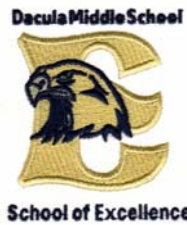


Welcome to

Dacula Middle School



Principal: Dr. Kellye Riggins

Assistant Principals: Dr. Horace Buckley, 7th Grade
Ms. Phyllis Candra, Special Education
Mrs. Doris Jones, Instruction & Assessment
Mr. Barry Kyrklund, 6th Grade
Mr. Jason Wester, 8th Grade

Dear Parents:

We welcome you and your child to Dacula Middle School. You are approaching exciting and challenging years in your child's development.

We encourage you to continue being involved in your child's school life. Many times middle schoolers become shy about having their parents involved, but ultimately they are proud of your participation.

This booklet is designed to help you and your child in the transition to middle school.

We look forward to meeting you and working with you as a team.

Sincerely,

Ms. Nicole Anderson-Irish, 6th Grade Counselor

Mr. Joe Culpepper, 7th Grade Counselor

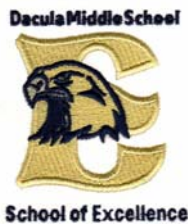
Ms. Jennifer Feinberg, 8th Grade Counselor

Ms. Elethia Rhoden, Support Counselor

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Dacula Middle School Mission Statement

The mission of Dacula Middle is to be a supportive community of lifelong learners, to respect each individual, and to inspire all to reach their maximum potential.

Staff Values

We will model, teach, and expect behavior which promotes honesty, integrity, responsibility, and respect.
We will provide a safe and secure learning environment.
We will demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement.
We will engage in professional learning on an ongoing basis.
We will actively seek to understand our diverse community.
We will challenge each student academically to achieve his/her full potential.
We will utilize effective teaching strategies based on best practices to provide students with motivating and challenging instruction.
We will collaborate with our colleagues to enhance teaching and learning.
We will utilize differentiated instruction to address the various learning styles and abilities of students.
We will communicate with parents on a regular basis.

Student Values

We will arrive to class on time.
We will pay attention in class.
We will always be on task.
We will demonstrate good behavior and not interfere with the learning of other students.
We will demonstrate good social skills and give encouragement when needed.
We will communicate with our parents and teachers.
We will be prepared and use good study skills.
We will be respectful of other students' learning styles.
We will respect the diversity at DMS and treat others as equals.

Parent Values

We will model and teach our children to show support and respect for our teachers, administrators, and staff.
We will support our children by instilling good study habits, proper nutrition, and regular sleeping routines.
We will show that we are interested in what our children are doing by making time to be involved with school activities and programs.
We will support our children by making sure they attend school daily.
We will communicate regularly with our children's teachers.
We will support our children by reinforcing homework skills and providing assistance as needed.
We will reinforce the importance of reading at home by reading with our children and discussing the material read.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Immunizations: Immunizations must be recorded on a Department of Human Resources Form 3231 and on file in the student's permanent school record. This information must be documented by the Health Department or your doctor. Documentation of the following three immunizations are mandatory for school attendance:
 1. All students must have at least **two doses** of MMR (Mumps, Measles, Rubella)
 2. All students must have a 3 part series Hepatitis B (3 shots)
 3. All students must show that they have received **two doses** of Varicella/Chickenpox vaccination or show proof of immunity- which is that they have already had Chickenpox.
- Important Dates – 6th Grade Open House is Thursday, August 09, 2007, at 12:00 noon.
- The First Day of School is Monday, August 13th.
- Dacula Middle's school day begins for students at 9:20 AM and ends at 4:00 PM
- Afternoon dismissal is between 4:00 and 4:30 PM
- Students will be on a "team" of two, three, or four teachers. One teacher will serve as the homeroom teacher while also being the teacher for one or two academic subjects. The teammate(s) will be the teacher of the other academic subjects.
- Students will have four core academic subjects: math, language arts, social studies, and science. Students will also be assigned to two connection classes which might include the following: PE, band, orchestra, computer science, health, art, music keyboards, chorus, guitar, family and consumer science, Spanish and drama. We also offer math and reading intervention and enrichment classes during connections time.
- Dacula Middle School has four nine-week grading periods.
- All middle school students in the Gwinnett County Public Schools are required to participate in Physical Education and Health. All students are expected to dress out for PE. The PE teachers will inform students of the required dress for PE class.
- Each student will be assigned a homeroom locker and students are responsible for memorizing their locker combination.
- Gwinnett County's grading scale is as follows:
 - **A = 90 - 100**
 - **B = 80 - 89**
 - **C = 74 - 79**
 - **D = 70 - 73**
 - **U = 0 - 69**

