



***Latta Middle School  
Student Handbook  
2023-2024***

## **Welcome to Latta Middle School**

Latta Middle School is a public middle school in Dillon County School District Three accredited by the South Carolina State Department of Education.

Latta Middle School is committed to excellence in providing the opportunity for each student to reach the highest levels of academic, social, intellectual, and physical development.

Latta Middle School is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Educational programs and activities at the school are equally accessible to all students regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicapping condition.

*At Latta Middle School, we emphasize academic achievement as the most important purpose of the school. We believe that academic achievement must be at the forefront of our efforts to excel and must take first place in what we emphasize as important.*

**Accreditation-** South Carolina Department of Education

### **Parents**

The administration, faculty, and staff of LMS encourage your support and involvement in your child's education. You have a significant impact on the education your child receives and your participation will encourage a feeling of partnership among your child, the school, and you. Communication between the home and school is vital.

Please read and discuss this handbook with your child as we will do at school. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact a teacher or administrator. Be sure to read our mission, beliefs, and vision statement. Working together, we can provide a safe, comfortable, and challenging education for your child.

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of Latta Middle School is to provide educational experiences for the development of the total child, and to provide each student with the greatest opportunity to develop intellectually, emotionally, physically, socially, and culturally.

### **School Beliefs**

We believe...

- Learning is a life-long process.
- Every individual can learn.
- Planning and collaboration are necessary to produce an effective learning environment.
- Every individual deserves a safe place to learn and work.
- Everyone has self-worth and deserves to be respected, valued, and accepted.
- All cultures deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Change is necessary for growth and development.
- Support and cooperation of the community and its resources are vital to the success of education.
- Every individual should have varied opportunities for career education, exploration, and planning.

### **LMS Vision**

We envision a school...

- Where students develop higher level critical thinking skills that will allow them to reach their highest potential.
- That promotes positive values and attitudes so that learning can be effective.
- That promotes interest and success in learning through diversified methods and materials.
- Where the curriculum is integrated among the subjects and relevant to real life experiences.
- Where alternative assessment augments standardized or mandated testing.
- Where it is more important to teach students to use information than to acquire it.
- Where all students can enjoy success.

### **Arrival and Departure**

The school day for students is 8:00-3:33. Students may not be dropped off at school before 7:35 as there are no adults on campus to supervise before that time. Students may not enter the building before 7:35. Breakfast is served in the classroom. **Please have your child here by 7:50** in order for them to have time for breakfast before instruction begins. The tardy bell rings at 8:00, and students must be in their classroom before the bell rings. Students who are tardy must have a parent/guardian to sign them in.

### **Athletics - Attendance**

LMS follows the standards stated by the SC High School League for eligibility. Only 7th and 8th graders are eligible to play high school sports. **If an athlete is absent/suspended from school on the day of a game, he or she will not participate in that game. If the student is suspended, he/she may not be on school campus attending practice or the game until the suspension is complete. Students who are attending the Alternative School are not allowed on the school campus for any reason unless pre-approved by administration.**

### **Attendance**

Students who are under seventeen (17) years of age are required by state law to attend school. The staff of LMS believes that attendance is a key factor in student achievement; therefore, students are expected to attend school everyday and to follow their schedules. Violations of the attendance policy can result in retention and/or referral to Family Court.

#### ***Unlawful Absences***

1. Students who are willfully absent from school without the knowledge of their parents
2. Students who are absent from school without acceptable cause with the knowledge of their parents
3. Leaving the school grounds without the permission of a parent and a school official
4. Any day beyond five (5) days without a medical or legal excuse

#### ***Lawful Absences (require written documentation)***

1. Illness that would endanger the health of the student and/or others
2. Death or serious illness in the family
3. A recognized religious holiday of a student's faith
4. Suspensions
5. Medical or dental examinations
6. Required court appearance
7. Extenuating circumstances approved by the principal

Latta Middle School, in accordance with Dillon District Three policy, will use the following procedure in dealing with unlawful absences:

1. After three (3) unlawful absences-Letter to parent
2. After five (5) unlawful absences-Attendance Intervention Meeting
3. After seven (10) unlawful absences-Referral to Family Court
4. **After five (5) unlawful absences, no absences based on parent excuses will be accepted.**

**Excuses from doctors, dentists, courts, or as such will only be accepted.**

**Students must bring a valid excuse on the day they are to return to school.** A valid excuse must list the student's name, list the dates of absences, the reason for the absence, and the telephone number and signature of the parent/guardian. **Parents/guardians must present an excuse no later than one week after a student's absence. Excuses turned in after this time may not be accepted.**

Parents will be notified at regular intervals as to the status of their child's attendance. Notes for early dismissal, bus changes, or excuses for absences should be turned in to the homeroom teacher on the student's return to school. All violations of the attendance policy will be handled at the discretion of the administration.

## ***Make-Up Work***

### **School Board Policy**

*Code IKEA Issued 4/05*

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for providing opportunities for students to make up work.

Students who have lawful absences will be allowed to make up work missed. The **student** must make arrangements to make up the work **during the first week after their return to school**. Teachers must assist students with the make-up work as needed either before school, after school, or at a mutually convenient time during the day. Students who have unlawful absences will not be permitted to make up work missed. The student will receive a zero for all missed assignments.

