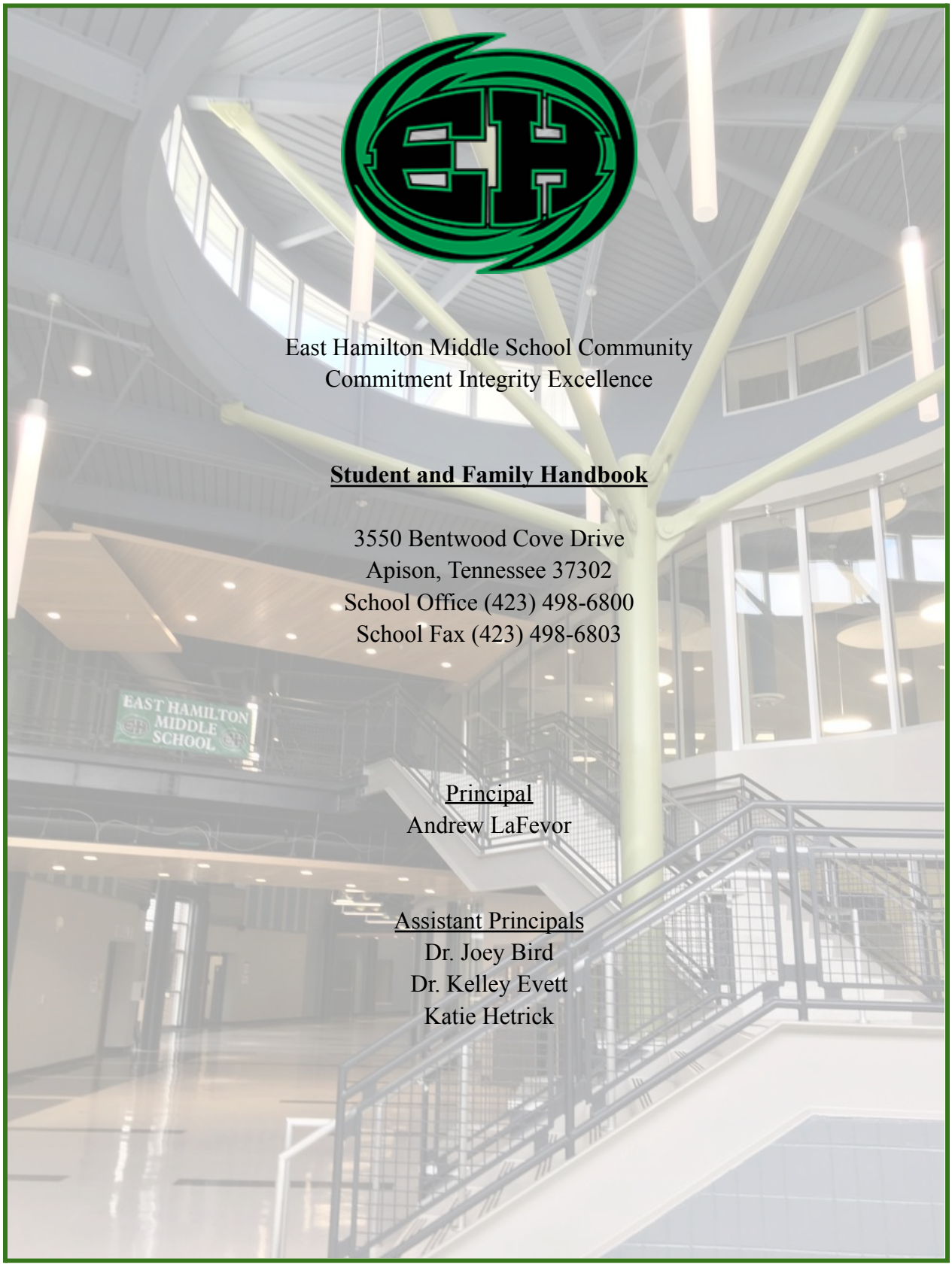


East Hamilton Middle School Community
Commitment Integrity Excellence

Student and Family Handbook

3550 Bentwood Cove Drive
Apison, Tennessee 37302
School Office (423) 498-6800
School Fax (423) 498-6803

Principal
Andrew LaFevor

Assistant Principals
Dr. Joey Bird
Dr. Kelley Evett
Katie Hetrick

EHMS Mission/Vision
Vision:

I am, We are, East Hamilton!

