

Spirit Creek Middle School Faculty-Staff Handbook 2016 – 2017



Dr. Melissa Shepard
Principal

Mr. Jonavon Harris
Assistant Principal
Mr. Cordaryl Middleton
Assistant Principal

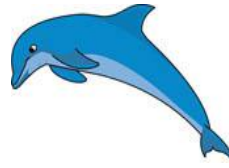
Contact us: <http://spirit-creek.rcboe.org/>

Phone: (706) 592-3987 Fax: 706-592-3999

Office Hours: 8:00 AM – 4:45 PM (Monday through Friday)

School Hours: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

115 Dolphin Way
Hephzibah, GA 30815



Spirit Creek Middle School

Preface

The faculty and staff of Spirit Creek Middle School are vital to the success of our students. Believing that clear, consistent guidelines and procedures are necessary for any organization to be successful, this handbook is intended to provide each employee with the information needed to do their job in the most positive and productive way. The policies and procedures included are meant to augment the Richmond County Employee Handbook and are not to conflict with any policies set by the board of education. In the event of a conflict, the policies and directives set by the Richmond County Board of Education and the superintendent take precedence over school policies.

Vision Statement

Spirit Creek Middle School is a school community where the quest for excellence is both a motivator and a source of pride. Student learning is our chief priority, and we are united in our efforts to ensure that all students learn at their optimum level of ability. Mutual respect among staff, faculty, and students form a strong foundation for discipline, communication, support, and learning. Our ultimate goal is to help students become self-sufficient adults who contribute to their local and global community; therefore, they will lead productive and rewarding lives.

Mission Statement

The Mission of Spirit Creek Middle School is to educate students to become self-sufficient adults who contribute to their local and global community.

Belief Statements

1. Student learning is our priority and primary focus of all decisions.
2. Educational growth can be encouraged through motivation and high expectations.
3. A safe and orderly environment promotes student learning.
4. Faculty, staff, and the community share the responsibility for promoting student success.
5. Tolerance is developed through the teaching of understanding and respect for all people and cultures.
6. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices should emphasize problem solving skills while incorporating a variety of learning activities related to the real world to accommodate all learners.



Employee Work Day

It is the policy of the State Board of Education to regard the minimum work day for certified personnel as 8 hours. This time includes a 30 minute duty lunch and planning period. The 8 hour work day must be staggered to ensure all students are supervised at all times. All teachers work 8:15 to 4:15. Teachers on afternoon duty work 8:30 to 4:30.

Clerical personnel work 7 hours and 45 minutes and paraprofessionals work 7 hours and 15 minutes (including a 30 minute lunch). Custodial staff work 9 hours (including one hour lunch). Lunchroom staff work various hours. All staff hours are staggered to support our instructional environment. Any change in hours must be approved by the principal.

There is a designated computer in the employee lounge for all employees to sign in and out daily. If you fail to sign in, the bookkeeper will record the absence on payroll. If you forget to sign in, you must send a written notice to the principal. The notice should include the time you reported to work and the reason for your failure to follow school procedures. All comp time of noncertified employees must be approved in advance by the principal in writing.

Absences from Work

All **certified** personnel are required to register with "Subby", the RCBOE computerized substitute calling system, and report any time they are absent. It is the teacher's responsibility to secure a substitute. Teachers **must** call Subby, even if they do not require a substitute. If a teacher improperly reports an absence in Subby and more than one substitute accepts the position, payroll will deduct the necessary amount to pay the additional substitute from the teacher's paycheck.

All **certified and classified** personnel **must** report their absence to the principal by 7:00 a.m. the morning they will be out by phone, email or text. It is not permissible for employees to report their absence to the clerical staff. Office personnel complete necessary paperwork only and are not to be contacted at home or at school for any type of assistance related to your absence. Failure to notify the principal may result in leave without pay. Paraprofessionals are also responsible for notifying their supervising teacher.



You are important to our success and we need you here!

While no employee should work when ill or contagious, please remember how important you are to our school. Schedule doctor's appointments after school hours when possible. If it is necessary for you to miss part of the school day, you must secure

permission from the principal. Time will be charged in hour increments, depending on the time signed in or out. Please follow-up and complete the required paperwork with the bookkeeper when you return to school.

All employees are expected to be on time and work their full work day. Accumulated tardy and leave early time will be charged as personal leave in hour increments.

If you are out for more than three days for personal illness, a doctor's excuse will be required the day you return to work. If administration observes a pattern of personal illness days, a doctor's excuse may be required. Failure to provide a doctor's excuse may result in leave without pay.