- If the students wish to learn to play a band or orchestra instrument, they will have the chance to choose their instrument the first few weeks of school. **Band, chorus, and orchestra programs are year-long commitments.** Therefore, participation in other connections classes is limited.
- Students needing to take medication at school must have a parent bring the medication and documentation to the school. All medication is stored and given in the clinic by our clinic clerk. If students need to have immediate medicine, e.g., aspirin or Tylenol, it cannot be given to students unless they have a personal bottle in the clinic. Do not send medications to school by your child. A parent should bring the medication to school in the **original** bottle.
- With the exception of intramurals, most club and school activities are scheduled in the mornings before the school day begins. Announcements will be made during the school year informing students of the dates and times for various clubs and activities.
- Spirit wear is available to purchase through PTA. There are various times during the school year when purchases can be made.
- If your student is absent from school, you may call the Homework Hotline designated for your child. You may also call the school, or e-mail your child's teachers. Please allow at least 24 hours after contacting the school for work to be gathered.
- If you need to drop off items in the front office for your child (i.e. lunch, gym clothes, books, instruments, etc.), our school policy is to e-mail your child's team of teachers and ask them to send the child to pick up the items. We will not interrupt the class to announce that items are in the front office. Flowers, balloons, or gifts for special occasions are not allowed to be delivered at school for students.



REGISTRATION

If a child attends Dacula Elementary, Harbins Elementary, or Alcova Elementary, he/she will automatically be registered for 6th grade at Dacula Middle School in August.

If a child attends any other elementary school, the parent or guardian must come to Dacula Middle School to register their child. Summer registration is held each Wednesday from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM by appointment only. Parents are to call (770) 963 – 1110 to make an appointment. Parents are strongly encouraged to pick-up a registration packet one week prior to their scheduled registration appointment. Parents are also responsible for bringing the following documents to registration:

A. Proof of Residence - must be one of the following:

- 1) sales contract
- 2) lease agreement
- 3) two utility bills - water, power, or gas (not phone or cable)

If a student and his/her family reside with other individuals, a notarized residency affidavit must be submitted signed by the individual with whom the student's parent/guardian resides. The affidavit must verify that the enrolling parent/guardian is residing in that home or apartment. When the residency is an apartment of someone else, the apartment manager must also witness the affidavit.

B. Immunizations (See page 6 in this booklet)

C. Vision/Hearing/Dental Certificate on Georgia form # 3300

D. Guardianship/Custody Documentation (If not natural parent, the documentation must be from Gwinnett Co. Probate Court)

E. Last report card and standardized testing scores

F. Complete address and phone number of previous school

G. IEP, Psychological Report, and Eligibility Report (if applicable)

H. Gifted Eligibility Report (if applicable)

I. International Center Documents and ESOL documentation (if applicable)

WITHDRAWAL OR TRANSFER FROM DACULA MIDDLE SCHOOL

In order to withdraw a student from Dacula Middle School, please notify the school 48 hours in advance so that paper work can be completed. On the student's last day, the parent/guardian must arrive at the school to sign the withdrawal form. This withdrawal form will be needed for registration at the student's new school.



TRANSPORTATION

Students at Dacula Middle School may use one of three ways to get to and from school. Students may ride the bus, travel as a car rider or walk. Parents are strongly encouraged to review the transportation procedures with their child in order to ensure safety and efficiency. Please note that if a child needs to change the method of transportation (i.e. from bus to car rider, etc), the parent or guardian must stop by the school's main office with proper identification or fax over a request with a picture identification included on the fax. The school's fax number is (770) 338-4632. For your child's safety, transportation can not be changed over the phone.