### ***Tardiness***

Students not in the homeroom classroom by 8:00 AM or in any scheduled class on time are considered tardy. Students who arrive after 8:00 AM must report to the Main Office and will be admitted to school with an unexcused tardy pending the reason for being tardy. Students who arrive after the 8:00 AM bell must be signed in by a parent/adult designee. Three unexcused tardies equals one unexcused absence. Unexcused tardiness will include oversleeping, riding with another student who comes in late, or other invalid causes. Student tardiness between classes causes students to miss learning. Students will receive consequences for being tardy. Those students with excessive unexcused tardies will be reported to the county attendance clerk.

### **School Board Policy JHA-K (tardy to school)**

Students who are chronically late to school often suffer academically from lost instructional time. For this reason, a record should be kept of all tardies to school. When tardies become excessive in the opinion of the principal, he/she, in consultation with appropriate staff, will counsel the parent/legal guardian. If after this counseling the student is persistently tardy, the principal will notify the parent/legal guardian and an intervention plan to correct the problem will be written. If the parent/legal guardian fails to comply with the intervention plan, the principal at his/her discretion may refer the case to proper authorities for educational neglect. For purposes of this policy, three unexcused tardies to school will constitute one unexcused absence. Additionally, three unexcused early dismissal sign-outs will constitute one unexcused absence. Unexcused tardies or early sign-outs are those that would not qualify as "lawful absences" under board policy.

### **Cell Phone/Smart Watch/Tablet, Etc. Expectations**

Students may have cell phones in their possession at school. However, cell phones **MAY NOT** be turned on or in use for any reason during the school day. These devices **are not to be visible during regular school hours**. They should be placed in a book bag or purse. Students who have phones in their pockets are violating the policy. Smart watches are not allowed to be worn at school.

### **Any infraction of this policy will result in the following:**

- **1<sup>st</sup> offense – Student will receive a warning/cell violation from the main office and the device will be confiscated. Parents will be required to pick up device from the main office.**
- **2<sup>nd</sup> offense – Student will receive another cell phone violation and the device will be confiscated to be picked up in the main office by a parent.**
- **3<sup>rd</sup> offense – Student will receive a major referral. Student may not bring phone/device back to school for the remainder of the year.**
- **Offenses thereafter will result in days of suspension.** The school office phone is available for student use when emergencies arise.

(Any student who has received a 3rd offense and is not allowed to bring a device to school may make arrangements to turn in their device at the beginning of the day to administration if needed for after school activities.)

## **Chromebook Expectations**

### **Students will be responsible by:**

- Following instructions during class while on the Chromebook
  - Only using Chromebook for school related activities (no games unless related to material being taught)
- Not making searches of inappropriate content
- Only using the Chromebook that has been issued to them
- Carrying their Chromebook properly (do not carry them by the screen)
- Retrieving and returning their Chromebook in an orderly fashion
- Making sure their Chromebook is plugged in when returning it to the cart

### **Teachers will:**

- Monitor students' use of the Chromebook during class and transition times
- Send students to the media center during a break/transition time to receive a violation if they are not following the above rules. If a student reaches the 5th offense, Mrs. Britt will refer him/her to administration.

### **Consequences: Offense 1-4 issued by Media Specialist (Parents will be notified in writing or via phone)**

- **1st offense** – Warning
- **2nd offense** – Minor
- **3rd offense** – Minor
- **4th offense** – Minor
- **5th offense** – Major (issued by administration)

## **Class Interruptions/Early Dismissals**

1. Schedule doctor and dentist appointments as late as possible, after school, or during school breaks.
2. Plan at home so that messages, delivered by school personnel to children, do not become necessary. In an emergency only, we shall always deliver a message. For other types of messages, they will be delivered only **between classes** or when they do not interfere with class.
3. **If early dismissal becomes necessary, send a note indicating the reason and time for the dismissal.** Only parents and adults designated by the parents and listed on the student's emergency card may sign a child out of school. Please bring an ID.
4. Office personnel will not take transportation changes over the phone. For the safety of all of our students, transportation changes must be done in writing or through email.

**Students may be checked out of school between classes, at break, or during lunch periods.** The principal or assistant principal must approve any exceptions.

**Please follow the schedule below for check out times for each grade:**

<b>5th Grade</b> 10:35-11:35 1:55-2:05	<b>6th Grade</b> 10:40-11:30 1:10-1:15
<b>7th Grade</b> 9:30-9:50 11:30-11:35 12:15-1:15 2:00-2:05	<b>8th Grade</b> 9:50-10:10 11:30-11:35 12:15-1:15 2:00-2:05

Students may not be checked out after 2:05 unless the parent sends a note indicating the time they need to leave. There are no breaks in the day after 2:05. Emergencies must be approved by administration.

### **Closed Campus**

We operate a closed campus. **Students must stay on the school grounds from the time they arrive, even if the first bell has not rung, until dismissal or until they are picked up by bus/car.**

### **Comprehensive Health Education Act**

Pursuant to South Carolina law, Title 59, Chapter 32, Section 59-32-50, Comprehensive Health Education Act of 1988, public schools are obligated to notify parents of students in the relevant grades of the content of the instructional materials concerning reproductive health, family life, pregnancy prevention, and of their option to exempt their child from this instruction. Notice will be provided sufficiently in advance of a student's participation in a lesson using these instructional materials to allow parents and legal guardians the opportunity to preview the materials and exempt their children.

