

# **R. Max Abbott Middle School Student Handbook ~ 2024-2025**



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Phone: 910-323-2201***

***<http://mams.ccs.k12.nc.us/>***

***<https://www.facebook.com/mamspanthers/>***

# R. Max Abbott Middle School Student Handbook 2024-2025

*All Cumberland County Schools district-level and school-based communications or guidance (e.g., handbooks, websites, social media communications, etc.) are subject to change.*

## WELCOME

Welcome to R. Max Abbott Middle School. Our students and staff have established standards of excellence in academic and co-curricular accomplishments. We have high expectations of our students, and we challenge you to set high standards for yourself. **Our Motto this school year: All Systems Go!**

Your success depends on the choices you make and is directly related to your efforts. Invest your time and energy wisely each day, and you will be successful in all you do.

We would like to help each student be an effective, responsible, and productive citizen in our society. Education is a team responsibility, which begins with your family, extends to the school, and encompasses the entire community. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher(s) throughout the year so that together, we are doing all we can to help your child be successful.

The R. Max Abbott Middle School Handbook is prepared to help you develop and accept the responsibilities and obligations of good citizenship in our school and community. Each student and parent is responsible for knowing and understanding this handbook, as well as the Cumberland County Schools Code of Conduct.

Set goals and challenge yourself to excel in academics by completing assignments, homework, and by participating in class; in attendance by being here each and every day; in behavior by making good choices and decisions and by treating others with respect; and in co-curricular activities by being involved in your school through the arts, athletics, and academic clubs.

## ***Make it a Meaningful Year!***

*Sharley Ditmore, Principal*  
*Kristen Kelton, Assistant Principal*  
*Priscilla Freeman, Assistant Principal*

***MAMS Vision:*** Our school is committed to providing a safe and caring environment where teachers will inspire students to be self-driven, life-long learners that appreciate diversity, display good character, and demonstrate responsible citizenship.

***MAMS Mission Statement:*** The mission of R. Max Abbott Middle School is to inspire our students to improve their lives and the world around them.

## **ASSEMBLIES/AWARDS**

Celebrations are held at the end of each grading period to recognize students who have achieved perfect attendance, A and A/B Honor Rolls, and special honors for academics, conduct, and good character. Students are expected to be attentive, respectful of presenters and performers, and to sit in designated sections with their teachers and class. You may show appreciation only through clapping hands.

### **2024-2025 Scheduled Awards Programs (subject to change):**

1st 9 weeks Awards: Friday, November 1, 2024

2nd 9 weeks Awards: Friday, January 17, 2025

3rd 9 weeks Awards: Friday, March 28, 2025

4th 9 weeks Awards: Thursday, May 22, 2025 for 6th and 7th Grade (8th-TBD)

## **ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES**

Battle of the Books

Forensics

Yearbook

National Junior Honor Society

Spanish Quiz Bowl

3D Printing Club

Spelling Bee

## **ATHLETIC REQUIREMENTS**

Our athletic program consists of football, baseball, basketball, soccer, track, wrestling, softball, and volleyball. In order to participate in the athletic program students must meet the following guidelines and requirements:

- A student must be in attendance at least 85% of the previous semester or miss no more than 13.5 days of school in one semester to be eligible to participate in athletics the following semester.
- A student must reside in the school district or meet local BOE policy.
- A student must pass at least one less than the number of required core courses each semester.
- Must have a weighted 2.0 GPA or a 70% average or better for the previous semester.
- A physical must be completed and received by the athletic director PRIOR to the first practice. Forms are available in the office.
- A student may not turn 15 on or before August 31st of the current school year.
- Voluntary transfer students may not participate in sports for 365 days from the first approved date of the first year of eligibility.
- Student athletes may not attend practice or games on days they are marked absent for the day.
- Any student athlete who is in RJC or suspended from school may not attend practice, play, or attend any school functions on the school campus on those given days. Students with discipline issues are subject to removal from any athletic team.
- All student athletes are to be picked up within 15 minutes after the practice or contest ends or they may be in jeopardy of forfeiting their right to be on the team.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

State law and board policy requires students attend school daily and be present for all classes. Regular and punctual attendance is critical to student success in school. In order to be counted present, all students must be checked in before 10:40 am or checked out after 10:40 am.

In order to be considered in attendance, a student must be present in the school for the school day, or at a place other than the school with the approval of the appropriate school official for the purpose of attending a school activity, which has been officially authorized under the policies of the Board of Education. Such activities may include: field trips, student conventions, musical festivals, or any similarly approved activity. The Cumberland County Board of Education authorizes school principals to record as present those pupils attending school related activities as designated by the Superintendent, providing the pupil's attendance at a school-related activity has prior approval of the principal or the appropriate school official.

Please check for special restrictions under each lawful reason. Documentation will be required for any of the foregoing to be considered lawful. Acceptable documentation can be a doctor's note with the doctor's signature, date, and time of appointment, subpoena, or parent's/guardian's note with student name, date, days of absences, reason for absence and parent's/guardian's signature. Documentation should be given to the homeroom teacher the day the student returns to school after an absence. If the note is not received explaining the absence within 5 days after the student returns to school, the absence will be coded as an "**unlawful**" absence. All other absences not defined above as "lawful" are coded unlawful.