Personal Leave

All employees are permitted to use up to three days of their accumulated sick leave per year for personal reasons. Personal leave requests must be made to the principal in writing, email or text. The principal will not approve personal leave during standardized testing, the last week of school or on special activity days. Employees must have enough accumulated time to cover personal leave before it will be approved.

Personal leave must be approved by the Superintendent for the day before and after a holiday, pre-planning, post-planning and professional learning days. Remember that all employees are expected to be present for these very important days. Failure to secure prior approval will result in leave without pay.



Service Beyond the Regular School Day

Certified personnel are contract employees and are required to attend events and meetings beyond their regular hours. Your attendance in this area will be a part of your TKES community involvement rating. Below is a list of required events:

- Open house and curriculum nights
- PTSA meetings- 2 out of 4 meetings
- Sporting events- a minimum of 2
- Any type of faculty meeting/professional learning

Noncertified personnel are always welcome and strongly encouraged to be a part of our meetings and events.

Accidents

All student and employee accidents must be reported to the front office immediately. Accident reports are available from the secretary and must be completed for all

accidents. Workers injured on the job must follow the procedures for Workman's Compensation. Information about Workman's Compensation is posted in the office and all faculty lounges.



Cell Phones

School employees are permitted to have cell phones inside the school building within district guidelines. All cell phones must be registered with the principal and be turned off or in silent mode during the instructional school day. Employees are permitted to use their cell phone during non-instructional time when students are not in their presence. Failure to follow this policy can result in disciplinary action, including suspension without pay. Furthermore, it is board policy that any employee should report a cell phone violation to the principal. The purpose of this policy is to prevent the disruption of instruction and school activities.

Collection, Disbursement and Accountability of Funds

All monies collected by the faculty for school activities and materials must be counted and then recorded on a cash receipt form. All money must be turned in to the school bookkeeper or principal daily. The bookkeeper will issue a receipt to that person in accordance to the guidelines and policies set forth by the Richmond County Board of Education. Employees are not permitted to hold money overnight for any reason. Individual school receipts will not be issued when donations are made to charitable organizations. PTSA funds will be collected and disbursed according to PTSA guidelines and policies. Teachers will not count or be held accountable for PTSA or charitable funds.



Conduct, Discipline and Supervision

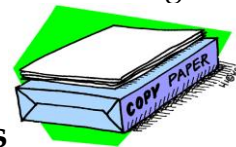
We are legally and morally responsible for students when they are in school. This responsibility begins with supervision at all times and in all situations. Never leave students unattended. Do not ask students to perform tasks that are not their responsibility such as cleaning with chemicals, moving furniture, or running errands. Students are not permitted in faculty/staff only areas. Teachers are responsible for monitoring students during lunch, restroom breaks, hallway transitions and arrival and dismissal times. Do not use student monitors.

Student Discipline

The ultimate goal of any rule or procedure is to achieve student self-discipline. We are working towards the goal of having mature, independent learners who can exercise normal limits and behaviors. Students are expected to behave in a way that allows them and their classmates to receive a quality education. Each teacher has the responsibility of handling his or her own discipline. Referrals to administration should only be made

when other forms of intervention have been attempted **or** the offense is so serious it warrants immediate attention from school administration. **Teachers are not permitted to send students to the office to wait on administration.** Administration will call for the student. At NO time is corporal punishment to be used! **All teachers are expected to follow our school-wide positive behavior support (PBIS) plan.**

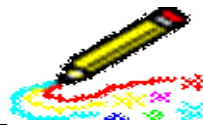
Students are never to sit or stand in the hallway unsupervised. The teacher should post and review the rules of behavior and consequences for misbehavior in all situations. It is essential that teachers explain the plan to the parents as well as the students and that we follow it consistently. The Uniform Code of Conduct and Discipline will be given to all students at the beginning of each school year. This code governs all discipline cases and is used as a guideline for all parties. A teacher may not suspend students from school, send a student to our Individualized Learning Center (ILC), contact parents to pick their child up for the remainder of the day or take away instructional activities. Teachers are encouraged to make suggestions about how to handle their students' misbehavior to administration. Parents must be involved early and often when there is a problem preventing their child from learning.



Copying and Duplication of Materials

Please remember to obey all copyright laws. If you have questions about the appropriateness of copying an item see the media specialist or the principal for a decision. We must operate within a budget. Please be conservative with paper and copying expenses. The RISO should be used for large runs and combined classes. You will be issued an allotment of copies for the year and must work within this framework. Teachers **are strongly encouraged** to avoid the “ditto death” of students and find alternative, creative methods of teaching and practicing skills in the classroom.