### **Dress Code**

Dress for Success at LMS! Appropriate dress is essential to success in school and in the workplace. Students are encouraged to show pride in themselves and their school by maintaining an appropriate standard of dress. Generally, student dress is considered appropriate as long as it does not distract others, interfere with the instructional programs, or otherwise cause disruption. **Any type of clothing or grooming considered to be disruptive or inappropriate will be handled at the discretion of the administration.**

- Hats, hoods, and sunglasses may not be worn in the building.
- Bandanas and sweatbands are prohibited.
- Proper shoes must be worn at all times.
- Skirts, shorts, and dresses should fit and be in good taste and not shorter than 4" above the knee on the front and back when standing. Leggings (straight/flare leg), jeggings, tights, and all form-fitting pants must be worn with a top/dress/skirt/shorts that come within 4" above the top of the knee (front and back). Students who violate rules about the length of shorts/skirts/dress repeatedly will be required to wear long pants.
- Sleeveless attire cannot reveal undergarments and must have straps at least 3 inches wide.
- See-through clothing is not permitted. If sheer fabrics are worn, the visible clothing underneath must meet dress code standards.
- Shirts cannot be tight, low cut or show cleavage. Shirts should be loose-fitting and fully cover the upper body. Tank tops, halter tops, strapless shirts/dresses, and shirts/dresses with spaghetti straps are not allowed.
- At no time should a student's midriff be visible while standing, sitting, or participating in normal school activities.
- Pants/shorts/skirts must be worn at the waist and undergarments are not to be visible. Clothing should not sag or hang below the waist. Students who disobey the rule repeatedly about wearing their pants at the waist will be required to wear their clothing with shirt tails tucked in.
- Excessively tight clothing or clothing in an excessive state of disrepair may not be worn at school.
- Jeans/pants should not have any holes above the knee.
- Hair curlers, combs, etc. may not be worn in the hair during the school day. Students should also take care of any grooming between classes and in the restroom. Students grooming during class may have items confiscated from them to be picked up by a parent.
- Students may not wear clothing that displays profane language, drugs, tobacco, or alcohol advertisements, sexual innuendos or anything else deemed to be offensive. Gang paraphernalia is also prohibited at school.
- *Note: Students should also adhere to this dress code for awards ceremonies, National Junior Honor Society induction ceremony, etc. If a student violates the dress code for one of these activities, he/she may be asked to change or will not be permitted to participate.*

Those students violating the rules will be required to call parents for a change of clothing. Those who purposely violate or are repeat offenders of the dress code will follow the discipline procedures below:

- **1st & 2nd offense**-Student will sign the dress code violation sheet in the main office and call for a change of clothing.
- **3rd offense**-Student will sign the dress code violation sheet in the main office, receive a major office referral, and call for a change of clothing.
- Students who continue to violate dress code will be suspended from school.

**The administration will make the final judgment on the appropriateness of clothing and/or appearance and reserves the right to prohibit students from wearing any articles of clothing or other items which lead to or may foreseeably result in the disruption of or interference with the school environment.**

### **FERPA**

The release of school records is governed by school board policy based on the Family Education and Privacy Act of 1974. The school policy manual is available at your school and the town library.

### **Gifted and Talented Program**

Gifted and talented students are those who are identified in grades 3-12 as demonstrating high performance ability or potential in academic and/or artistic areas and therefore require an educational program beyond that normally provided by the general school program in order to achieve their potential. Gifted and talented abilities for these regulations include:

- Academic and Intellectual Ability: Students who have the academic and/or intellectual potential to function at a high level in one or more academic areas.

### **District Program Model**

Special gifted and talented curriculum will be used for this class. For students in grades 5-8, gifted and talented students are served in Honors classes. In grades 9-12, gifted and talented students are served in Honors and AP classes.

### **Screening Process**

All second grade students are screened for the gifted and talented program through the use of a nationally norm-referenced test and an aptitude test. All students are tested in a group setting in the spring. Students who are referred to the gifted and talented program will be tested at the time of referral if appropriate test scores are unavailable.

### **Identification Process and Eligibility Criteria**

There are three dimensions used in the identification process:

1. Dimension A: Reasoning abilities are those higher level cognitive processes that reflect general aptitude for thought. Nationally normed individual or group aptitude tests must be employed. Students must demonstrate high aptitude at a 93<sup>RD</sup> national age percentile or above.
2. Dimension B: High Achievement in reading and/or mathematics must be demonstrated with a 94th national percentile score or above on a nationally normed achievement test or by South Carolina statewide assessment instruments such as SCREADY with an advanced score.
3. Dimension C: Students must demonstrate a high degree of interest in and commitment to academic and/intellectual pursuits. This dimension will be tested with Performance Dimension Tasks provided by the State Department of Education. Grade point average may be used with rising 7th through 8th graders. The grade point average must be 3.75 on a 4.0 scale. Students must meet the requirements in 2 of the 3 dimensions unless the score in Dimension A is 96% or higher. If that condition is met, the student qualifies with Dimension A alone.