### MAMS Attendance Policy Brochure below:

#### COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

This brochure includes what every parent should know about school attendance and the law. North Carolina law requires all children who are enrolled in Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade to attend school on a regular basis. When a child misses a day of school the parent/guardian must notify the homeroom teacher in writing within three days of the absence. **TYPES OF ABSENCES**

There are two types of absences: **excused (lawful) and unexcused (unlawful, 2A)**. An absence must fall into one of the following eight categories to be excused:

1. **Illness or Injury (1A):** The student is physically unable to attend school due to an illness or injury.
2. **Quarantine (1D):** The isolation of the student ordered by the health department/board of health or medical physician.
3. **Death in the Family (1C):** The death of an immediate family member such as parents, siblings or grandparents.
4. **Medical/Dental Appointment (1B):** Not for routine hour- long appointments, but for extensive appointments involving medical procedures.
5. **Court (1E):** The *child* must be present for court proceedings or an administrative hearing.
6. **Religious Observation (1F):** The tenets of a religion to which a student and their parents adhere, require or suggest observance of a religious event.
7. **Educational Opportunity (1G):** The purpose of the absence is to take advantage of a valid educational opportunity such as travel by the student. *An educational opportunity form is required for prior approval by the principal. A student report must be turned in within five days of the last absence.*
8. **Military Deployment or Reunification (1N):** The child's parent/guardian is deploying, redeploying or home on leave. Not to exceed five (5) days of absences.

## **FROM THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER**

The school social worker will contact you by letter, phone or home visit when your child has reached at least three (3) unexcused absences, six(6) unexcused absences or ten (10) excused absences.

## **REQUIRED BY LAW**

The social worker will send out three contact letters for unexcused absences.

1. The first letter is for **three unexcused absences**. These absences received a code of unexcused because a note was not received from the parent stating one of the eight valid absence reasons.
2. The second letter is sent home for **six unexcused absences**. These absences have accumulated from the beginning of the student's school year. This letter is signed by the principal.
3. The third letter is for **10 unexcused absences**. This letter notifies the parent of a conference with school personnel. This meeting is an effort to resolve the attendance concerns before punitive action.

## **AFTER THE TEN DAY LETTER**

If attendance concerns continue after the 10 day meeting, then the social worker may proceed to the following actions:

- 1. Truancy Mediation Council.** The social worker will request a formal mediation at the Cumberland County court house. The parent/guardian will meet with school personnel, social services, court representatives, juvenile services, mental health counselors and any agencies involved with the student. This will give all parties a chance to discuss the situation and come to a mutually satisfactory solution.
- 2. District Court.** The social worker may elect to proceed with court action. This action brings all parties in front of a judge to discuss the noncompliance with the compulsory attendance law. This could result in jail time as well as fines.

## **EXCESSIVE EXCUSED ABSENCES**

Students accumulating 10 excused absences are sent a letter of Excessive Excused Absences. A physician's note will be required for all future absences. Failure to provide a physician's note will result in the absence being coded unexcused. Parents/guardians may submit a letter from a physician stating that the student has a chronic illness that will cause the student to be absent more than 10 days in a school year.

## **MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS**

It is the student's responsibility to make up missed classroom assignments within five days of returning to school. Please contact your teachers immediately.

## **ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY**

To be eligible for MAMS sports, you must be in attendance for 85% of the previous semester. Student- athletes may not attend practice or games on days they are absent.

## **CONTACT YOUR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER**

Your school social worker will assist your family in overcoming any barriers that may be keeping your child from coming to school. Address issues early, so the school year will be successful for your child and family!

## **MORNING TARDY POLICY**

Please refer to the student handbook for full details of the morning tardy policy. Students are tardy starting at 7:30 a.m. and must sign in at the front office with a parent before reporting to class.

## **PARENT PORTAL**

Keep track of your child's attendance by accessing the parent portal at <http://www.homebaseportal.ccs.k12.nc.us/>. You will receive sign-in information from your child's homeroom teacher. (Subject to change this school year, updates will be provided).

## **BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING**

Students and teachers at R. Max Abbott Middle School should be able to attend school and function in a bully-free zone. For an act to be considered bullying it must meet certain criteria. This includes hostile intent, imbalance of power, repetition, distress, and provocation. Bullying will not be tolerated and will be handled by the teacher and/or administrator at the occurrence.

A computer or electronic device used to intimidate or torment a student or school employee is considered cyber-bullying. If someone repeatedly posts (through social media, chat, or text) information or photos of or about someone else, makes statements, whether true or false, intended to provoke or harass an individual, they are participating in cyber-bullying. If the acts happen at school or affect another student's performance in school, school administration will address the incident per the Cumberland County Student Code of Conduct

## **CAFETERIA - SCHOOL MEALS**

Everyone at MAMS has the right to eat lunch in a clean, safe environment. Students will be encouraged to use and demonstrate acceptable social manners while using the café facilities. Lunch should be conducted at a Level 1 (whisper talk) to Level 2 (normal talk).

Breakfast and lunch are served daily. Lunch menus will be posted at the beginning of each month. R. Max Abbott Middle School is a Title I/CPS school -therefore, all students will receive FREE school breakfast and FREE school lunch.