Mission:

At East Hamilton Middle School, we strive to create a safe and supportive environment for all students, a collaborative and encouraging culture for faculty, and are committed to creating partnerships and growing the community's future.

Athletics

EHMS is a member of the Tennessee Secondary Schools Athletic Association (TSSAA), Tennessee Middle School Athletic Association (TMSAA), and the Hamilton County Athletic Association (HCAC).

TMSAA and HCAC governs eligibility, participation, and contests. Students wishing to participate in middle school athletics can fail no more than one class the preceding year of the sport in which they want to participate. For questions regarding eligibility, participation, and/or contests, please contact the head coach for the respective sport or the Athletic Director.

1. A low conduct grade may determine eligibility for athletic involvement. Students must be good role models to represent EHMS in all facets of the school environment.
2. Student athletes must follow all rules set forth by the school and the athletic organizations. Listed below you will see the list of teams and approximate times marking the beginning of each sport.
3. Students who plan to participate in a school sport must complete the following forms before trying out:
   - a sports physical – filled out by doctor and signed
   - a parent consent form - signed
   - a concussion form - signed
   - a sudden cardiac arrest form - signed
4. Every student and parent/guardian will sign a contract regarding sportsmanship expectations.

Attendance

East Hamilton Middle School misses students when they are not present at school, as students miss valuable learning time. Students are expected to attend school regularly and arrive to classes on time. Please make every effort to schedule appointments at the latest time possible so that you do not miss class.

HCDE policy allows students five (5) unexcused absences per school year. HCDE will allow parent excuses to serve as documentation for three (3) additional personal illness days. After three (3) parent/guardian excused personal illness days, **parents must provide medical service documentation for the following reasons: personal illness, family illness, or personal reasons (as defined below under excused absences). To avoid student absences being recorded as unexcused, a written statement signed and dated by the parent or guardian, <u>AND</u> any medical documentation, should be presented to the appropriate school official in the attendance office within five (5) days of the student returning to school.**

By law, social services will be involved after 5 absences. There will be a parent meeting to set up an attendance intervention system for any student who is absent for more than 5 days. Court appearances for both student and parent should be expected if the student's attendance does not significantly improve during the intervention.

Excused Absences

1. Personal Illness: Students will have to provide a physician's statement for this to count as excused.
2. Death in the Immediate Family: Students may be excused for not more than three (3) days in the event of a death in their immediate family. An acceptable excuse for this is the funeral program.
3. Family Illness: Students having an illness in the family that requires the student to give temporary help will be excused upon proof of appointment. A doctor's statement is required. Prior approval by parent or guardian and the principal or his designee is required.

4. Religious Holiday: Students will be excused on special or recognized religious holidays regularly observed by that particular faith. Prior approval is required.
5. Medical or court: Students who are absent for a good cause (doctor or dental appointment which cannot be scheduled at times other than school hours, court appearance, etc.) may be excused upon proof of appointment. Prior approval by parent or guardian and the principal or his designee is required.

* School-Sponsored Activities: Students are marked **present** when participating in a school-sponsored activity.

Habitual Truancy

District personnel will intervene to address habitual truancy using a Tiered Attendance Intervention support structure for students and their families, as detailed below.

Progressive Truancy Plan

A student who is absent five (5) days without adequate excuse shall be reported to the Director of Schools, Attendance Supervisor or his/her designee who will, in turn, provide written notice to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student's absences or request an attendance hearing. Then, the Director of Schools shall implement the progressive truancy plan described below prior to referral to juvenile court.