Employees are not permitted to make copies or use school supplies/materials for personal use. If you observe this behavior, please report it to the principal immediately. Failure to follow this policy may result in leave without pay or termination.



Daily Attendance Report

Each teacher is required to enter daily attendance into our computerized system every day before 10:00 a.m. Teachers are strongly encouraged to make this part of their homeroom routine. This information must be accurate as school funding is tied to daily attendance. The student data collection specialist is not responsible for entering your daily attendance. Any student excuse for absences must be turned in to the student data collection specialist daily. Please do not keep the excuses in your classroom.

Homeroom teachers are required to monitor their student's attendance and follow the requirements of our district policy. Our data specialist tracks student attendance weekly and is available to assist you.



Eating and Drinking in the Classroom

Teachers should not eat and/or drink in the classroom when students are present. This is not professional behavior and will not be tolerated at Spirit Creek.

Evaluations/Appraisals and Room Visits






Teachers should expect visitors from the central office, as well as school administration. The purpose of these visits is to monitor the classroom activities and acquaint the administrators with a teacher's skills and style in the classroom. It is not necessary or preferred that the teacher stop the lesson to converse with visitors. Classrooms should reflect standards-based learning and students should be engaged and on-task. Classrooms should be neat, organized, orderly and attractive at all times. All employees will receive feedback and evaluations within the guidelines of board policy. The Richmond County School System implements the TKES evaluation system for all teachers. Teachers are responsible for uploading their documentation in a timely manner.

Faculty Meetings

Certified personnel are required to attend faculty meetings and non-certified personnel are encouraged to attend. Please do not schedule appointments or request to arrive late on meeting days. Morning meetings will begin promptly at 8:00 a.m. You are expected to be on time and remain professional throughout the meetings.

Field Trips

You are to follow the Richmond County Board of Education guidelines concerning field trips. No student may be denied a field trip solely on the basis of ability to pay. Please consider the following when planning field trips:

-  All field trips must be instructional.
-  They must meet standards for your grade/subject.
-  They must meet guidelines for time away from school.
-  They must provide inclusion for all students based on financial concerns.
-  If transportation is needed you must follow guidelines for securing and paying for school buses.



Fire, Tornado and Safety Drills

We will hold fire drills once a month, safety drills three times a year and a tornado drill once a year. All faculty and staff are expected to participate in the drills. One copy of

the evacuation plans must be posted near each classroom door. Teachers are encouraged to practice and instruct students in these safety procedures. Our safety plan is updated each year. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with our safety plan and be prepared for an emergency.

Grade-level Chairpersons

Grade chairs are the liaison between the principal and the grade level teachers. In addition to this responsibility, grade chairs must lead grade level meetings each week to coordinate instructional activities within the grade and discuss grade specific rituals and routines. Minutes from the weekly meeting are to be electronically submitted to the principal.



Team Collaboration

Team collaboration is a necessary component of the middle school concept. Teams are expected to meet once a week to discuss instruction, student data and any other necessary information to support their student's success in the classroom. Minutes from the weekly meeting are to be electronically submitted to the principal.

Grading and Progress Reports

Teachers are required to complete various progress reports on the academic and social skills of their students. Parents have a right to know whether their child's academic or behavioral performance is deteriorating. Notify parents in time to take corrective action. It is required that teachers keep a log of parental contact. There should be NO SURPRISES on a report card!

1. Teachers are required to keep grades updated **weekly** in our electronic system.
2. It is strongly advised that all grades be objective and measurable in some way. All teachers must be able to justify a grade assigned with real data. **Academic grades in the content areas should never be lowered because of behavioral problems. It is recommended that teachers keep work samples during the entire grading period in case documentation is needed to verify a grade.**
3. Every nine weeks, teachers must issue grades and report cards for their students.
4. Teachers are required to maintain an accurate grade book, reflecting the work of the students assigned to them for the academic year. Grades should be averaged carefully and checked for accuracy.
5. At the end of the second grading period, teachers will be required to report the students not meeting expectations or requirements on Appendix B.
6. At the end of the third grading period, teachers will be required to report the students not meeting expectations or requirements on Appendix C.
7. All CCGPS standards must be taught following the county curriculum map/guide and grades should reflect a student's mastery of standards.

