RED LINE** before beginning the unloading process. Once students have exited their cars, cars move slowly forward and exit slowly onto Manley Lane. The process is repeated until all students are safely unloaded.

The car riders will meet in the Commons if they arrive before 7:20. If they arrive after 7:20, they walk directly to their lockers and classrooms.

**IN General:** If you bring your child to school and need to enter the building, you must park your car in the designated visitor parking areas. Please go directly to the school office to sign-in and receive your visitor pass.

**WALK:** Students walking to school from neighboring Hunterwood or River Rest subdivisions should enter GMS through the Commons doorways as our bus riders. Your student should exercise caution when crossing Hillsboro Road or Manley Lane.

### **AFTERNOON DISMISSAL**

**BUS:** Students are dismissed at 2:30 through the Commons doorways and 6<sup>th</sup> grade doorways to load the buses. Buses are designated according to their bus number.

**CAR:** Students are dismissed at 2:30 through the main school doors. Parents drive slowly through the designated car rider lanes.

Our dismissal procedure for cars is two rows wide versus our single line procedure for morning arrival. **NOTE:** The first row closest to the school is designated for cars only. The next row is designated for larger vehicles (i.e. trucks,

SUVs and vans). This procedure allows students to see over the first row to find their car and prevents cars from being hidden behind the larger vehicles.

Vehicles in the front of the line must pull forward to the **RED LINE** for loading. Once the first group of students is loaded in our primary and secondary lines, drivers will be directed to leave slowly. The second wave of vehicles will be directed to move forward to the **red line**. The above process will be repeated until all students are loaded. Any remaining students will return to the school office to call their parents.

**IN General:** Cars start lining up 15-20 minutes before school is dismissed. If you want to be in the first group of drivers, plan to arrive early.

**WALK:** Students walking home to Hunterwood or River Rest subdivisions are dismissed through the Commons doorways. Your student should exercise caution when crossing our two lane driveway during dismissal as well as when crossing Hillsboro Road or Manley Lane.

**Inclement Weather Procedures:**

This procedure is outlined in greater detail on page 5 of the *GMS Student Handbook and Agenda*. Should *GMS* close early due to inclement weather, please inform your student of their method of transportation home. *GMS* does not maintain forms for this procedure. It is incumbent upon your family to have an emergency plan in advance.

## IV. COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

Communication between *GMS* and our parent community is very important to the our faculty and administration as well as to the *GMS* Parents' Club. Below are several ways communication is handled between you and the school:

### Connect-Ed

Williamson County Schools has implemented an automated telephone calling system called "Connect-Ed." This system allows the *WCS* central office and our school principals to notify its parent community of important announcements and upcoming events. Once your child has been enrolled at *GMS*, your telephone number will be added to the *WCS* and *GMS* databases.

### The General's Dispatch

A quarterly newsletter is produced and distributed by the *GMS* Principal, Dr. Susan Curtis, and the Parents' Club titled The General's Dispatch. This newsletter provides parents with regular communication from the school's administration and Parents' Club. It often includes announcements from the Williamson County School System as well as recent notes from the *GMS* faculty and staff.

The General's Dispatch will be added to the first parent emails of each quarter as well as posted on the *GMS* website. Copies will be available in the front office for those of you who do not have computer access.

### Teacher E-mail

Most parents find that e-mail is a very effective way to communicate with the school. Every teacher, administrator, and *GMS* employee has an e-mail address

that is listed on our Internet web site.  
<http://www.wcs.edu/gms/GMS> under Staff

E-mail is an effective way to communicate with our teachers during the day. Please do not use e-mail for any information requiring an immediate response (such as change of dismissal, etc.) or action.

### Voice Mail

To use the GMS voice mail system, simply dial 472-4501 and follow the voice prompts. You will be prompted to enter the teacher's respective telephone extension # to leave a voice message. These extensions will be provided in the upcoming 2008-2009 Student Directory prepared by the GMS Parents' Club.

### GMS Parents' Club Communications

GMS Parents' Club has developed an email distribution list within our parent community. This information is maintained by GMS Parents' Club and will never be released to businesses for solicitation.