All food items brought to school must be consumed during breakfast or lunch. After eating, students are asked to leave tables clean and carry lunch trays and plastic ware to the trash area. Trash must be placed in proper receptacles. Food and lunch trays may not be taken out of the cafeteria without permission. **Water bottles may be brought to school. No outside food or drink will be allowed during instructional time.**

Lunch items may be dropped off at the front desk for your child. The student will be called to the office to pick it up prior to their lunch time. Parents/Guardians may only drop off meals for their own children (not for friends). Parents/Guardians who would like to eat lunch with their children are invited to do so, and will be able to eat together in a designated area during the child's scheduled lunch time.

## **CELL PHONES/EAR BUDS**

Many students have cell phones/electronic devices for communication with parents after school. Student cell phones/electronic devices are not allowed to be used from 7:00 am - 2:40 pm. Cell phones must be placed in lockers. Any cell phone, electronic devices, or any other non-educational item that is seen by school personnel, will be confiscated and turned in to the office. If a parent needs to reach their child during school hours they may call the school at 910-323-2201 and ask for their child to come to the office to call them.

Any student who refuses to give up their cell phone, electronic device or other prohibited item to school personnel will automatically be referred to a school administrator.

Earbuds are NOT to be used or seen during the school day and will also be confiscated. Wired headphones may be used at the discretion of the assigned teacher for educational purposes, but wired headphones may only be connected to the school device.

After a device is taken from a student the first time, the student may sign for the device at the end of the school day at the front desk. After a device is taken from a student the second time and thereafter, a parent/guardian must pick up the device in the office the following school

day.

### **CHANGES IN STUDENT INFORMATION**

It is imperative that the school office be notified immediately of a change of address, home or office telephone number, or of a change in emergency information during the academic school year. Please request a change of address form from the data manager to assure the change is made in Infinite Campus.

### **COMPUTER USE POLICY**

At MAMS, students who have turned in an Internet Use Agreement will be allowed to access the Internet. When you use the computers, you have a responsibility to use them correctly. This means that they should not be used to access or create materials that don't belong at school. This includes, but is not limited to, images and messages that are sexually explicit, grotesquely violent or seek to demean or harass others. Please be aware that the privilege of computer use depends on your ability to use them correctly. You may lose that privilege if you are unable to act responsibly.

All laptop computers are the property of R. Max Abbott Middle School and Cumberland County Schools. Laptops are for students' academic use during the school year. Students are held responsible for damages to laptops assigned to them by the school. These laptops are to be handled carefully. Satisfactory settlement will be required for damage to laptops. **Students who visit gaming sites or inappropriate sites at school will have their school technology privileges taken for up to 45 school days per incident. Disciplinary action may be taken for each incident.**

R. Max Abbott Middle School uses a software monitoring student computer use. **Any student found tampering with, disconnecting from, or altering the system will have disciplinary action taken.**

### **DISCIPLINE PLAN**

Positive Student Behavior is the goal at R. Max Abbott Middle School. There are school wide and grade level incentives rewarded for positive behavior. However, occasionally students do not respond to positive incentives and a disciplinary action is required. When this occurs the following steps may be taken:

Step 1: The teacher will give the student a verbal warning.

Step 2: The teacher(s) will conference briefly with the student. They will discuss what is happening, how to fix the issue, how to avoid the issue, and any next steps. Contact with parent/guardian is optional at this level. (Note in ABE.)

Step 3: The teacher may use other interventions including moving the student's seat, brief removal from support personnel, or silent lunch, if needed. Contact with a parent/guardian is required at this level. (Classroom Action in ABE.)

Step 4: A referral will be made to the grade-level administrator to issue a disciplinary action. Administrative contact with parents/guardians is required. (Office referral in ABE.)

**\*\* Severe actions will result in an immediate referral to an administrator.**

## **DRESS CODE**

*High standards of dress promote good citizenship and a positive, professional, and safe learning environment. The appearance of our student body reflects upon the climate of our school. Students are expected to adhere to standards of dress and grooming that are acceptable in a positive learning environment. Teachers and administrators have discretion in making judgments relating to the appropriateness of dress.*

- **Hoodies - WILL BE ALLOWED.** However, any student found in violation of wearing the hood portion in the building will **immediately lose their privilege of being able to wear a hoodie in the school building** for the remainder of the school day. Persistent violations may result in an administrative referral.
- Coats may be worn to and from school, but may not be worn in the building or from class to class, please store these items in the student's locker. Students may wear light jackets, sweaters or sweatshirts in class.
- **BOOK BAGS** –Book bags may not be worn or carried during the school day, they must be left in the lockers until needed. No rolling book bags allowed, unless a doctor's note is provided. All PE clothes may be kept in a small drawstring bag – but must be left in lockers until elective time or designated locker time before electives.
- No oversized purses, laptop bags, or book-bag type purses are allowed.
- No clothing will be worn that is offensive to any race or sex, or which displays profanity, weapons, alcohol, or drugs in any form. Also, no clothing that advertises inappropriate movies, cartoons, or activities will be permitted.
- Hats, hoods, bandanas (all colors), head wraps, headbands with ornaments such as ears, puff balls, stars, or other decorations will not be worn for any reason during the school day. Slide-on headbands, plain or patterned, are permitted. Note: Head coverings for religious purposes are permitted.
- Sunglasses or non-prescription glasses may not be worn during the school day.
- “Sagging” pants are not permitted, this also includes low-rise pants. Boxers or gym shorts should not be seen below waistbands. If pants are repeatedly sagging, rope or cord will be provided for the student to use in lieu of a belt.
- No clothing is to be worn that will allow a student's undergarments to be visible.
- Any form of gang evidence is prohibited. This includes bandanas, rolled up pant legs, and specific markings on clothing or body.
- Rips or holes in pants, skirts, shorts, or other bottoms must be below fingertip length.
- Skirts, dresses, and shorts must pass the fingertip test and meet administrative approval. Long t-shirts are not allowed in place of a dress. They may however be worn with shorts that pass the finger-tip test.