8. Each child who is present one-half or more of the report card period is to be given a report card. Teachers should make every attempt to receive grades from previous schools and combine those with our grades.
9. Final grades are to be entered into our system on time every progress report and report card period. The student data collection specialist will print report cards and place them in teacher boxes the day before they are issued to students.
10. All teachers are required to keep on file **in the office vault** a copy of the most recent report card.

Housekeeping



Classrooms must be kept neat and orderly at all times. Teachers should set up daily classroom routines for students to keep their areas neat. Textbooks and papers should be kept off the floor at all times. Supplies should be stored in an orderly fashion. Bulletin boards need to be kept up-to-date and instructional in nature. It is always desirable to display student work. It is important to remember that the appearance of your classroom is a strong message about your professionalism as an educator. Make certain the message is positive.

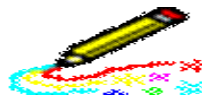
Ill or Injured Students



Students who become ill or injured at school should be sent to the office for treatment and to notify parents. Teachers are encouraged to use adult judgment concerning complaints.

Board policy forbids dispensing **any** medicine without written permission from a parent or doctor. Medicines should be housed in the clinic with written instructions on file. Asthma inhalers or allergy reaction kits are the exception and may be kept in a locked cabinet or file drawer in the classroom. Permission forms may be obtained from the office. Any student found with drugs or medicines in the classroom should be referred to the principal immediately. Teachers are reminded that you must use adult judgment when sending a student to the office. Do not let students create a climate where anyone can leave the room at any time without good cause.

Lesson Plans



It is RCBOE policy that teachers submit lesson plans one week in advance. Plans are to be uploaded in Rubicon every Friday by 4:15 p.m. to be checked and recorded by administration. Lesson plans are to be left on your desk at all times during the week. Lesson plans must follow the Richmond County Curriculum Guide and include Common Core Georgia Performance Standards.

Teachers are required to leave lesson plans for the substitute when they are going to be out. It is not the responsibility of your grade level peer to complete this task for you. Teachers are to have three days of emergency substitute plans stored in their classroom. Substitute plans should include the daily schedule and special instructions for individual students of any type of academic or behavior plan.

Media Center

We are required to operate our media center under the open-concept. All students may have access to the library throughout the school day. Please coordinate activities with the media specialist.

Moment of Reflection

In compliance with Georgia law all teachers at public schools must conduct 60 seconds of silent reflection at the start of each school day. This moment is not intended as a religious observance. We will include this moment during our morning announcements.



Parent-Teacher Conferences and Communication

Teachers are expected to hold regular conferences with parents to keep them informed about their child's educational progress. Teachers should take the initiative and request a conference with all parents. This is a **teacher responsibility**, even when faced with uncooperative parents. Teachers are to conduct a conference with any parent who requests one. There is no exception to this policy.

The principal will attend any conference when asked to do so by either the teacher or the parent. It is **required** that teachers maintain written documentation of the contents of any parent conferences. Prompt, personal, warm and friendly contacts will serve the best interests of the students and lead to more effective decisions about the educational needs of our students. Do not procrastinate in discussing any problems a student may be having with their parent. Early intervention by both parent and teacher are crucial to finding solutions for learning problems.

Teachers are also required to keep written documentation of any phone, email or text contact with parents. The front office will place parent messages in the teacher's box daily. **Teachers are expected to respond to the message within 24 hours.**



Personal Appearance

All employees are expected to dress in a professional manner and set an example to their students as well as present themselves appropriately to the public. We all have a profound influence on students and parents and should be role models at all times. Those guidelines specified in the Richmond County Board of Education Code of Conduct on Dress Code apply to all staff members as well as students. Professional dress is expected and the following are considered appropriate:

Men

Shoes with socks	Ties
Short/long sleeve collared shirts	Sports jackets/suits
Crew/mock/turtle neck shirts	Polo/golf shirts
Slacks	

Women

Shirts/blouses tucked in when appropriate	Skirts/dresses (**appropriate <u>length</u>)
Slacks	Suits
Knit shirts	Denim dresses/skirts
Coordinated Capri pant suits (mid calf)	

The following dress is NOT considered appropriate attire

Shirts not tucked in (men)	T-shirts (men/women)
Jogging/sweat suits (permitted in PE only)	Revealing garments
Leotard type stirrup pants	Flip flops/Athletic Shoes
Mini skirts/dresses	Tight-fitting clothing
Leggings/Joggers	Skorts
Shorts or dress shorts (men/women)	Blue jeans (pants)

NOTE: There will be general exceptions for dress made by the Principal for special event such as field trips, spirit day, etc.