This distribution list is used for the sole purpose of communicating new information to parents as well as providing updates on our school-related activities. If you would like to receive this information, please visit the GMS website: [www.wcs.edu/gms](http://www.wcs.edu/gms). Click "Sign-Up for Email Notices" located in the index on the left hand side of our home page. Simply complete the on-line form, and you will be added to this distribution.

## Internet

Do you want to know about the great things going on with Williamson County Schools? Then you need to sign up for IN FOCUS, the district's new email based newsletter. Simply log onto [www.wcs.edu](http://www.wcs.edu) and click on "Signup for the WCS Email Newsletter."

You may also obtain current information about our school directly from our web site <http://www.wcs.edu/gms>. The index to our site is located on the left hand side of our home page.

## V. GMS CAFé (Community Awareness Forum)

During the 2006-2007 school year, a vital strategic initiative was launched at *GMS*: GMS CAFé (Community Awareness Forum)! This initiative represents an intentional alliance between the *GMS* Administration, *GMS* Guidance Offices, the *GMS* Parents' Club and our local community.

GMS CAFé (Community Awareness Forum) is a long-term, strategic initiative created to focus adult attention on *"increasing the protective factors for our students while decreasing known risk factors."* The audience for this effort includes all adults interacting with our students in a parenting/teaching/coaching capacity (i.e. faculty, youth leaders, dance/art/piano teachers, athletic coaches, etc.) as well as the community leaders responsible for creating policy and intervention programs.

Community Awareness Forums are made available to our entire community. Each forum is designed with the following goals in mind: (1) Create unity between our school, parents, and community leaders; (2) Enlighten our audience to the unique issues and challenges facing this generation of students; and (3) Provide the audience with essential tools for equipping themselves and their students for success.

Notices for upcoming events will be posted on the *GMS* website and the *GMS* marquee. They will also be included in the Parents' Club daily email distribution.

The *GMS CAFé* initiative is convinced: Our schools cannot create Safe and Drug-Free Environments within their hallways, classrooms and school buses apart from our community's support and involvement; and the Grassland community cannot create Safe and Drug-Free Environments within our homes, gymnasiums, athletic fields, dance/music/art studios, entertainment venues, and church pews apart from our schools' educational resources and support . . . **"We're All In This Together!"** -- We hope you will join us in 2009-2010!

## VI. THE GENERAL GRILL (a.k.a. GMS Cafeteria)

The General Grill welcomes the opportunity to serve your student! Anne Redden and her staff serve your student nutritionally balanced meals in accordance with the Williamson County School System's required guidelines. You may contact Anne with any questions via email: [anner@wcs.edu](mailto:anner@wcs.edu).

Monthly lunch menus may be obtained from the WCS website: [http://www.wcs.edu/parentstudent/food\\_service.htm](http://www.wcs.edu/parentstudent/food_service.htm). This menu allows your student to choose between bringing lunch from home or purchasing from the cafeteria's choices.

Student lunches cost \$2.75 per day. This price includes one entrée, fruit, vegetable, and milk. Ala carte items vary from \$.50-\$1.00 each. Breakfast is also available for \$1.50. Visitor lunch prices are \$3.25.

Our cafeteria utilizes an automated debit system. This system allows parents to pre-pay student lunches. You determine the amount deposited into your child's account. Students are assigned a personal identification number to make purchases. Two accounts may be established within this ID# for the student: (1) regular lunch account or (2) special sale account for ala carte items. Notations may be made on the student accounts (i.e. special instructions, dietary restrictions, etc.). Each purchase is deducted from the appropriate account.

**IN General:** You may replenish your student's account at any time. Make your check payable to GMS Cafeteria. Enclose this check in an envelope with the student's name, homeroom teacher's name, and lunch money noted on the outside. Your student should deliver the check to the cafeteria in the morning.

## VII. GENERAL INTERMISSION

During the 2009-10 school year, GMS will continue a daily 25 minute General Intermission program for all students. Each Friday students will meet in small groups for Five Star Fridays (a reorganization of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program and the Capturing Kids' Hearts philosophy.) The other days will be utilized for team based activities: team building exercises, intramurals, and study hall/silent reading. Parents are encouraged to help with the intramural program which operates every day except Friday.