### **Referral Process**

Teachers, administrators, and/or parents may refer students for screening for the gifted and talented program. The referral should be made to the school administrator who will give this information to the District Gifted and Talented Coordinator.

### **Appeals Process**

Parents who want more information about their child's status regarding the gifted and talented program may contact their school principal.

### **Source for Additional Information**

If further information is needed regarding identification procedures and program services, please contact Sandy Jones at the District Office.

Dillon School District 3 does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap in admission to, treatment in, or employment in its programs and activities. Inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies should be made to George Liebenrood, Superintendent, 205 King Street, Latta, SC 29565.

### **Grading**

<b>Report Card</b>	<b>Numerical Grades</b>
A	90-100 (Excellent)
B	80-89 (Above Average)
C	70-79 (Average)
D	60-69 (Below Average)
F	59 and below (Failing)
I	Incomplete*

**\*An incomplete will result in a failing grade for the work that is not made up according to the make-up work policy.**

**\*Common practice for our teachers is to place a zero in the grade book for any graded assignments that were not completed on the day assigned. If a student is absent on the day a graded assignment is given, the teacher will automatically place a zero in the grade book. The grade will be replaced as soon as the student completes the assignment. A student has five school days to make up assignments once he/she returns to school.**

### **Grievance Procedures**

School board policy provides a procedure for resolving student complaints and grievances in an orderly manner. The first step in the procedure is to address the problem to the person with whom the grievance exists. For example, if a student has a concern about a rule set by his/her teacher, then the student's first responsibility is to discuss the matter with the teacher.

Most grievances can be settled at this level. In instances where resolutions are not achieved, the second step is to address the concern to the principal.

If these efforts fail, the student may then request to register the complaint with the superintendent. Students who have unresolved complaints concerning matters such as harassment, sexual harassment, intimidation, or discrimination are encouraged to report such matters to the principal who will direct them to the appropriate board policies and instruct them on how to proceed with their grievance. Sexual harassment of students by district employees or other students is prohibited. All students and employees must avoid any action or conduct which could be viewed as sexual harassment.

### **Homebound Instruction**

Students who are victims of a long-term illness are eligible for homebound or hospitalized instruction. A physician must certify that the student is unable to attend school but may profit from instruction given in the home or hospital. The principal must approve all applications for homebound instruction.

### **Homework Policy**

Students *may* be assigned homework on a regular basis to reflect the following purposes:

- Reinforce and supplement classroom learning experiences
- Encourage accountability and responsibility
- Foster student initiative and independence
- Enable the successful completion of more curricular material
- Reinforce home-school interaction
- Extend the learning environment into the reality of the outside world

Please check with your child's teachers to learn about their homework practices and assignments. Most homework is classwork that students did not finish during class. Students are also expected to read and study for all classes.

### **Honor Code**

1. Students are not permitted to obtain answers from other students or sources while taking a test or completing assignments.
2. Students will not attempt to secure, copy, or distribute tests in any fashion. Specific examples include but are not limited to the following:
  - A. Keeping a test beyond the allotted test time
  - B. Obtaining a test without teacher permission
  - C. Any covert attempt to secure test materials
  - D. Possession of a teacher's edition textbook
  - E. Plagiarism
  - F. Violating any classroom policy regarding testing
  - G. Copying another student's classroom work
  - H. Accessing websites during a test on the Chromebook without permission

Any attempt to violate the honor code will be taken seriously and dealt with accordingly by the administration.

### **Honor Roll**

- A Honor Roll – A student must have an "A" average in all subjects.
- A/B Honor Roll – A student must have a "B" average or above in all subjects and at least one "A" average in a subject

**Students are expected to perform their own work in all classes.** Honor rolls will be forwarded to the local newspaper each quarter.

### **Immunizations**

Per State law, all students need the required immunization booster shots and/or new shots to protect them from various diseases.

### **Individual Health Care Plans or Individual Health Plans (IHPs)**

Individual health care plans are also called individual health plans or IHPs. School nurses who are registered nurses write IHPs to guide how a student's health care needs will be met while at school. The nurse works with the student, the student's parents or legal guardians, the student's health care provider, and other school staff to write the plan. IHPs are written for students who have special health care needs that must be met by school staff during the school day. IHPs are also written for students who

have been approved by the school district to self-medicate or self-monitor. To learn more about IHPs, talk with your child's school nurse.

### **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

Students, ages 3 through 21 years, may receive services under the IDEA if the student needs special education and related services to benefit from his or her educational program. A team decides if a student qualifies for services under the IDEA. The team includes the student's parent or legal guardian, teachers, and other school staff. The team develops an individualized education program (IEP) if the student meets federal and state requirements. The IEP outlines a plan for helping the student receive a free appropriate public education and meet goals set by the team. The IEP may include health services for the student during the school day if needed. Contact your child's principal or Kelly Sellers, Director of Exceptional Children, at the District Office to learn more about the IDEA.

### **Jewelry/Valuables**

Students are encouraged to leave jewelry and other valuables such as phones, iPods, tablets, etc. at home. This is especially true for those taking classes such as physical education. Students are likewise encouraged not to bring large sums of money to school. The school will try to help locate lost items, but it is not the school's responsibility.