Tier One Attendance

Tier One of the Progressive Truancy Plan shall apply to all students within the district and include schoolwide prevention-oriented supports to assist with satisfactory attendance. These supports shall include, but are not limited to:
1. Parents and students will be notified of attendance expectations and the Truancy Plan in the Student Handbook
2. At three (3) unexcused absences, parents and students will be made aware of the number of 9 absences and that five (5) unexcused absences will begin Tier Two.

Tier Two Attendance

Tier Two of the progressive truancy plan shall be implemented after the accumulation of five (5) 14 unexcused absences but before referral to a juvenile court.
Tier Two includes:

1. A conference with the student and parent, guardian, or other person having control of the student;
2. A resulting attendance contract, to be signed by the student, parent/guardian, and the attendance supervisor/designee. The contract shall include: a. A specific description of the school's attendance expectations for the student; b. The period for which the contract is effective; and c. Penalties for additional absences and alleged school offenses, including additional disciplinary action and potential referral to juvenile court.
3. Regularly scheduled follow-up meetings to discuss the student's progress
4. A school employee shall conduct an individualized assessment detailing reasons the student has been absent from school. This employee may refer the student to counseling, community-based services, or other services to address the student's attendance problems.

Tier Three Attendance

Tier Three shall be implemented if the interventions under Tier Two are unsuccessful. Tier Three may consist of one or more of the following:
1. School-based community services
2. Participation in a school-based restorative justice program
3. Courses on Saturday or outside of school hours designed to improve attendance and behavior.

If any tier of progressive truancy intervention is unsuccessful, and the school can document that the student's parent or guardian is unwilling to cooperate with the truancy intervention requirements outlined in the plan, the director of schools/designee may report the student's absences to the juvenile judge without first having to implement subsequent intervention tiers, if any.

Early Dismissal

In the case of an emergency, a parent or guardian must come to the attendance office to sign the student out in person. Teachers cannot release a student from class except on authorization from the attendance office. Any person asking for a student should be directed to the Main Office. A student cannot leave in the company of any person other than a parent,

legal guardian, a school employee, or a person designated by the parent or guardian **AS LISTED ON THEIR EMERGENCY CONTACT IN THE ONLINE REGISTRATION FORM.** If this is not filled out, the student may not be released.

Students will not be dismissed via a telephone call by a parent or guardian due to the danger of unverifiable documentation. A parent or guardian must come to the school and sign out the student through the attendance office. **Students cannot be dismissed after 1:40.**

Behavior Plan and Discipline

There is a school-wide behavior plan in place that utilizes incentives that students can earn for demonstrating positive school habits and interactions based on our Canes Commitments.

C - Caring
A - Accountable
N - Neat
E - Engaged
S - Safe

Parent Role in School-wide Positive Behavior Plan

Your help with the behavior plan is very important and your support sends an important message to your child that we are working together as a team to help him/her be successful in school. We understand that your home environment may have different expectations, but in order to support your child's success in school, we ask that you support our school's expectations in the following ways:

1. Please take the time to review the EHMS expectations with your child.
2. Please remind your child of the EHMS expectations each day before he/she leaves for school.
3. Our system is consistent and predictable. Your child will be told the reason for the consequence, and he/she should be able to tell you what occurred. You will also be contacted by the classroom teacher or a school administrator, depending on the level of the consequence.
4. When your child gets home from school, talk with them about their day, including any praises, reinforcements, or incentives received.
5. If your child did meet expectations that day, use the Canes Commitments chart as a tool to go over and reinforce expected behaviors.