## VIII. PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAMS

GMS provides several opportunities for your student to participate in our Performing Arts programs both in and out of our classrooms. We offer three courses in the Performing Arts: Band, Chorus, and Drama. Additional information may be obtained within our 2009-2010 GMS Course Catalog.

It is our privilege not only to teach your students the fundamental skills in our Performing Arts classes but also to create environments whereby each student is encouraged to demonstrate their acquired skills and talents through various performance venues (i.e. concerts, school plays, etc.).

### Band

Participation in our GMS Band programs begins with our sixth grade students. To participate in our 7<sup>th</sup> grade Concert band, the students must have one year experience with their instrument. Our 8<sup>th</sup> grade Symphonic Band

students must have two years prior experience with their instrument.

Students involved in our band program enjoy differing performance opportunities as they progress with their grade level (i.e. band concerts, pep band, various school and community functions). Many of these students also perform individually or as a group throughout the year.

### Chorus

Chorus is a year-long course commitment for our 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. There are no auditions to join Chorus as a GMS student. Students perform in evening concerts and daytime assemblies throughout the school year. They also participate in the Middle Tennessee Vocal Association's Choral Festival.

Students currently in our Chorus class also have the opportunity to audition for our "Showstoppers" performing choral group. This group performs several times throughout the school year in a variety of venues.

### Showstoppers

Showstoppers is an auditioned vocal ensemble that is comprised of students from the year-round 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade chorus classes. This group meets after school and performs a repertoire from the genres of pop, country, musical theater, and jazz. While they perform in concerts with the grade level chorus, they also perform in other venues throughout the community to provide entertainment for all ages. There is no fee to join this group; however, we do have costumes and other clothing items that are purchased at the beginning of the year.

## Drama

A Creative Dramatics course is offered at GMS. In addition to this class, GMS has proudly produced several stage performances throughout the years: "Schoolhouse Rock Jr. Live," "Into The Woods," "Hillbilly Reunion," and most recently "Don't Rock the Boat." Any GMS student interested in performing in one of our productions has the opportunity to audition for the various roles. These roles often involve acting, singing, and dancing.

## **IX. GENERAL ATHLETICS**

Athletic opportunities abound for the middle school student at GMS! Specific policies governing our sports teams are outlined on page 8 of the GMS Student Handbook and Agenda.

Our students have the opportunity participate in the following competitive athletic teams. Try-outs for these teams are conducted prior to each season opening.

- **Fall Team Sports**
  - Football (JV & Varsity)
  - Volleyball (JV & Varsity)
  - Cross Country (Girls' & Boys' Teams)
  - Golf (Girls' & Boys' Teams)
  - Soccer (JV & Varsity Girls'; JV & Varsity Boys')
  
- **Winter Team Sports:**
  - Wrestling

- Basketball (6<sup>th</sup>, JV & Varsity Girls' Teams; 6<sup>th</sup>, JV & Varsity Boys' Teams)
- Spring Team Sports:
  - Baseball (JV & Varsity)
  - Softball
  - Tennis (Girls' & Boys' Teams)
  - Track (Girls' & Boys' Teams)
  - Lacrosse (Girls' & Boys' Teams) -Club sport

**IN General:** GMS promotes excellence in our athletic programs. Parental and community support are vital to the success of our teams. Make your plans to support GMS Athletics by attending our events throughout the year. Season passes may be purchased through our Athletic Booster Club.

## **X. GMS CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS**

Numerous opportunities exist for your student to participate in school-sponsored as well as non-school sponsored clubs and activities! In previous years our students have participated in these various clubs and organizations:

- National Junior Honor Society
- Fellowship of Christian Athletes
- Student Council
- Youth Legislature
- Destination Imagination
- Boys' and Girls' Lacrosse Teams
- Book Club
- Duke University and John Hopkins Talent Search
- Model UN

- **STARS (Students Taking A Right Stand)**  
**Executive Council**
- **JROTC**
- **Chess Club**
- **Math Club**
- **Drama Club**
- **Forensics Club**
- **Science Club**
- **Cheerleading & Dance Teams**
- **Showstoppers Choral Group**
- **Knit Wits**
- **WGMS Staff**
- **GMS Yearbook Staff**
- **GMS Newspaper Staff**

## **XI. GMS PARENTS' CLUB INC.**

Our *GMS Parents' Club* is the parent support organization for *Grassland Middle School*. The primary purpose of our *Parents' Club* is to provide yearly funds to supplement allotments from *WCS Board of Education* and to support the enrichment and enhancement of *GMS* academic, artistic, athletic, musical excellence, as well as building and grounds enhancement. This organization also coordinates parent volunteer resources and activities throughout the school year.