- Leggings must be worn with a shirt that covers the bottom.
- Biker Shorts are NOT permitted.
- Bodysuits and catsuits will be treated as legging and must have a shirt that covers the bottom.
- No tying of tops.
- Sheer, see-through, or lace shirts are not permitted, the body's midsection/torso should be covered at all times. Strapless/spaghetti straps, shirts with cutouts on the body, or that show the midriff are not permitted.
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- No tank-tops or sleeveless shirts with low underarm areas will be allowed.
- Bedroom clothes, pajamas, lounging pants, or slippers may not be worn.
- Blankets, stuffed animals, and other similar items are not permitted at school.
- Facial stickers/bandaids are not permitted unless there is an injury to the face.
- All new fashion trends or fads will be reviewed at the administrator's discretion.

***All dress code violation consequences are at the discretion of the administration, students who break the dress code repeatedly may receive disciplinary action.***

*All Cumberland County Schools will make any necessary religious accommodations for any type of headgear or head coverings otherwise restricted or prohibited under existing individual school dress codes. No student shall be suspended out of school based solely upon violation of an existing individual school dress code.*

If a student is thought to be out of dress code, they will be asked to report to the office where they may call home to get an appropriate change of clothing. If a parent/guardian is not able to bring clothing the administrator will make a determination on student placement for the remainder of the day.

#### **EARLY DISMISSAL**

If a student needs to leave during the school day, a parent/guardian must pick the student up and sign him/her out in the main office. **Students will not be allowed to check out of school after 2:20 pm.** R. Max Abbott Middle School maintains a 100% ID check when students are checked out. All persons checking out students must be listed on the student's information form.

## **EIGHTH GRADE DANCE**

Depending on parent volunteer and participation numbers, an eighth grade dance may be scheduled for the end of the school year. This activity will be for eighth grade Max Abbott Middle School students only. All current eighth grade students will have the opportunity to purchase a dance ticket and attend the end of year dance. All participating students must meet the behavioral requirements listed below.

### **Behavioral requirements:**

- Students who have been assigned to the alternative school during the school year may not attend the dance.
- Students that have been suspended 3 or more times are not able to attend the dance.
- Students that have been suspended from school for a period of time including the day of the school dance may not attend the dance.

### **Dress Code requirements for eighth grade dance:**

- Dresses with spaghetti straps will be permitted, no strapless dresses, no shorts or shorts outfits, no exposed midriffs, no fully exposed backs, dresses must meet the fingertip length requirement
- Collared or polo shirt is appropriate. Ties and/or suits are optional

## **EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING**

In the event of inclement weather, school may be closed or may require a delayed starting time or an early dismissal. Local radio and television stations will announce these conditions. This information is also available at the Cumberland County Schools website.

## **FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES**

Only school-approved clubs and organizations are entitled to have fundraising activities. All fund-raising activities must be pre-approved by the R. Max Abbott Middle School Administration. Students may not sell unauthorized items at school for profit.

## **FIRE AND TORNADO DRILLS**

Fire drills are conducted each month throughout the school year. Check the posted instructions in each classroom indicating how to exit the building in case of fire or where to report for safety during a tornado. Remember to walk silently (at a Level 0) and quickly to the designated area. The fire alarm sounds like a bell. A three-tone bell signals a tornado drill. Students assume a curled position and cover their heads during a tornado drill.

## **GOOD CONDUCT**

One of the most important lessons education should teach is discipline. It is the training that develops self-control, character, orderliness, and efficiency. It is the key to good conduct and proper respect for self, other people, and property. All R. Max Abbott Middle School students and staff have the right to expect to be able to learn and teach in an atmosphere free from unreasonable and unwarranted disruptions. We value our class time and our activity time.

Each student is required to enter class prepared with pencils, pens, paper, textbooks, and all class-related materials necessary for each class. Non-instructional items are not permitted at school unless directed by a staff member.

Assignments, both class work and homework, are necessary components of the curriculum at

MAMS. Students must complete and turn in these assignments in a timely manner. Assignments should be the work of the individual, copying another student's work or plagiarism are honor code violations and may result in an office referral. Students should utilize their handbooks for all assignments.

In order to maintain a positive academic environment conducive to high standards in teaching and learning, students will be accountable for responsible, respectful behavior. Students must adhere to the rules contained in the Cumberland County Schools Student Code of Conduct, and the R. Max Abbott Middle School student handbook.

If changes or additions to the rules occur, all concerned parties will be notified through announcements and/or written handouts and will be held responsible for knowledge and compliance thereof.

### **COUNSELING DEPARTMENT**

Comprehensive school counseling programs promote students' academic careers, as well as their personal-social development. Our counselors are available to assist students in attaining maximum benefit from their school experiences. Please ask your teacher to call your counselor to see if they are available. The counselors will see students as quickly as possible to assist with the needs of our students.