### **Lunch**

Lunch will be free for all students this school year.

### **Medicine at School**

**Students who need regular medication at school must leave that medication, prescription or non-prescription, in the nurse's station. Parents must bring any medication to the school for their child to take and fill out the appropriate paperwork.** Students will receive discipline actions for possessing medication of any kind at school. All medicines including pain medication should be labeled and in its original container. **Written permission must be given to the nurse by the parent to administer any non-prescription medication.** This permission must include the amount of dosage and the frequency of dosage. The school nurse has the necessary paperwork to be completed. No staff member will administer medication to your child without written permission. Any unused medication not reclaimed within one week of the termination of treatment or the last day of school will be destroyed.

**Parents should inform the school nurse at the beginning of the year if a student has a special physical/mental condition such as allergies, poor vision/hearing, diabetes, etc.** The school is not responsible for any adverse reactions when the medication has been given in the prescribed way. The school retains the authority to reject any requests for the administration of medicine. If medication is a long-term prescription, the doctor's orders must be delivered to the school.

## **National Junior Honor Society**

### ***2023-2024 Advisors: Emily Mew & Stephanie Weatherford***

- I. Membership in the LMS NJHS will include eligible students in the second semester of the 6th grade year through the end of the 8th grade year. Eligible students must complete and submit an application requesting membership in the NJHS by a designated date.
- II. Eligibility requirements are based on scholarship, character, leadership and behavior.
- III. **Scholarship**: Eligible students must meet and maintain at least a 3.5 GPA for all core and high school credit courses each semester.
- IV. **Character and Leadership**: Eligible students must also score higher than 3 on a teacher evaluation of character and leadership traits and have no more than 3 unexcused absences.
- V. **Behavior**: Students with a discipline record which denotes any out of school suspension will not be considered for membership in the LMS NJHS. Any suspensions occurring after induction will result in immediate removal from NJHS.
- VI. **Membership Dues**: All inductees and current members must pay a \$10.00 membership fee each school year in order to be considered an active member. Dues are non-refundable.
- VII. Only active members, which includes all of the above criteria, will be allowed to participate in NJHS service projects, fundraisers and field trips.
- VIII. **Students who fail to maintain academic eligibility of a 3.5 GPA will be placed on a one semester probation during which they may still participate in club activities. After one semester of academic probation, any student who continues to have a GPA lower than 3.5 will be permanently removed from the NJHS.**
- IX. Faculty Council Selection Alternatives
  - A. **Full Acceptance**: Student meets all criteria without any concerns.
  - B. **Full Acceptance with Conference**: Student meets all criteria, with concerns regarding academic or behavioral issues. An advisor will conference with student.
  - C. **Probationary Acceptance with Conference**: Student did not meet one or more of the criteria, but Council offers acceptance with one semester probation as described in sections V and VI below. An advisor will conference with the student.
  - D. **Not Accepted with Conference**: Student did not meet one or more of the criteria, and Council believes student does not exhibit NJHS ideals. An advisor will conference with the student. Student will be eligible to apply the next year.

## **Notice of Destruction of Special Education Records**

Special education records for students with disabilities are maintained by the LEA (school district) until no longer needed to provide educational services for a student. This notice is to inform you that special education records will be destroyed after five years following a student's program completion or graduation from high school, unless the student (or the student's legal guardian) has taken possession of the records prior to that time. For more information related to the destruction or acquisition of special education records, contact Kelly Sellers, Director of Exceptional Children for Dillon School District 3 at 843-752-7101.

## Parent Portal

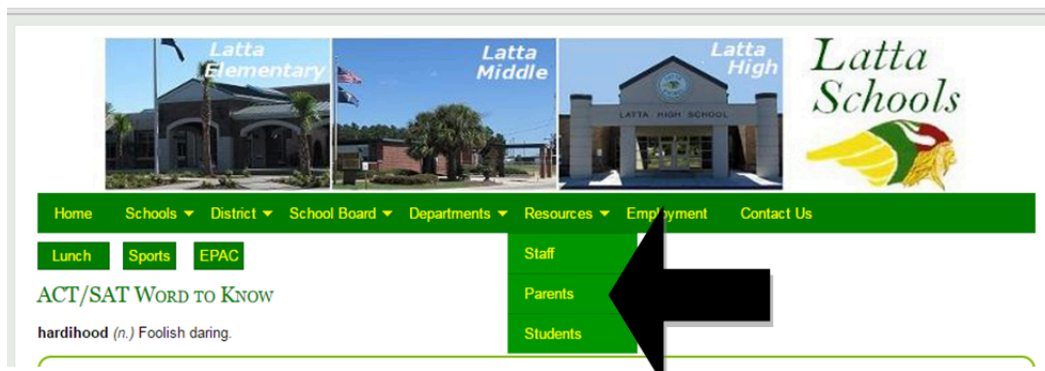
Join the PowerSchool Parent Portal if you would like to have access to your child's grades. Parent Portal allows you to view your child's grades as soon as they are posted in the online gradebook.