The *GMS Parents' Club* has an Executive Board of Directors. This Board is selected by a Nominating Committee comprised of four active board members and one parent representative from each of the three feeder schools. This committee establishes a proposed ballot to be voted on by the parents of *GMS*.

Our *Parents' Club* holds a monthly Board Meeting on the third Monday of every month (with the exception of holidays). All parents are welcome to attend these meetings.

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### **GMS Parents' Club** **2009-2010 Executive Board**

President	Kim Wixted	309-5936
Past President	Karmine Quiggle	373-8593
Vice-President	Patsy Brown	595-9008
Treasurer	Robin Folks	309-0845
Recording Secretary	Mary Frank Miller	591-2622
Corresponding Secretary	Lynn Johnson	309-9938

## 2009-2010 Committees

Building & Grounds	Correspondence
Campus Volunteer Support	Parent E-mail
<i>General</i> Support	Marquee
Hospitality	News Print
Special Events:	Newsletters
• Info Fair	School Supplies
• Open House	General Store
	GMS Directory
Lost and Found	INVEST campaign
GMS CAFé (Community Awareness Forums)	

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### INVEST Campaign

In lieu of dues and numerous fundraising projects GMS Parents' Club adopted the "INVEST" program. The INVEST program supplements funding from the county. These funds often furnish new technology, curriculum enhancements, fund special events, and fully support the faculty and administration of GMS.

GMS Parents' Club recommends each family to contribute \$100 for their first student and \$75.00 for each additional student in the school to the INVEST program. These contributions are usually collected at the beginning of the school year during our Information Fair and Open House event, but will be gladly accepted at anytime during the school year. These contributions are 100% tax deductible.

### School Spirit - The General Store

"The General Store" is located in the GMS Commons. GMS Spirit items are for sale in this store during the school lunch hours (i.e. hooded sweatshirts, T-shirts, etc.).

## Athletic Booster Club

The *GMS Athletic Booster Club* is a sub-group of the *GMS Parents' Club*. This group exists to support fund raising activities for *all* sports to promote *GMS Athletics*. The *Booster Club* sells season sports passes, manages the *GMS* concession stands for athletic events, and conducts an annual fund raising event.

You are encouraged to assist this group and support *GMS*. Our *Booster Club* is an excellent pathway to our *GMS Community*. We welcome your participation!!

## Volunteer Opportunities

Many opportunities exist at *GMS* for parents to volunteer their time and talents!! We would love for every parent, grandparent, etc. in the school to have opportunities to volunteer at *Grassland Middle*. Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, to enhance your child's education, and to strengthen our school's community.

Please review the following list. If a particular area interests you, be sure to sign up at our annual *Information Fair* or *Open House* events

Art Teacher Support	Annual School Supply Sale
Athletic Booster Club	General Store
Library Book Fair	Hospitality
Building & Grounds Maintenance	<i>GMS CAFé</i> Events
<i>GMS</i> General Information Guide	<i>GMS</i> Cafeteria Monitor
Volunteer/Office Support	<i>GMS</i> Hallway Monitor
Parent Communications	Intramural Assistants

## XII. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### IN General:

The answers to many of your Frequently Asked Questions may be found in the GMS Student Handbook and Agenda (AGENDA) and in the 2009-2010 GMS General Information Guide. The General Information Guide may be purchased through the GMS Parents' Club at our upcoming Info Fair or Open House Events.

1. What is the WCS/GMS policy regarding my student's use of cell phones and portable/handheld electronics (i.e. IPODs, mp3 players, etc.)?