### **GRADING SCALE**

R. Max Abbott Middle School and the Cumberland County Schools follow a 10-point grading scale.

A = 100 - 90% B= 89 - 80% C= 79 - 70% D = 69 - 60% F = 59 <

### **HALL ETIQUETTE/ HALL PASSES**

Students should only be in the halls at the beginning and end of the school day and while moving from one class to another. It is the student's responsibility to ask for and secure a hall pass from their assigned teacher before leaving the classroom to visit the restroom, office, etc. Students are asked to be courteous at all times and to keep to the right when walking in the halls. The expectation in the hallway is a Level 0 (No talking) to Level 1 (Whisper voice), since during some class changes other grade levels will be in core class instruction.

### **INJURY AT SCHOOL/ILLNESS/SICK PHONE**

Any student injured at school must immediately notify school personnel. In case of injury, an accident report will be completed by the supervising teacher and the parents will be notified. If a student is sick, they will be sent to the main office where the reception will ask them to sign the sick log and call their parent(s), they will then return to class until a parent can pick them up. If the student is vomiting or has a fever, they will wait in the side office for a parent to pick them up.

### **INSURANCE**

Student accident insurance plans selected by the School Board are made available on an optional basis to all students. At the beginning of the school year printed information and application forms will be given to each student. The completed application forms must be mailed directly to the insurance company.

## **LOCKERS**

Lockers are provided for students' convenience to keep books and other property needed at school. All students must provide their own lock to use with their assigned locker. All books and personal items, when not in use, including heavy coats, are to be kept in your locker. Cell phones and other technological devices not administered by the school should remain in lockers. Please adhere to the locker schedule assigned by each individual team. Students who are continuously late for class may lose the right to have a locker for their use.

All students must store all of their school items in their assigned locker.

1. Use only the locker assigned to you, and do not share lockers with others.
2. You may use any lock that you would like to provide. The lock combination must be provided to the homeroom teacher.
3. Do not give your locker combination to other students.
4. Lockers must be kept clean at all times. Writing or adding stickers to the outside or inside of lockers is prohibited.
5. Lockers must be kept in good condition. If a locker is knowingly abused, you will lose the use of the locker and pay for damages.
6. Do not leave valuable personal property in lockers.
7. Lockers remain the property of MAMS and may be subject to inspection by the school administration at any time.
8. Storage of inappropriate or illegal items is not allowed and is subject to disciplinary action.
9. Lockers should be cleaned out prior to leaving for winter break (teachers will schedule this).

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Personal belongings found on school grounds should be turned in to the front office. Lost and found items may be claimed in the designated area. The school cannot be responsible for any lost items. Items not claimed by the last day of each 9 weeks will be donated to a charitable organization.

## **MEDIA CENTER**

The media center is open to students from 7:00 am to 2:55 pm daily. Students can either visit with their class or individually before or after school, or during a class with permission/pass from their teacher.

- Each student may check out three books at one time.
- Books are checked out for two school weeks, and can be renewed once.
- A replacement fee will be charged to cover the cost of any lost or damaged books.
- Students with an overdue book must turn it in or renew it before checking out other materials.
- All overdue fines and lost book fees must be paid by the end of the school year in order for students to participate in end-of-year celebrations, field days, etc.
- Destiny, the online library catalog, can be accessed at <http://destiny.ccs.k12.nc.us>
- NCWiseOwl is a group of subscription online databases for student research and includes full-text journal articles, newspaper articles, and reference materials. Access for free at [www.ncwiseowl.org](http://www.ncwiseowl.org).

## MEDICINE

Students required to take oral medications during school hours must have an official physician's medication form properly completed and on file in our office. This medication form requires written instructions, student's name, name of drug, dosage, time of day the medication is to be given, and signatures of the physician and parent. Parents are responsible for transporting to and from school all medicines to be administered by school personnel in a container properly labeled by the pharmacy or physician. The pharmacy label on the bottle must match the physician medication form exactly. All medication must be kept in the office. No student is to have any medication(s), whether prescription, or over-the-counter drugs in his/her possession at any time during the school day.

However, if a student has an emergency self-medication authorization form on file with the office to self-carry an asthma inhaler or an EpiPen, then that student may have that item in their possession at all times.

## MESSAGES

In order to preserve valuable instructional time and to promote the safety of our students, personal calls and messages to students will be allowed only in an emergency. Pre-planning is essential. Students need to make appointments, bus plans, alternate car rides, etc. before leaving home for school. When there is a cancellation or change in the schedule by the school during the school day, students will be permitted to call a parent/guardian to inform them of the change.

## OUTSTANDING SCHOOL OBLIGATIONS

Students with outstanding obligations (lost or damaged books, fundraising money owed, etc.) may be restricted from participating in co- or extra-curricular activities (i.e. field trips, special programs, field day activities, celebration day events, dances, etc) per Principal discretion.

## PARENT PORTAL

Keep track of your child's attendance and grades by accessing the parent portal at <http://www.homebaseportal.ccs.k12.nc.us/> (subject to change with the new system this school year). You will receive sign-in information from your child's homeroom teacher or may ask for a copy of this information at the front desk.