Disciplinary Process and Procedures

All Board Policies regarding behavior as outlined in the HCDE Code of Acceptable Conduct will be enforced. Consequences, including suspension or expulsion, may result in violation of these policies.
Specific Conduct/Behavior Information and consequences can be found in the Code of Acceptable Conduct and at hcde.org
In addition suspension from school will occur when:

- A student is involved in off-campus criminal behavior, resulting in felony charges
- A student's presence in school poses a danger to persons or property, or disrupts the educational process
- A student is involved in fighting, which can also result in an arrest and summons to juvenile court.

Bullying/Harassment/Cyber-Bullying

Bullying/Harassment/Cyber-Bullying is a violation of HCDE School Board Policy.
Claims of bullying/harassment/cyber-bullying are to be directed to the building administrator for investigation without the fear of reprisal or retaliation. False accusations as a means of reprisal or retaliation will be disciplined in accordance with district policies, procedures, and agreements.

- Bullying is defined as unwanted, aggressive, repeated behavior that involves a power imbalance and places a student in reasonable fear and causes a hostile educational environment.
- Harassment (sexual, racial, ethnic, religious) includes words, gestures, threats, or any other conduct that is severe, pervasive, or persistent and creates a hostile environment that interferes with or limits a student's ability to participate in or benefit from services, activities, or opportunities offered by a school.

- Cyber-Bullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes, but is not limited to, devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, tablets, and communication tools such as social media sites, text messages, chat rooms/apps, and websites. Examples may include mean text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social media sites, embarrassing pictures/videos posted on social media or other websites, and fake profiles.

Communication - *Parent Square*

East Hamilton Middle and HCDE use the Parent Square system to notify parents or guardians of emergencies, general announcements, and student absences. It is vital we have current home, mailing, and email addresses and phone numbers on file.

Cafeteria

Here is helpful information about school nutrition:
https://www.hcde.org/about_us/department_directory/school_nutrition

- If you feel that you may qualify for free or reduced lunch, please complete the following application using this link: https://family.titank12.com/application/new?identifier=4QDPT3
- Students may deposit money in their lunch accounts at any time. A service charge will be added on for any returned checks.
- All students are expected to exhibit appropriate manners and behavior in this area. Outdoor dining and/or carrying food from the dining hall is at the discretion of school administration and staff.
- Parents cannot bring outside food or have food delivered during the school day.
- Any beverages must be in containers with lids.

Dress Code

Student dress should exemplify an atmosphere of learning. Students may not wear any type of dress or look that is distracting or disrespectful to the learning environment. In terms of decisions regarding school dress, the professional judgment of teachers and administrators will prevail. If a student is not sure if an article of clothing is dress code appropriate, he/she should bring it to school and ask a teacher or administrator for approval before wearing the item in question.

Administration makes the final decision on dress code questions/issues.

Consequences for violating the dress code:

- Students will call home to have appropriate clothes delivered to school.
- If clothes cannot be sent, we will provide students with clothes to change into from our care closet.
- If the problem persists, the administration will provide the appropriate discipline consequence.

East Hamilton Middle School Dress Code Policy

Shirts

- Shirts and sweatshirts must be school appropriate without rips or holes.

- Only top two buttons may be unbuttoned on collared shirts.
- No low cut tops, no spaghetti straps, no backless tops, or tank tops.
- No bra straps showing or bare midriffs.
- No sheer or see-through material.
- No cap sleeves, cold shoulders, or sleeveless shirt (All shirts must have sleeves)
- Logos and images must be school appropriate.

Pants/Shorts

- Any jeans or khakis are allowed.
- Pants must be worn at the waistline. No sagging.
- No leggings, yoga pants, sweatpants, or athletic pants..
- Shorts: All shorts must be no more than 3 inches above the knee and may not have rips, holes, or frayed edges. Form-fitting, spandex, skin-tight, bike shorts, and Nike Pro-style shorts are not permitted. ,
- No rips or holes in pants.
- No skirts or dresses unless approved by administration for religious practice/beliefs.

Shoes & Accessories

- Toes and the majority of foot must be covered.
- Crocs, running shoes, and boots are allowed.
- No flip-flops, no slides, no slippers, no sandals, and no house shoes.
- Jewelry must be school appropriate.
- No caps, bandanas, bonnets, sunglasses, headphones, or blankets.
- All bookbags, purses, and fanny packs must be kept in lockers once in the building.

Sweaters, Hoodies, & Jackets

- Sweaters, sweatshirts, quarter zips, and jackets are allowed.
- Hoods must be kept down and not worn.
- All logos and images must be school appropriate or represent our East Hamilton (EH) feeder pattern. All electronics, such as headphones and phones, must be placed in lockers.
- No headphones or airpods should not be worn in school.

Important: The administration reserves the right to make adjustments to the dress code at any time. Administration will determine whether articles of clothing are appropriate or inappropriate. If a student is not sure if an article of clothing is dress code appropriate, he/she should bring it to school and ask a teacher or administrator for approval before wearing the item in question.

**The first two days of school will be used as a norming time for students.

Updated 8/26/26

Drills: fire, safety, tornado

All drills are conducted in accordance with regulations and policies. Appropriate student behavior is expected at all times.

Electronic Devices/Cell Phone/Internet Use

Technology Responsible Use Policy Cell Phone Policy

Students bringing cellular phones or electronic devices to school do so at their own risk. Neither the Hamilton County Department of Education, nor East Hamilton Middle School will assume any liability for any lost, stolen, or damaged cell phones or electronic devices in school, nor any school-related activity.

Students may **NOT** have in their possession a cell phone or other electronic device during school hours. After entering the building at the start of the school day, students must turn off all cell phones/electronic devices and place them in their backpacks/book bags in their lockers, where they shall remain until the end of the day. At no time should students have a cell phone in their possession during school hours.

Students are restricted at all times within the building and on campus from using their cell phone or electronic device, in the following manner:

- Making or receiving phone calls
- Using any recording feature to include the phone/device cameras, video camera, or voice recorders
- Using real-time audio/video, i.e. Skyping, FaceTime, etc.
- Using Bluetooth devices
- Use of the phone/device's internal speaker or external speakers for music, or any other reason
- No over the ear or on the ear headphones / earbuds are allowed

The consequences for violations of this policy shall result in the following actions per HCDE policy.

1st violation - phone is confiscated,parent may pick up at the end of the day

2nd violation - phone is confiscated, parent may pick up in three days

3rd violation - phone is confiscated for 10 days or at the discretion of the school administrator

4th violation- phone is confiscated for 20 days or at the discretion of the school administrator

Parents, please do not contact or communicate with students during instructional time via cell phones. All emergency contact to the student must go through the main office, attendance office, or nurse's office when necessary. In most cases, a student may be given permission to use a classroom or administrative telephone to contact a parent or guardian.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

HCDE is required to provide annual notice of The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the rights it provides parents and students. The FERPA gives parents, students over 18 years of age and others certain rights with respect to the student's education records. Click here for additional information on FERPA rights and responsibilities.

School Fees

East Hamilton Middle School students pay an art, technology, and science fee of $25.00 per year. We encourage students to pay online, but cash and/or check is accepted too.

Field Trips

School-sanctioned field trips will follow Hamilton County Board Policy regarding field trips. Under no circumstances are students permitted on field trips without a properly signed permission slip. Field trips including postseason athletic trips will follow the same procedure as instructional trips. Permission slips are due the day prior to the event/trip taking place. Decisions regarding student participation may be based on attendance, grades, and/or behavior.