Follow the steps below to sign up:

- Go to the district website [www.dillon3.k12.sc.us](http://www.dillon3.k12.sc.us)
- Hover over Resources



- Click on Parents



- Click on PowerSchool Parent Portal Account Request



Once you click here, you will fill out and submit the form. When your account information is ready, it will be delivered to the school of your choice. You will be contacted by email for pickup.

## **Parent's Right to Know**

Parents may request, and the school will provide the parents on request, information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers including, at a minimum, the following:

- Whether the teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
- The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.

Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

## **Promotion and Retention**

Students are required to earn a combined overall average of 60 percent or higher for the academic areas of math, language arts, science and social studies in order to be promoted to the next grade.

For students taking Algebra or English 9 in the 8th grade, they must make a C or higher (70 percent or above) in the class to receive high school credit.

For students taking Fundamentals of Computing in the 7th or 8th grades, they must make a D or higher (60 percent or above) to receive high school credit.

## **Report Cards and Progress Reports**

A progress report is issued at the midpoint of each nine-week grading period, and a report card is issued at the end of each nine-week grading period. Students should take the reports home and return them, signed by parent or guardian, to school the following day. Parents are encouraged to sign up for Parent Portal accounts to have real time access to your child's grades and attendance at all times.

## **Safe School Alert**

Our district has an alert system on our website for parents and/or students to report anything that may be unsafe for the school environment. Alerts may be anonymous if the reporter does not want to leave a name; however, name and number can be included so that the proper authorities can contact you. Please enter as much detail as possible including names of individuals involved. These alerts are received by administration immediately at any time.

3. Social distancing at all times in the buildings and buses will be enforced.  
4. Provision of student masks, disinfectant wipes, student face shields, sanitizer dispensers, student gloves, digital no-touch thermometers, social distance signage, "mask when you move" rules and student desk shields or face shields in all classes as well as similar measures on our buses has been delivered.

Please contact your school if you have any concerns or suggestions.

**SCHOOL MEAL PRICES FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2020-21**

The Department of Agriculture has officially released the school meal rate for the 2020-21 school year. These rates are established by the state department and not individual districts.

**2020-21 Student Meal Prices**

Breakfast: Free for all students  
Full Paying Lunch Price: \$2.70 per meal  
Reduced Paying Lunch Price: 40 cents per meal

**S.C. DHEC GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

Interim COVID-19 guidance for schools: Management of suspect and confirmed COVID-19 cases. This guidance is intended for schools to plan their response to known or possible cases of COVID-19 as well as known contacts. This is based on what is currently known about COVID-19 and will be updated as more information and guidance become available. The entire document is available at the link below:

[SCDHEC COVID Response Guidance. \(PDF Document Link\)](#)

**OFFICIAL SCHOOL NEWS**

Please be advised that all official announcements regarding school matters are posted at school websites and are sent to you through our ALERT system. School matters posted through social media are not official or authorized by the school system and may be incorrect.

**Safe School Alert**

**SAFE SCHOOL ALERT!**

**Safe School Alert**

Your teachers and staff in Latta Schools want to make sure that you are safe while in school. If something happens to you or you are made aware of a possible unsafe environment in school, you need to let us know as soon as possible so that we can protect you and everyone else in school. It is your duty to help us protect everyone both emotionally and physically at all times in our school family.

The quickest way to get help is to let an adult at your school know as soon as possible. However, if you feel uncomfortable doing so in person, you can report it here and now without leaving your name. If you do leave your name, we can respond directly back to you with the corrective actions being taken.

Please check the appropriate 'box' beside the school where the concern exists. Then, in the space below, give us as many details as possible about the situation. Please tell us "who, what, when, where, and how" about the concern so we can directly correct it. Then press the "SEND" button. THANK YOU for helping us keep our school family safe.

☐ Latta Elementary  
☐ Latta Middle  
☐ Latta High

**SEND**

### **S. C. Education Accountability Act of 1998**

Purpose of this act is to establish a performance based accountability system, which focuses on improving teaching and learning to equip students with a strong academic foundation. LMS administration and faculty will strive to incorporate standards set by the state that address the curriculum to ensure student performance. In considering the necessity for new policies, we will continue to follow the guidelines set by the state.

### **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)**

Section 504 is a federal law that requires public schools to make adjustments so that students with certain disabilities can learn and participate in settings like other students who do not have disabilities. To be eligible for services under Section 504, a student must have a condition that substantially limits one or more major life activities. A team decides if a student is eligible. The team should include the student's parent or legal guardian, the student (if able), and others who know the student or know about the student's disability, such as a teacher, a guidance counselor, a school nurse, and other school staff. If the student is eligible, the team develops an individual accommodation plan. The individual accommodation plan explains how the student's needs will be met while at school and may include health services for the student during the school day if needed. To learn more about Section 504, contact your child's principal or Kelly Sellers, Director of Exceptional Children, at the District Office.

### **Smoking/Tobacco Products/Vaping**

Latta Middle School is a smoke free/tobacco free campus. It is unlawful for anyone to smoke inside a government building. Smoking and vaping is prohibited by law and policy. In addition, it is against school policy to have smoking paraphernalia or vaping paraphernalia on school property. We offer a smoke-free workplace to both adults and students. Discipline of those who violate the expected standard will be determined by administration. **Our discipline procedures for these violations were updated:**

- 1st incident: Vape pen is confiscated and will not be returned. Student will be suspended for 1 day.
- 2nd incident: Vape pen is confiscated and will not be returned. Student will be suspended for three days.
- 3rd incident: Vape pen is confiscated and will not be returned. Student will be suspended for five days or could be recommended for alternative school and/or expulsion.