## PERSONAL PROPERTY

Personal items are the responsibility of the students. Please leave valuables (cell phones, jewelry, electronic equipment, cameras, large sums of money, etc.) at home. **We are not held responsible for lost personal items.** Books and personal items should be safeguarded. Special care must be given to securing band and orchestra instruments. Never leave these instruments unattended. Never leave books, pocketbooks, etc. unattended on bleachers, steps, or in desks. Please ensure your name is on all your property.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education is a required class. Students are required to dress out for participation. “**Dressing out**” means changing from your school clothes into appropriate clothing for physical activity and changing back into your school clothes after class. To be successful in physical education class it is imperative that you dress out and participate in each class. The items that you need are as follows:

**T-Shirt** – A clean, plain white or light colored pullover shirt. Tank tops and half shirts will not be permitted.

**Shorts** – A clean pair of athletic shorts that are acceptable in length and fullness for freedom of movement, but will stay in place without being held by the hand or a belt. Shorts made of denim or other heavy material with zippers or belts are not appropriate.

**Pants** – Sweat pants or jogging suits may be worn during cold weather days at the teacher's discretion. Coats, hoodies, and heavy jackets are not acceptable.

**Socks** – Clean athletic socks.

**Shoes** - Rubber-soled tennis shoes. No open-toed shoes, boots, or other casual shoes will be allowed.

We will not allow any student to dress in a manner that distracts others from learning, is offensive to others, or violates health or safety requirements. The school dress code applies for Physical Education.

## PROGRESS REPORTS/REPORT CARDS

Progress Reports will be posted in the Parent Portal and Report Cards will be given to students once during each nine-week period and available in the Parent Portal.

### **Progress Report will be available on the following schedule:**

1st 9-weeks - Monday, September 23, 2023; 2nd 9-weeks - Wednesday, November 20, 2024; 3rd 9-weeks – Thursday, February 6, 2025; and 4th 9-weeks – Wednesday, April 22, 2025

### **Report Cards will go out on the following schedule:**

1st 9-weeks – Friday, October 25, 2024; 2nd 9-weeks – Friday, January 10, 2025; 3rd 9-weeks - Wednesday, March 19, 2025; and 4th 9-weeks - will be mailed on Friday, June 6, 2025

## PROMOTION AND RETENTION POLICY

(CC Board Policy IHE)

In order to be promoted to the next grade students must earn a passing grade of a 60 in:

- ❖ Language Arts
- ❖ Math
- ❖ Science
- ❖ Social Studies
- ❖ One Elective Course

Final promotion decisions shall be based on mastery of grade-level skills as measured by teacher assessments, North Carolina End of Grade Tests, and other local and state recommended assessments.

## PUNCTUALITY

Promptness to school and class is very important! Students are to be in their seats and ready

to work at the beginning bell for class. **Students who arrive at school after classes are in session must report to the school office with a parent/guardian to sign in and secure an admittance pass to class.**

A student is tardy to class if they do not arrive at the designated time per the daily schedule and do not have a note from the previous teacher or from the office. When a student is tardy to the same class for the third (3) time in a nine weeks grading period, they will receive an automatic office referral. Students who do not report to class and are more than 10 minutes late to class may be reported as skipping. Skipping classes will be an automatic office referral.

### **QUESTIONS – WHO TO ASK**

Ms. Sharley Ditmore serves as our Principal. She will visit classrooms regularly and meet with students both individually and in groups about data and student progress. She will have the principal's round-table meeting to gain input about the school from the students' perspective. She is always available to meet with students regarding concerns or needs.

Ms. Kristen Kelton serves as an Assistant Principal. She handles all of the 6th grade and the seventh grade Tropics team discipline. She also serves as our school's testing coordinator, handles all field trips. She is always available to meet with students regarding concerns or needs.

Dr. Priscilla Freeman serves as an Assistant Principal. She handles the seventh grade Islanders team and all of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade discipline. She also serves as our athletic director, manages buses and bus drivers, and oversees the building and grounds maintenance, as well as custodians. She is always available to meet with students regarding concerns or needs.

Ms. Audra Bramble will serve as our Safe Schools Coordinator. She will assist the administrative team as needed in disciplinary concerns. She will monitor lunches and be available for student issues.

Students who have questions or concerns may speak with any of their teachers at any time. We also have a wonderful Student Support Team made up of our school counselors and social workers. They are available to all of the students at Max Abbott Middle School each and every day. Our counselors and social workers assist with peer mediation, problem solving, attendance issues, assist students and their families in gaining community resources, work with families who are homeless, and look out for the general needs of the students.

### **REPORTING INFORMATION**

If you have information you would like to report, please speak with any of your teachers, any staff member, your assistant principals, or your principal. However, if you would like to report anonymously, you may do so by visiting the Say Something site.

Max Abbott Middle School will follow Cumberland County Board of Education Policy Code 4342 pertaining to student search and seizure.

### **SCHOOL EQUIPMENT AND PROPERTY**

Extreme care should be taken in the use of all school equipment and property. Microscopes, band and orchestra instruments, physical education equipment, textbooks, computers, lockers, and even chairs and desks should be used with proper care. You may be held responsible to pay for damages to school property assigned to you which has been intentionally abused.

## **SCHOOL HOURS**

School hours are from 7:30 am until 2:40 pm each day. Students should **NOT** arrive earlier than 7:00 am or remain on the campus later than 2:55 pm unless they are participating in a supervised activity.