CAR RIDERS

We strongly encourage students to ride the school bus to and from school. However, if that is not an option and your child will be a car rider, please abide by the following procedures:

Morning Arrival

- Students may be dropped off at the side parking lot between 8:45 and 9:15 AM.
- Students may not be dropped off before 8:45 AM., unless for a supervised, school-related activity.
- Students dropped off between 8:45 and 9:00 AM. report to the old gym.
- Students dropped off after 9:00 AM report directly to their homeroom.
- There are directional signs/staff members located in the side parking lot to assist parents and supervise students.
- Please do not drop off students in the front of the school. This backs up traffic onto Dacula Road.

Afternoon Dismissal

- Car riders are dismissed at the 4:00 PM. bell to the side lot for parent pick-up.
- There are directional signs/staff members located in the side parking lot to assist parents and supervise students.
- Overflow for parent pick-up carries over to Auburn Ave. & Wilson Rd. across from the school.
- A policeman will direct traffic at the intersection of Auburn and Dacula Roads.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Should your child need to ride home on a different bus, a note signed by a parent/guardian must be given to the grade level clerk before 12:00 noon. The note should include the parent or guardian's daytime phone number. School personnel will make phone verification. Drivers will not allow students to ride an unassigned bus, or to get off at a different stop without parental and administrative approval.

Morning Arrival

- Students will be dismissed from their buses at the back of the school beginning at 9:00 AM
- Students will report to homeroom after dismissal from their bus.

Afternoon Dismissal

- Students riding the buses will be dismissed in several different loads beginning at 4:10 PM
- Bus numbers are displayed on closed circuit television.
- Students are to report to the bus lanes at the back of the school.
- If a student misses their afternoon bus, they report to the front office to call a parent for pick-up. Students who miss their buses will receive strikes/steps on their team discipline plans.

WALKERS

Students crossing Dacula Road must utilize crosswalk and crossing guard directly in front of the fire station.

Morning Arrival

- Students may not arrive prior to 8:45 AM unless attending a supervised activity.
- Students arriving between 8:45 and 9:00 AM report to the old gym. Those students arriving after 9:00 AM report directly to their homeroom.

Afternoon Dismissal

- Students involved in after-school activities at Dacula Park are released at 4:00 PM and must have a signed parent note.
- Afternoon walkers are dismissed at 4:00 PM
- Students involved in after-school activities at Dacula High School are released at 4:00 PM

CLUBS AND SPORTS

Art Club -. The Art Club provides students the opportunity to work in a cooperative atmosphere with others who share an interest in creative activity. The club meets once a week, after school, unless special projects demand additional meetings. The objective of the Art Club is to foster art skills while creating visual interest in the school environment.

Basketball -(Boys and Girls) - The Dacula Middle School basketball teams that compete against other middle schools are made up of only eighth graders. In order to be eligible for tryouts, seventh graders must have a passing average (70 or better) in five of their six subjects over the last semester of their seventh grade year. In order to remain on the team, players must have a passing average in five of their six subjects over the first semester (first two 9-weeks) of their eighth grade year. Each coach has his/her own criteria for selecting a team, but these are a few traits that most coaches look for in a player: good academic achievement, good attitude, coachable, hard worker, possesses good basketball skills and good social skills.

Breakfast Club – The club is open to all book lovers. We meet approximately twice a month on Monday mornings to share breakfast foods and to discuss a book we have all read. All students are invited!

Cheerleading - Cheerleading tryouts are held in the fall for only eighth grade students. Cheerleaders are expected to be at all practices and games. Cheerleaders are both leaders and representatives of Dacula Middle School and have to conduct themselves as such. Good conduct and grades must be maintained.

Chess Club- The Chess Club meets once per week before school. It provides students an opportunity to learn to play or strengthen their skills and compete in tournaments. All interested students are welcome and may bring their own chess set or play with the sets that are available.