**Any student with a vape pen that has THC oil or any student distributing or selling vape pens can be recommended for the alternative school or expulsion.**

### **Students with Special Health Care Needs**

Many health care services can be provided for students to keep them at school where they can learn and participate with other students. Our goal is to provide information to parents and legal guardians about some of the services and programs available for addressing the health care needs of students during the school day to help students succeed in school. It is important that the necessary health care information is shared with the appropriate people—such as teachers on duty during recess, bus drivers, and cafeteria employees—to make sure that the students' needs are met throughout the school day.

### Study Suggestions

Students who spend time studying regularly at home are in the best position to do well at school. Latta Middle School suggests that students who follow the study habits below are those who will be most successful at school.

1. **Attend every class possible.** No one benefits from your absence. Regular attendance makes learning much easier and we have noticed a strong correlation between attendance and success.
2. **Take appropriate books home with you each day.**
3. **Go over what occurred in each of your classes, including reviewing your notes.**
4. **Read your assignment. If you want to be highly successful, read it again.**
5. **Complete all homework. Review it** before class the next day.
6. **Strive to understand**, not just to do. All work is for a purpose. Try to grasp the concept your teacher is helping you to understand.
7. **Set a definite study time each day**, and spend at least one hour outside of school per day studying. On days leading up to major tests, spend much more time studying.
8. **Study each day for upcoming tests.** Do not wait until the night before to do all of your studying.
9. **Limit activities that interfere with your studies.** Commonly, school students confuse the less important as being more important than the most important. Clearly, what is most important academically is the learning that takes place indicated by your grade point average.

### Transportation

In order to ensure the safety of everyone, it is important that certain procedures are followed at all times. Please cooperate with LMS on the following:

#### **Cars**

Car riders should load and unload on Academy Street only. Under no circumstances is an LMS student to drive and/or park a vehicle on school property. Also, students are expected to load their cars as soon as it arrives and not loiter on school property after dismissal. Dismissal is not a time for socializing. Staff members are trying to ensure everyone's safety during this time. Students who do not adhere to this will receive disciplinary action.

#### **Buses**

All buses are expected to arrive at each designated stop within the same ten minutes of the set hour each day unless there is an uncontrollable factor. **Students should arrive at the bus stop five minutes ahead of the bus.** Drivers will not wait on latecomers. Bus stops are within 0.2 mile from a student's home. The bus will NOT pick students up at their home if there is a designated bus stop. Students should ride only the bus to which they are assigned. Students may have a pick up and a drop off stop; however, the stop may not be changed unless it is a permanent change. According to State law, students who live within a mile and a half radius of the school are not permitted to ride the bus. Any questions about bus transportation need to be directed to King McCoy, district bus supervisor (843-752-2710).

**Riding the bus is a privilege rather than a right.** Misbehavior on the buses will result in the student's being denied the privilege to ride the bus for a certain period of time and may result in suspension from school. **Students are expected to be respectful to the drivers and follow directions given by the drivers. Throwing things out of the windows, yelling, pushing, or any type of rowdiness will not be tolerated while on the bus.**

Disciplinary actions for these offenses may include the following:

- Conference w/ parent notification *and/or*
- Bus suspension w/ parent notification

**When the administrator's initial actions are not effective and the problem becomes habitual or if the student has been referred to the office for three or more offenses in relation to his or her behavior on the bus, the administrator may suspend the student from the bus for the remainder of the school year.**



Students missing the bus are obligated to get to school and home through some other means of transportation.

**59-67-45 OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA LAWS AND REGULATIONS STATES:**

NO PERSON SHALL WILLFULLY AND WRONGFULLY INTERFERE WITH THE OPERATION OF A SCHOOL BUS, EITHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE, BY BOARDING, RESTRICTING MOVEMENT OR USING THREATS, EITHER PHYSICAL OR VERBAL, TO THE DRIVER OR ANY PASSENGER WHILE THE BUS IS ENGAGED IN THE TRANSPORTATION OF PUPILS TO AND FROM SCHOOL OR ANY LAWFUL SCHOOL ACTIVITY OR WHILE PASSENGERS ARE ENTERING OR LEAVING THE BUS NOR SHALL ANY PERSON WILLFULLY FAIL OR REFUSE TO OBEY A LAWFUL ORDER OF A SCHOOL BUS DRIVER RELATING TO THE OCCUPANCY OF A SCHOOL BUS. THE USE OF THREATENING, OBSCENE OR PROFANE LANGUAGE ADDRESSED TO THE DRIVER OR ANY PASSENGER ENTERING, LEAVING, OR WAITING FOR A SCHOOL BUS IS DISORDERLY CONDUCT AND ANY PERSON CONVICTED FOR THE USE OF SUCH LANGUAGE SHALL BE PUNISHED AS PROVIDED IN 16-17-530. NOTHING CONTAINED HEREIN SHALL BE INTERPRETED TO INFRINGE UPON THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF DULY CONSTITUTED AUTHORITIES.