**THE SCHOOL DOORS WILL NOT OPEN UNTIL 7:00 am EACH SCHOOL DAY.**

**Supervision WILL NOT be provided for students prior to 7:00 am or after 2:55 pm.** Parents who continuously do not abide by these guidelines, and allow their students to be at school long before and/or after school, may be referred to a child protective agency.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE SCHOOL DAY**

**Prior to 7:00 a.m.** – Teachers and assistants sign in and report to classroom or duty assignment

**7:00 a.m.** - Bell rings - School opens for students

Immediately upon the student's arrival to their homeroom class, all book bags, athletic bags, or similar items **MUST** be deposited in the student's locker.

**7:00-7:30 a.m.** – Breakfast served/All Staff should be on duty at 7:00 a.m.

**7:00-7:30 a.m.** - Students get breakfast, go to locker, and then report to their homeroom

**7:30 a.m.-7:40a.m**– Homeroom

**7:40 a.m. - 2:40 p.m.** – Core and Elective classes

**2:40-2:55 p.m.** - Bell rings - Students dismissed to cars and buses

**3:30 p.m.** - Office closes

## **SICK STUDENT**

If a student is sick, the classroom teacher will give them a hall pass to visit the main office. Students will speak to the receptionist and ask to use the sick phone to call their parent(s). The student will sign-in on the sick log and then call their parent(s), the student will then return to class until a parent can pick them up.

If students have a fever or are throwing up or if they are displaying other severe symptoms, the student will remain in a designated location until parent/guardian arrival.

## **STUDENT DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP**

Students who are car riders will be dropped off/picked up each day at the sidewalk area in front of the school. However, an adult may park and walk to the sidewalk to get their child and walk them back to the parked vehicle. Students are not to be dropped off/picked up at the bottom of the entrance hill on Winding Creek or on the roadway on Executive Place. The safety of all of our students is very important and enforcing these drop-off and pick-up routines will help make the drop-off and pick-up times safer for all of our students.

The School doors will not open until 7:00 am each school day. Supervision **WILL NOT** be provided for students prior to 7:00 am or after 2:55 pm. Parents who continuously do not abide by these guidelines, and allow their students to be at school long before and/or after school, may be referred to a child protective agency.

## **STUDENT WORK - GRADING POLICY**

Student progress is evaluated in a number of ways including projects, homework, daily assignments, and tests both teacher-made and standardized. Failure to do projects, presentations, and performances will result in a reduction of one letter grade from the original grade for each day late. After five days, no credit will be given for these assignments. All student work is expected to be completed in a timely manner.



MATH & ELA should have a minimum of 20 grades by the end of each grading period. SCIENCE & SOCIAL STUDIES should have a minimum of 15 grades by the end of each grading period. ELECTIVES - ARTS/COMPUTERS/PE should have a minimum of 10 grades by the end of each grading period.

### **STUDENT WORK - HOMEWORK**

Students may have approximately 10-15 minutes of practice work (per teacher) per day. Projects and long-term assignments are not included in this time frame.

### **STUDENT WORK - MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS**

Students are responsible for securing make-up assignments for absences on the day they return to school. All work missed due to a lawful absence must be made up within five school days upon the student's return to school. Assignments that are not made up will be reflected in the student's grade. A student who is present when a test is announced is expected to take the test as scheduled or upon returning to school.

In laboratory classes such as cultural arts, physical education, computer technology, and science, which do not lend themselves to make-up work, the teacher will determine the make-up procedure. It is anticipated that make-up work (including tests) will be completed outside the normal class time.

### **STUDENT WORK - LATE WORK**

Students will be responsible for submitting all assignments, to include performances, presentations, and projects, on the due date determined by the teacher. Failure to do so may result in a reduction of **one letter grade** from the original grade for each day late. This does not apply to homework or daily class work assignments. These assignments must be turned in on the due date. Work submitted more than five school days after the due date will receive no credit.

### **TARDY POLICY PROCEDURES**

If a student arrives to class late without a hall pass, the consequences will be as follows (per class, per nine weeks):

1st offense – Student receives warning and must sign the tardy log

2nd offense – Student must sign the tardy log and parent may be contacted

3rd offense- Student must sign the tardy log and an office referral is submitted (1 day of RJC will be given if administration determines student was tardy 3 times)

**NOTE: This Policy does not include Late Check-Ins: Please refer to the attendance section of this handbook.**

**MAMS Definition of Skipping:** Any student who is not in class for more than 10 minutes after the class start time and returns to class without a pass is considered skipping. A student in an unauthorized area of the school without a pass or permission is considered skipping class.

### **TRANSPORTATION SCHOOL BUSES**

School bus transportation is only available to R. Max Abbott Middle School students residing in our attendance areas. To ensure the safety of all passengers, students must adhere to the

following while riding the bus:

- Students shall stay in their seats and face forward.
- Students shall refrain from throwing waste paper on the floor of the bus.
- Students shall not consume food or drinks on the bus.
- No part of the body shall be extended through the bus window at any time.
- Students must be quiet while the bus is stopped for railroad crossing.
- Students shall not open the emergency door unless an emergency exists.
- Students must sit in assigned seats at the discretion of the driver or administrator.
- Students are liable for all damages to school property.