Health and Physical Education Requirements

Georgia law requires that students in grades 6-8 receive a minimum of 60 hours of physical education instruction and 30 hours of health instruction each year. Only students who provide proof of medical exemption will be excused from PE.

Professional Ethics

Follow the guidelines provided by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. These guidelines are reviewed during pre-planning every year.

Professional Organizations

All faculty members are strongly encouraged to join a professional organization that offers its members liability insurance and represents their interests in the political arena. We have representatives from P.A.G.E. and NEA/GAE on staff to assist you. Currently, Richmond County will allow payroll deductions for professional dues.

PTSA

This association is dedicated to the direct support of our school, and all faculty and staff are strongly encouraged to join and participate in PTSA activities. You can show your support of this organization by participating in activities and supporting the efforts of this group as they work to help you educate our students.



Registration and Records

All teachers are expected to maintain accurate records on the students assigned to their classes. Beginning with registration, teachers must be familiar with the required health forms, the format of various permanent records and information sent between schools in order to correctly enter a student into school and serve him/her. Records must be requested in a timely manner and should be previewed by the classroom teacher as quickly as possible. Any forms or memos seeking input from the teacher should be completed and turned in as quickly as possible.

You are required to complete a Richmond County permanent record for every child enrolled in your classroom (even if only for a short time) unless the student has attended another Richmond County school and the permanent record can be obtained from that school. All records must be complete, accurate and up-to-date. Use only a black repro pen when completing records.

The contents of such records are confidential. Any discussion is limited to the parents, student, administration or any other concerned teacher who deals with the student. Teachers have free access to the records in the vault, but all records must remain in the building and be returned to the vault at the end of the school day.

RTI Team

The RTI team is the process through which teachers address the academic and behavioral needs of their students. All matters of RTI are confidential and should be treated with the utmost sensitivity by school personnel. We have a RTI process at Spirit Creek. All are required to follow the process and complete necessary paperwork in a timely matter.



Supplies

Supplies and instructional money is available to teachers at the beginning of the school year according to instructional allotments. The deadline for ordering instructional supplies is set at the beginning of the school year. Failure to meet the deadline will result in loss of instructional money. The bookkeeper is responsible for typing and submitting requisitions. Teachers must secure and provide all the necessary information for the order when submitting a requisition.

Do not spend money and expect reimbursement with a receipt. The principal must pre-approve your expenses and specific documentation is required. The bookkeeper is available to assist you in this area.

If you need supplies throughout the school year, please email your request to the principal. There is a designated supply area in the school with general school supplies that you may need for instruction. Every effort will be made to ensure you receive necessary materials.



Telephones

The office phone should not be used by employees. There is a designated student phone for emergencies only. Please do not send students to the office to use the phone for non-emergencies. There are designated phones in each hallway for teacher use. The front office is not the place to contact parents to discuss their child's behavior or academics. These types of discussions are confidential.

Teachers are encouraged to make personal phone calls before and after school hours. All non-emergency personal phone calls will be taken as messages and placed in the mailboxes.

Tenure and Certification

It is each teacher's responsibility to secure and maintain his or her own teaching credentials. Failure to maintain a current certificate will void a teaching contract.



Tutoring

Follow the county guidelines. Submit your name each year to the principal if you wish to be included on the county tutor list.

Child Abuse

Educators are required to report child abuse/neglect (O.C.G.A.19.15.2). State Standards require all persons who suspect child abuse/neglect to report the incident to the Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS), the authorized recipient of such reports. The law requires any observer or one who has reason to suspect an abusive act occurred to report it directly or cause it to be reported through the building supervisor.

The reporter is to complete the required form, inform the administration and report the incident to DFACS. Official DFACS forms are located in the guidance office. Notifying a counselor and administrator does not fulfill teacher responsibility for reporting suspected child abuse/neglect. Any person or official who is required to report a suspected case and knowingly and willfully fails to do so shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

It is our responsibility to report suspected abuse. We are not investigators and should not investigate suspected abuse. The agency will take your report and determine if an investigation is warranted.



Drug Free Workplace

No employee engaged in work for the Richmond County Board of Education, whether for a federal grant, any other grant, or otherwise employed, shall unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess or use on or in the workplace, any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana or any other controlled substance, as defined in schedules 1-5 of Section 202 of the Controlled Substance Act (21 USC 812) and is further defined by regulation at 21 CFT 1300.22 through 1300.15.

Additionally, this school district prohibits the use of alcohol or tobacco products on school grounds.