Grading

Hamilton County Schools policy for calculating grades is as follows:

Quarterly Grades -

- Daily Grades : 50% (homework can be up to 10% of Daily Grades)

Semester Grades -

- Q1 50% and Q2 50% for semester 1
- Q3 50% and Q4 50% for

Year Grades -

- Semester 1 42.5%
- Semester 2 42.5%
- TCAP/Final Exams 15%

- Assessment Grades: 50% | semester 2 |

Grading Scale

A: 90-100 (100 is the highest recorded course grade.)
B: 80-89
C: 70-79
D: 60-69
F: 59 and below
I: Incomplete- (must be removed by next grading period)

Make-up Work

The student is responsible for getting his/her make-up work after any absence. Students will be given five days to turn in the work. Due dates will be honored by students. When a student requests make-up work, they can get it directly from the teacher or contact the teacher through the teacher's email address.

Make-up work for unexcused absences is allowed but may result in reduced credit. (Reduction may not exceed 10%.)

Lockers

Students will be issued a locker; in addition, all students will be required to stow book bags, purses, and supplemental items in their locker. Students will have locker access at designated times. Students will use only the locker assigned to him/her and keep it locked at all times. Students should not share locker combinations with peers, doing so is a violation of school policy. Disciplinary action including revocation of a student's locker privilege may occur if a student intentionally jams his or her locker to gain easy access or if they share their locker with another student. The school has the authority and control over the locker and may gain access to it at any time.

Medical Information

Medicine

At school, medication falls under the direction of the School Nurse. Information can be found at: hcde.org

- click Inside HCDE tab
- scroll down and click Support Services
- click School Health
- click School Health Program
- click Board Medication Policy

Individualized Student Medical Order Over the Counter Medication Permissions

School Nurse

No student may be treated by the school nurse unless a Consent to Treat form. In order for the nurse to care for your child the following form must be completed and submitted.

Consent to Treat Form

Transportation of students of students to medical facilities

If an emergency involving injury occurs at East Hamilton Middle School, 911 will be immediately called. Emergency personnel will make the determination of whether to transport the child to a medical facility. Every effort will be made to contact the child's parent or guardian; however, if the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the child will still be transported to a medical facility for emergency treatment. HCDE is not responsible for costs associated with emergency transport.

Parking
Parents should not use the front parking lot as an area to pick up or drop off students. Visitor parking in the front lot is reserved for office visits, conferences, and general school business.

PTA Communications
We highly value our partnerships with families and community. The PTA will notify the school community of methods of communication from the organization.

Report cards
Report cards will be available at the end of each nine-week grading period via PowerSchool. However, academic progress can be monitored daily on PowerSchool. Please contact the main office for help with PowerSchool.
Parents are expected to review this academic report and notify teachers of concerns. For specific dates for progress reports and report cards, please refer to the district calendar posted at www.hcde.org/calendar. Parents should always contact the teacher prior to making contact with administration. A conference should be held with the team first for academic or behavior concerns.

Safety
East Hamilton Middle School has a comprehensive school safety plan in place that is reassessed on a regular basis. We hold multiple safety drills throughout the school year to ensure staff and students know what to expect and how to respond in the event of an emergency.

Persons who come onto school property shall be under the jurisdiction of the site administrator/designee. Individuals who come onto school property or who contact employees on school or district business are expected to behave accordingly and follow all safety procedures.

Please be aware that students will not be dismissed while a drill is being conducted, so dismissal will be delayed until the drill is over. In addition, access to the building may be limited depending on the type of drill being conducted. Outside visitors may be temporarily denied access during a drill.

When the school is on lock down due to a security or weather-related issue, the first priority is the safety of staff and students. Parents or other visitors to the building must follow school emergency procedures under the direction of school staff until the lockdown is lifted. During a security lock down, no one is permitted to enter the building from the outside. In weather-related lockdowns, schools may allow those outside to seek shelter indoors until it becomes necessary for staff to take shelter.

School Day
The instructional day runs from a school start time of 7:15 AM until a school dismissal time of 2:15 PM. Any change to this time is made by the district transportation department, not at the local school level. Students should arrive no later than 7:05 AM.