**Students will not be permitted to ride a bus not assigned to them. Non-bus students may not not ride a bus at any time.**

School bus transportation is a privilege. Students who do not follow the above rules, may be suspended from riding the school bus. Bus suspensions may vary from 1-5 days, 10-15 days, or for the remainder of the year, depending upon the type of violation and the number of prior violations. Questions about bus transportation, safety questions, or bus suspensions should be directed to Justin Cains, Assistant Principal.

### **PRIVATE VEHICLE**

To provide for the safety and proper supervision on campus, students **should not arrive before 7:00 am and must be picked up by 2:50 pm** each school day. If an emergency should cause a delay in pick up, parents/guardians should telephone the school so that supervision can be arranged. Students remaining after school for scheduled supervised activities **must have pre-arranged transportation** for departure at the announced ending time.

### **VISITORS**

Our school policy is to welcome only visitors who have legitimate business at school. Guests and visitors must report to the main office and sign in for authorization before proceeding through the school to volunteer or attend events or conferences. All volunteers must complete the CCS volunteer form, found on the CCS website, before they will be permitted to volunteer in classrooms or on field trips.

Students may not bring visitors to school to attend class.

Parents are also encouraged to make appointments to see their child's teacher(s) during his/her planning time so that all teachers will be given the opportunity to attend.

### **VOICE LEVELS**

Students and teachers at R. Max Abbott Middle School should be respectful of the events of the school and demonstrate appropriate voice levels as they move about the building. Voice Levels: Level 4 – Outside Voice (appropriate outside and/or during PE activities in the gym); Level 3 – Presentation Voice (appropriate when speaking in front of the class, during a presentation, or when asked to read aloud in class); Level 2 – Normal Voice (this is the voice level that is used the most. It is appropriate during group activities, during lunch, or interacting within the classroom with the teacher/students); Level 1 – Whisper Voice (appropriate when doing partner work or when asking questions when others are engaged in quiet activities); Level 0 – Silent Voice (at this level there should be no talking or whispering, it should be

silent). We are at Level 0 when changing classes in the main building, as we enter and exit assemblies and awards programs.

Examples of voice levels:

Entering and exiting the school building: Level 0 or Level 1; Working in a classroom, while completing a test/quiz: Level 0; Working in a classroom, while conducting a science experiment (2-3 people): Level 2 or Level 1; Classroom discussion or lesson interaction: Level 2 or Level 1; Working on a project with a group of students: Level 2 or Level 1; Entering and exiting elective classes: Level 0; Moving through the building with class or individually: Level 0; Visiting the restroom: Level 0 or Level 1; Presenting a project to the class: Level 3; Standing in a line: Level 0; Participating in a school pep rally: Level 4

### **CCS NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

Please refer to [www.ccs.k12.nc.us](http://www.ccs.k12.nc.us) and the Non-Discrimination Policy and Grievances page for a detailed statement.

## **Max Abbott Middle School Shared Responsibilities**

### ***Student expectations:***

- Showing respect and cooperating with all adults in the school.
- Coming to class prepared to work and completing all assignments to the best of my ability.
- Following the school dress code.
- Following all school/classroom procedures and routines.
- Monitoring PowerSchool and personal goals on a weekly basis.
- Respecting the rights of others to learn without distraction and disruption.
- Showing respect for people and property by not using profanity, stealing, or vandalizing.
- Practicing safety by not running, pushing, or fighting on campus.
- Asking my teachers questions when I don't understand something.
- Discussing with my parent(s) what I am learning in school.
- Following the Code of Student Conduct.

### ***Teacher expectations:***

- Providing a safe and pleasant atmosphere for learning;
- Explaining assignments to students clearly.
- Providing continuous feedback of student progress and achievement to students and parents.
- Providing students with goal setting opportunities.
- Providing motivating, interesting, and rigorous learning experiences in my classroom.
- Utilizing scientifically research based techniques and methods that work best for the students.
- Explaining the Code of Student Conduct to the students.
- Communicating and cooperating with each parent to enable the best education possible.
- Explaining my expectations, instructional goals, procedures, routines, and grading system to students and parents.

### ***Parents expectations:***

- Getting my child to school on time and avoiding unnecessary absences.
- Providing a time and place each evening for quiet study or reading at home.
- Helping my child in any way possible to meet his or her responsibilities.
- Finding out how my child is progressing by attending conferences, PTO meetings, calling the school, and monitoring my child's progress in PowerSchool.
- Encouraging my child to read to complete assignments, but also, for enjoyment.
- Talking with my child about his/her school work and activities every day.
- Reinforcing the Student Code of Conduct.
- Keeping my child's teachers abreast of unique circumstances.

- Contacting my student/teacher through school phone systems.
- Supporting the school and my child's teacher in its efforts to maintain proper discipline.

***Administrators/counselors expectations:***

- Creating a welcoming environment for students and parents.
- Communicating to students and parents the school mission and goals.
- Ensuring a safe and orderly environment.
- Reinforcing the partnership between parent, student, staff, and community.
- Acting as the instructional leader by supporting teachers in their classroom.
- Setting high standards and implementing effective programs.
- Allocating resources to ensure that high standards are met for all students.
- Providing a variety of opportunities for involving parents in decision making, providing input, and volunteering at the school.
- Providing the appropriate growth opportunities for students and teachers.
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This year we will participate in PBIS. Students will be given a name tag/QR Code to receive Panther Points to earn rewards for exhibiting the actions below:

