

**R. C. Edwards Middle School**  
**Student Handbook 2020-2021**



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### **Equal Opportunity In Programs and Activities**

Federal law prohibits discrimination under programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance. The statutes listed below are applicable to Edwards Middle School and provide in part:

#### **TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964**

“No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of , or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

#### **TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972**

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of , or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

#### **SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973**

“No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States shall...solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

Edwards Middle School conducts its programs and activities involving admission and treatment of students, employment, teaching, research, and public service in a nondiscriminatory manner as prescribed by Federal law and regulation.

Inquiries concerning the above may be addressed to:

School District of Pickens County  
District Superintendent  
1348 Griffin Mill Road  
Easley, South Carolina 29640

R. C. Edwards Middle School  
Mr. Jeff Duncan  
1157 Madden Bridge Rd.  
Central, South Carolina 29630  
**R. C. Edwards Middle School**

## Mission Statement

R. C. Edwards Middle School,  
with the student, family, and community,  
will promote high standards of academic achievement,  
personal achievement, and career preparation,  
in a safe environment.

## **PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE**

Welcome to R. C. Edwards Middle School for the 2020 – 2021 school year. Our goal as a faculty and staff is to prepare each student for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century work force in a caring and nurturing environment. We do this by having high standards for our students academically, behaviorally, and personally. It is my hope that each student finds a club, sport, performance group, or organization that they can be a part of on our campus that will help keep their focus on their academic goals. I hope that you are looking forward to a successful year at RCE.

Go Panthers!

Jeff Duncan  
Principal

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Attendance**

Regular attendance is essential if students are to be successful in school. Absences can be a major cause of learning difficulties in school. Every student enrolled in the Pickens County School District is expected to attend school regularly.

Conditions under which a student's absence shall be excused are:

1. Student's personal illness (a Physician's statement may be required).
2. Illness in the family requiring temporary help from the student (a physician's statement may be required).
3. DHEC exclusionary requirements.
4. Death in the immediate family (not more than five days shall be excused).
5. Observance of religious holidays.
6. Absence due to a school approved activity.

Any student absent more than 10 days in the school year (180 days), except when such absences are excused by the District Board of Trustees designee, may not be promoted at the close of the school year. Every student must bring a note or doctor's statement within three days of returning to school. Once a student has three consecutive unexcused absences or five cumulative unexcused absences, a meeting must be held with the student, his or her parent and the School Intervention Specialist. Further unexcused absences by the student will result in a referral to the district attendance office. A doctor's excuse

is required after a student has accumulated a total of 10 absences – excused or unexcused.

### **Hall Passes**

Students are not permitted in the halls during class time unless the student has in his or her possession a written hall pass or is accompanied by a teacher, staff member, or administrator.

### **Early Arrival**

Students may begin entering the building at 8:00 AM and will report directly to their first period class. Breakfast will be served in the classroom.

**School supervision of students begins at 8:00 AM and ends at 3:30 PM. Therefore, students should not arrive before 8:00 AM each morning, and all students must be picked up by 3:30 PM each afternoon.**

Students are **NOT** allowed to congregate in hallways before school begins. Furthermore, students should only be reporting to their first period class before the school day begins, unless under the direct supervision of an administrator, faculty, or staff. Students found in violation of these procedures will face disciplinary action.

### **Late Arrival / Early Dismissal**

#### **Arriving Late**

Students arriving at school after 8:30 AM are considered tardy. Students arriving after 8:30 must have a **parent** sign them in and receive a pass from the office before reporting to class. Failure to obtain a pass

and properly sign in will result in disciplinary action.

Students who need to leave school early due to sickness or other reasons deemed necessary by their parents or guardians will use the following procedure:

1. Parent or person picking the student up must come into the office and **sign the student out of school.**
2. The school will not be responsible for the student after they have been signed-out,
3. Anyone other than a parent or legal guardian **MUST** be listed on the student's sign-out sheet in order to be able to sign-out the student.

**There will be NO student check-out after 2:15 PM on regular school days.** After 2:15 PM, parents or guardians will be directed to wait in the car pick-up line for student dismissal at 2:30 PM.

### **Health Room and Medicine**

The Health Room is located in the main office and is staffed by a registered nurse. The nurse will evaluate all students who become ill or need medical attention and will contact parents when a student needs to leave school due to illness or injury.

**Please note that visits to the nurses office will be limited to emergency situations only.**

Adherence to local school district policies is required for the safe and effective dispensing of medications. Protocols are established for administering emergency medication for acute allergic reactions and

dispensing of over-the-counter medications. They are as follows:

1. **All medication must be sent to school in its original container. No exceptions will be made.**
2. If a parent sends medication to school along with written instructions, but has not completed the School District of Pickens County Medication Permit, designated school personnel or the school nurse may give the medicine as directed **only** on that day.
3. The parent must complete a Medication Permit for succeeding days when more of the same medicine is to be administered.
4. All prescription medication brought to Edwards Middle School will be counted and recorded. No controlled medication (for example Ritalin or Dexedrine, etc.) will be sent home with students.
5. No Tylenol, Pepto Bismol , or OTC (over-the-counter) drugs are given unless the child brings this medicine from home and has on file a Medication Permit completed by the parent or guardian.

### **Visitors**

**ALL** visitors to R. C. Edwards Middle School are to report to the office after being allowed to enter through the secure front entrance. Ring the button on the far right door and an office attendant will buzz you in after asking for the reason you are at our school. Once in the office you will be signed in on our computer and given a name tag to wear during your visit.

**Visitors building access will be restricted to the main office.**

## **Messages To Students**

The office staff will not carry messages to students during class except in the case of an extreme emergency.

## **Solicitations**

Students are not to sell or promote items unless permission is granted by the administration.

## **Fire Drills**

In case of a fire or other emergency, the signal to evacuate the building will be a continuous sounding of the fire alarm.

## **Respect for School and Personal Property**

Students defacing or damaging school equipment or property of others in any way, will be required to clean the article and / or pay for damages done. The law specifically provides that parents and students are responsible.

## **Dismissal At The End OF School**

We will begin dismissal procedures at 2:30 PM. Students will remain in their classrooms. Buses will be dismissed over the PA. Car riders will be dismissed using a car line dismissal spreadsheet as cars arrive on campus.

## **Bus Transportation Reminders**

1. Masks will be mandatory for all bus riders and drivers.
2. Due to capacity restrictions and contact tracing, students will be required to ride on their assigned bus; **riding a bus to another student's home will not be allowed.**

## **Bus Discipline**

The principal of the attending school or his designee is responsible for school bus discipline. However, each student must **obey the bus driver at all times while under his / her supervision.** The driver may not remove a student from the bus without the approval of the principal or his designee, unless the student's behavior is a threat to the safety of other students on the bus. In this case, the driver is instructed to stop the bus and call his / her supervisor. The driver must report all violations of safety regulations as well as any behavior problems to the school principal or his designee.

**The administration has the authority to deny any student the privilege of riding a school bus.**

## **Breakfast**

All students have the opportunity to eat breakfast on campus. Orders will be submitted on the previous school day. Meals will be delivered to classrooms the morning of.

## **Lunch**

The most efficient method of operating the lunch system is to pre-pay for lunches. Lunch money can be turned in to first period teachers. **Students will not be allowed to charge meals.** If your child is on free or reduced lunch, this information will remain confidential since each student uses the same method for checking out at the cash register. **YOU MUST REAPPLY EACH SCHOOL YEAR FOR FREE OR REDUCED LUNCH STATUS.**

## **Lost and Found**

A place in each classroom is provided for articles of clothing and personal items which are lost and been turned in. Please report any lost or found items to the office personnel. Every effort will be made to relocate and return your property.

## **Conferences**

Any parent who wishes to arrange a conference with their child's teachers should contact the guidance office. One of our counselors will schedule a conference at a convenient time for the teachers and parents.

## **Media Center**

The Media Center offers an excellent collection of materials for students use in class assignments, research work, and general reading. Those materials include books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, recordings, pictures, and computers. All media center materials can be returned through first period class. If a student is absent on the day his/her book is due, he/she will not be fined if he/she returns the book on the first day back from an absence.

## **Guidance**

The purpose of guidance services is to assist students and parents with educational, vocational, or personal problems. Counselors will meet with students and/or parents individually or in small groups.

## Computer Use

### Tech IT Home Overview

This year, all 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> will be issued a ChromeBook. Students will do their work and access many of their textbooks through the device. In order for your child to receive their device the following must be done:

1. **Recommended: Parents read the Tech It Home Handbook and view the Tech It Home Parent Guide (Middle).**
2. **Recommended: Students read the Tech It Home Handbook and Tech It Home Student Guide.**
3. **Required: Parents and students sign the Tech It Home User Agreement Plan, agreeing to the terms and conditions. The agreement is part of the registration gateway process.**
4. **Required: Pay the yearly \$ 20 fee payable through MySchoolBucks**

Students and parents are asked to become familiar with the School District of Pickens County's computer usage policy located in the School District of Pickens County's **2020-2021 Back To School Handbook**, which you may obtain upon request. Strict policies govern the use of computers located anywhere on school property.

## Discipline Philosophy

In making the transition from elementary school to middle school, the hardest adjustment for a student is the expected behavior. Expected behavior at R.C. Edwards Middle School is different from expected behavior in elementary school. Middle School students are given more freedom; however, along with freedom comes more responsibility. **Behavior is by choice not by chance.** If students work within the rules they will not have any problems.

### The Consequences for Failure to Follow Rules Will Be:

1. Student warned by the teacher.
2. Parent contact made by the teacher.
3. Admin conference with the student.
4. Office referral.

Steps in the above sequence may be skipped if the inappropriate behavior is determined to be severe enough to do so.

## Punishment

The extent of punishment in any situation will depend upon such factors as the seriousness of the infraction, total number of offenses, repeated offenses, and if prior warning was given to the student.

Levels of punishment range from lunch detention, In-School Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension, and in the most extreme cases expulsion.



## Dress Code

**Moderation and modesty should govern student dress. Therefore, students will follow these rules in middle and high school programs. The dress code effective for the 2020 – 2021 school year is:**

1. Provocative and suggestive clothing is not permitted (tight-fitting, plunging necklines, etc.)
2. Garments worn on the legs (pants, shorts, skirts, dresses, etc...) **must have a length within one inch of the top of the knee; with no holes or slits above this line. NO SAGGING OR BAGGY PANTS ARE PERMITTED.**
3. Bare midriffs will not be permitted. The standard used will be that no midriff is visible when the student is engaged in normal movement such as walking, sitting down, standing up, bending over, etc....
4. Any sleeveless garment must have width on the shoulder area of at least four (4) of the student's fingers, and the arm opening should fit the body closely enough to cover the underarm and the side of the chest area.
5. Mesh or see-through garments are permitted only if a legal garment is visible underneath.
6. **Underwear should not be seen at any time.**
7. Sleepwear is forbidden. This includes bedroom slippers.
8. Shoes or sandals must be worn. Flip-flops (shower-type shoes with soft bottoms) are forbidden.
9. Headwear (hats, sunglasses, do-rags, bandannas, etc...) is not to be worn inside any of the buildings.

10. Hair rollers are not permitted.
11. Face painting is not permitted.
12. No clothing, accessory, or visible tattoo that displays inappropriate language or images ( profanity, sexual suggestion / insinuation, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, ethnic slurs, slogans / symbols that may lead to disorder, etc.) is permitted.
13. Chains or other articles hanging from clothing are not permitted, as well as items that have potential to cause harm to one's self or to others.
14. Attire, colors, visible tattoos, or symbols related to gangs are not permitted.

**Students are reminded that face masks/face coverings should be worn at all times on campus when physical distancing of 6 feet or more is not possible. Please keep in mind all images or messages on face masks/face coverings should be school appropriate and not cause a disturbance.**

A principal may make an exception to these rules for medical or religious situations or for school spirit or curricular activities. A principal has the authority to judge student dress situation not specifically listed in this regulation as a violation if the situation has potential to disrupt the education process or environment.

### **First Offense**

The student will have to correct the violation before given permission to return to class. The student will be given a formal warning that will be documented in the

student's in house discipline record (**not permanent record**)

### **Second and Subsequent Offenses**

The student will have to correct the violation before given permission to return to class. The student will be considered **disobedient** and an appropriate disciplinary consequence will be assigned based on the context of this situation in the student's discipline record for the year.

### **Electronic Devices**

Radios, headsets, I-pods, CD's, and electronic games are strictly prohibited on school grounds unless approved by the administration for class use. If the electronic equipment is visible it will be confiscated.

### **Cell Phones or Paging Devices**

It is the policy of *The School District Of Pickens County* that cell phones be turned off and stored out of sight during school hours. Those hours are between 8:00 AM and 2:30 PM. Stored out of sight means in pockets, bags, backpacks, etc.

#### **First Offense**

Confiscation of the device; and, after a conference with the parent / legal guardian, the device will be returned to the adult.

#### **Second Offense**

Confiscation of the device; and, after a conference with the parent / legal guardian, the device will be returned to the adult after 14 calendar days.

#### **Third Offense**

Confiscation of the device; and after a conference with the parent / legal guardian, the device will be returned to the adult after 60 calendar days.

#### **Fourth and subsequent offenses**

Confiscation of the device, and the device will be returned at the end of the school year.

**Also, school personnel and / or the school district are not responsible for the loss or damage of any cell phone or paging device brought on school property or busses.**

### **Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying**

Any student who feels that he or she has been the victim of harassment (including sexual harassment), intimidation, or bullying is encouraged to report the matter to a school administrator or teacher. **All** allegations will be promptly investigated and addressed.

**This handbook does not include all the District rules, regulations, and policies which govern students in Pickens County.**