Due to safety issues we ask all parents to read and follow the information below:

- There will be no staff to supervise and the school will not be open prior to 6:45 AM.
- All students who are car riders will be directed to wait outside in the car rider pick-up/drop-off area ONLY.
- No parents are to park in the front parking lot – it is for faculty only.
- Bus riders will unload/load using the front of the school.
- No student dismissals after 1:40 PM.

Late Arrival and Early Dismissal
- Students must attend one half of a school day to be counted present.
- If a child attends less than one half of a school day, the student will be marked as absent. A written excuse note should be turned in to the front office for this to be considered an excused absence.
- Students who arrive after 7:15, the designated start time of school, will be counted as tardy and must obtain a pass from the front office.

- Students will not be released from school for early dismissal without prior approval from the parent or guardian and after 1:40.
- The names of the adults who are permitted to pick up the student from school must be documented in the student's school file. Without prior notification from the student's parent or guardian, a student will not be released to an adult whose name is not documented in the file.
- The parent/guardian or adult whose name is listed on file will be asked to show the front office staff a picture ID for the student to be released from school.

Transportation: Bus/Car/Walkers

Bus Information

Students are expected to ride their assigned bus to and from school. Students can only ride a different bus with a school administered bus pass. The parent/ guardian of the student wishing to ride another bus will need to email the permission note along with a picture of their photo ID to ehmsoffice@hcde.org by 11:00am. Upon verification, the student will be given a bus pass to give to the bus driver. Permission will not be granted for those students who wait until the end of the day. This policy is for student safety and liability.

Any student who interferes with the safe operation of a school bus will be held accountable. The principal may suspend the right and privilege of transportation from any student due to misconduct or misbehavior while on the bus.

Bus Rider

Students who ride buses in the morning and evening will unload and load from the front of the school.

Car Rider (AM/PM car rider drop-off and pick-up)

Parents will drop-off and pick-up at the West side, behind the school. Traffic will fill the lanes and be stopped. Following the stop, the students will load; then, traffic will be released.

Walkers

Since East Hamilton does not have sidewalks connecting the campus to the various neighborhoods, students and parents should exercise extreme caution when entering and exiting the campus. In the morning and afternoon, it is recommended that students use the available crosswalks and make routes where school staff are present.

Visitors

ALL visitors must check-in with the front office staff. Tennessee State Law requires that guest passes be issued to anyone who is a visitor to a school. All visitors must report directly to the front office, present a photo ID when signing the guest log, and wear the visitor identification sticker provided. All visitors must return to and exit through the main office. Visitors should be aware that the RAPTOR system checks the sex offender database and reports positive findings to the School Resource Officer as well as the campus-based administrative staff.

Parents should not have deliveries made to the school as they will not be given out. Items brought or delivered to school (for students) that are needed for the school day will be distributed via Administrative discretion and after school.

Due to the nature of the school, appointments with teachers, staff, and administrators should be made in advance of arriving on campus. Making an appointment in advance will reduce visitor wait time and increase our collective staff efficiency.

Persons who come onto school property shall be under the jurisdiction of the site administrator/designee. Individuals who come onto school property or who contact employees on school or district business are expected to behave accordingly.

When the school is on lock down due to a security or weather-related issue, the first priority is the safety of staff and students. Parents or other visitors to the building must follow school emergency procedures under the direction of school staff until the lockdown is lifted. During a security lock down, no one is permitted to enter the building from the outside. In weather-related lockdowns, schools may allow those outside to seek shelter indoors until it becomes necessary for staff to take shelter.

Volunteers at EHMS

Please note that volunteers and visitors to the building may be restricted to essential personnel.

Volunteers are welcome in our schools but they must respect the learning environment and the safety and security guidelines that are in place. All volunteers must present a valid ID and sign in before receiving a visitor's badge using the RAPTOR sign-in procedure.

Volunteers must register with the appropriate protocol. Athletic and field trip volunteers should work through the Athletic Director and School Secretary to gain approval before working with students. Background checks may be needed and required.