**Amendments to the Handbook**

The LMS administration reserves the right to add or adjust rules, standards, and regulations as necessary.

**Dillon 3 Nondiscrimination Notice**

Dillon District 3 does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, immigrant status, English-speaking status, and therefore commits itself to nondiscrimination in all its educational and employment activities. The following people have been designated to handle questions, concerns, complaints and requests for additional information regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Kelly Sellers, Director of Exceptional Children. For all other inquiries including sexual harassment, and Title IX concerns or complaints contact Sandy Jones, Chief Officer of Academics and Federal Programs. You may call 843-752-7101 or contact Dillon School District 3 at 205 King Street, Latta, SC 29565.



August 7, 2023

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

We are excited about the new school year, and we look forward to working with your family. We hope you will find this letter and the information following this letter to be informative. At Latta Middle School, we use a positive behavior system that we refer to as PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) with our students. Our PBIS will center on the Viking High Five which includes our school wide expectations. The Viking High Five is **1) Be Responsible, 2) Be Respectful, 3) Be Ready, 4) Be Safe and 5) Be Your Best.**

As much as we have put an emphasis on positive behavior, it is necessary to address unwanted behaviors. On the first day of school, we have discussed the expectation matrix and PBIS guidelines with students. We are focusing on positive behavior and trying to encourage students to make the right choices throughout their school day and in their everyday lives. It is our desire that you support our efforts to maintain a positive learning environment for your child. Our Behavior Management System has been developed by the entire faculty at Latta Middle School, and we continue to make improvements year after year. Teachers have decided what behaviors would be managed within the classroom and what behaviors would be office-managed. This should create a more uniform approach to all discipline in the school. As always, severe discipline issues will automatically be referred to the office for administrative attention. These referrals will be entered into the child's school discipline record.

When students exhibit unwanted behaviors that are to be classroom-managed, the teacher will correct the child and reteach the expectation, and students will have the opportunity to correct the behavior themselves. If correction does not work, the teacher will give the student a Minor Incident Report (MIR), and you will be notified. This is a "teacher write-up" that remains in the classroom. Teachers will discuss the problem with the student and choose an intervention to prevent the behavior from happening again.

However, if the student exhibits another unwanted behavior, the teacher will issue the 2<sup>nd</sup> MIR. You will be contacted via phone or email. If another unwanted behavior is exhibited, a 3<sup>rd</sup> MIR will be issued, and you must meet with the child's teacher(s). If a 4<sup>th</sup> MIR is needed, the student will then be given a discipline referral to the office (major referral). Please see the information following this letter and review it with your child.

As parents, we ask you to support this Behavior Management System. When our teachers contact you, please assist them by working with your child to improve the problem behavior. Thank you for your help. If you have questions, please contact us at 752-7117.

Sincerely,

LMS Faculty

# Latta Middle School

## PBIS Incentives and Consequences



### Incentives/Rewards

In appreciation for following expectations, we will offer school wide incentives and rewards to students. We will offer these rewards periodically throughout the school year. Incentives in the past have included movies, nachos and extra recess, kickball/basketball tournaments, dance parties, ice cream sundae bar, etc. Teachers will get suggestions of incentives from students for this school year. **Students will be eligible for these incentives until they receive a 2<sup>nd</sup> minor, a major referral, and/or a bus suspension.** We would like for all students to participate in our school wide incentive activities. Please remind your child that these rewards and incentives are a privilege and not a right. Students who cannot participate will remain in the classroom to continue their work.

### Consequences

Teachers will give students the opportunity to correct their behavior; however, if a student does not comply, teachers will issue Minor Incident Reports (MIR).

#### Minor Incident Reports (MIR)-Classroom-Managed

- 1<sup>st</sup> MIR-Parent notified via pink slip from teacher
- 2<sup>nd</sup> MIR-Parent notified via phone or email/Student becomes ineligible for incentive
- 3<sup>rd</sup> MIR-Parent/teacher conference
- 4<sup>th</sup> MIR-Student receives a major office referral and is sent to the office.

#### Major Referrals-Office Managed

Administration will use their discretion for major referrals. Parents will be notified and may have to conference with administration and teacher/team. Severe behaviors will result in automatic removal from class and suspension.

#### Bus Referrals-Office Managed

- 1<sup>st</sup> bus referral-Warning/Parent Contact or Conference (May include driver and/or bus supervisor)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> bus referral-Bus suspension
- 3<sup>rd</sup> bus referral-Bus suspension
- 4<sup>th</sup> bus referral-Loss of bus privilege for the remainder of the year

If you have questions for the bus supervisor (King McCoy) or driver, you may contact the Bus Shop at 843-752-2710.

**\*\*This information is subject to change as we continue to improve our Behavior Management System.**

## **Latta Middle School Student Handbook 2023-2024 SY**

**Please visit our website (<http://www.dillon3.k12.sc.us/LMS/>) to view our Student Handbook. Once you have read the handbook, please sign the form below and return it to the school.**

**Please pay special attention to our attendance policy as we try to improve student attendance throughout the school year.**

**I have read and discussed this handbook with my child. I agree to encourage my child to use these resources in order to help him/her succeed at Latta Middle School.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date