*Our electronic device policy is stated on page 3 of the AGENDA as follows, "All electronic devices are to be left at home. Any found at school will be confiscated by the administration and a parent will be required to come to school to pick them up."*

*Our Electronic Device Policy is stated as follows,*

*"1<sup>st</sup> Time - Parent required to pick up device.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> Time - Student must serve detention and parent must pick up device.*

*3<sup>rd</sup> Time - Student must serve two detentions and parent must pick up device.*

*4<sup>th</sup> Time, etc. - Policy will continue to build with each incident."*

2. Where are telephones located within GMS facilities for use by students after school hours?

*Several telephones are located throughout GMS for student use after school hours:*

- *A telephone is available in the front office for use until 4:00 p.m.*
- *Additional telephones are located in these areas: Concession Stand in the gym; P.E. Teacher's offices*
- *All faculty members have telephones in their classrooms.*
- *Any adult supervising a school activity should have access to a telephone.*

3. Does GMS have a dress code?

*Yes, this detailed information is contained within the AGENDA on pages 4 and 5 and can be found on the GMS website.*

4. How often will my student receive a Report Card?

*Williamson County Schools provide four (4) nine-week grading periods throughout the school year.*

5. Are student progress reports provided at GMS? If yes, how often will I receive my student's report?

*Student grades are available daily through the Parent Connection website. This eliminates the need for a progress report unless your child is failing a subject. In that case you will receive a progress report.*

6. How often does GMS conduct Parent/Teacher conferences?

*Formal conferences are scheduled in the fall. The date is pre-determined by the Williamson County School System. If you desire to meet with your child's teacher outside of this formalized schedule, you may schedule a conference at a time agreeable to both parties.*

7. What are TCAP's? When are they administered?

*Students in Grades 2-8 take the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) Achievement Test each spring. The Achievement Test is a timed, multiple choice assessment that measures skills in Reading, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. Student results are reported to parents, teachers and administrators. Tentative dates for this year's testing are March 22-31, 2009.*

**IN General:** More detailed information regarding the achievement testing process is available via the Williamson County website at:  
<http://www.wcs.edu/staff/assessment/middle.htm>

8. How is the D.A.R.E. program administered at GMS?

*D.A.R.E. - Drug Awareness Resistance Education is being taught through our 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading focus classes by Officer Jessica Richards, our School Resource Officer and a DARE instructor. The DARE lesson replaces the reading focus lesson one day per week.*

9. What is the S.T.A.R.S. program, and how is the administered at GMS?

*S.T.A.R.S - Students Taking A Right Stand.*

*This comprehensive prevention and intervention program brings students, parents, and schools together in an effort to eliminate substance abuse as described on page 8 of the handbook. The GMS STARS counselor and our school counselors conduct small group meetings with students who could benefit from talking with others regarding a variety of topics.*

10. What are the GMS policies governing student absenteeism, early dismissal for medical/dental appointments, or school tardiness?

*Parental notes for absenteeism should be turned into the student's homeroom teacher upon return to school. You may also click on the "Attendance Office" link on the GMS website ([www.wcs.edu/gms](http://www.wcs.edu/gms)) to send your note directly to our attendance administrators. The GMS policy governing student absences and make up work is further outlined on page 4 of the AGENDA. Family trips must be approved ahead of time by the principal.*

*If students must check out early for dental, medical, or other appointments, a note stating the reason must be brought to the school. This note must be shown to the teacher of the class from which the student will be dismissed. Parents must sign a student out of class in all cases. Please review this policy on page 5 of the AGENDA.*

*GMS values student promptness not only when arriving at school but also in getting to class in a timely*

*manner. Our policies regarding student tardiness is outlined on page 4 of the AGENDA as well.*

11. If my child forgets a textbook, project, or homework at home, should I bring the item to the GMS front office?

*GMS realizes this is a difficult situation for both your student and you. However, GMS discourages parents from bringing these items to the school for their student. A primary developmental goal during the middle school educational years is to encourage independence and responsibility in the student. Often times this can only be learned through difficult situations such as leaving necessary assignments at home.*

12. How should I communicate a change of dismissal plans or transportation plans to my student(s) late in their school day?

*All changes of plans or new instructions should be communicated as early in the school day as possible via telephone or email with the GMS front office. Please try to avoid changes in student dismissal or transportation plans after 2:00 p.m. when possible.*

## Notes