Dance Team - Dance Team tryouts are held in the fall for 8th grade students only. The dance team performs at all home basketball games. Students on dance team are expected to attend all practices and home basketball games. All dance team members must maintain good grades and conduct.

DMS News Team - This club is responsible for producing a morning news program, which is broadcast to the entire school three times a week. The club is open to 6th, 7th, and 8th graders, but club size is limited. A selection process is used.

Environmental Club -Members of the Environmental Club have fun using science and technology to learn about recycling, conservation, and environmental awareness. Activities include recycling projects, fun online environmental discoveries, and other projects. The club meets once a month.

Etiquette Club- The Etiquette Club offers students opportunities to learn how to make a great first impression and confidently deal with situations that require social skills. Some of the topics

covered include proper introductions, polite conversation, table manners, restaurant rules, setting the table, thank-you notes, host and guest skills, and much more.

4-H Club - 4-H supports each young person's personal growth guided by the four "H's": HEAD- developing life skills and knowledge, HEART- building self-esteem and supporting positive values that build character, HANDS- fostering active citizenship and service to others, HEALTH- teaching healthy habits. 4-H is an educational enrichment program for boys and girls 5th -12th grades that help young people become self-directing, contributing, and productive members of society. The 4-H program is conducted through the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service and focuses on the needs, concerns and interest of young people. Its aim is to help youth gain a positive, self-concept, rational social behavior, knowledge and problem-solving capabilities.

FBLA—The Future Business Leaders of America is an organization that provides opportunities for students to explore careers and community service projects. The purpose of FBLA is to bring business and education together in a positive working relationship through innovative leadership and career development programs.

FCA - The Fellowship of Christian Athletes is a club that meets twice a month before school to provide students the opportunity to share and fellowship with other students who have similar interests. FCA was originally started for students involved in athletics but has expanded to include all students who wish to attend. The middle school club is an official member of the state and national FCA.

Intramurals - All students are eligible for these after-school organized athletics. Students must have a signed permission slip obtained from a grade level clerk in order to participate. School-wide announcements are made to keep students aware of beginning and ending dates.

Junior Beta Club - The Junior Beta Club honors the outstanding academic achievement, worthy character, and commendable attitude of 8th grade students. Members are given opportunities for promoting leadership, character, and social responsibility through numerous school and community service projects. Membership is through invitation only; letters are sent home in September each year.

Keyboard- Advanced Keyboard is open to sixth, seventh and eighth grade students who already have keyboard experience and would like to share music in a class setting beyond their private learning. Students are encouraged to bring their own music and play duets with others in attendance. We will explore other avenues of using keyboard skills including accompanying the fine arts groups. The class meets on the first Monday of every month before school with a maximum number of 15 students.

Knitting – In this club, students in all grades learn the basics of knitting. They meet 2 mornings a week starting during the second 9 weeks, continuing through Spring Break. The group will start with scarves and then go to hats. Students start with knitting and also learn purling and patterns. The class runs from October to Spring Break.

Math Counts - This is a national coaching and competition program designed to stimulate seventh and eighth grade students' interest and achievement in mathematics. Students are coached on advanced math topics weekly starting in October and compete in February at the county level. Winners progress to state competition and national level competition in March. Sixth graders are invited to participate in the weekly coaching and can compete at the local levels as an alternate.

Multicultural Club- This club is for sixth, seventh, and eighth-graders who are interested in learning about the diversity of Dacula Middle School as well as the different cultures of our country and world. The club is in charge of decorating for various holidays and informing the student body of important cultural issues throughout the year. Members of the club build friendships through learning and working together.

Running Club- The Running Club is designed to provide students with the opportunity to interact with their teachers and peers in a positive and healthful manner. While improving their physical wellbeing, students are able to participate in running games, time trials, and 5K races (both formal and informal) throughout the school year. There is a Gwinnett County physical requirement.

Student Council - The purpose of Student Council is to provide students with input into their school and to provide a link between the faculty and the student body. Student Council representatives are elected by teams and serve all year. Representatives must be willing to work hard both during school hours and after school hours. They must maintain a 3.0 average or above. Student Council sponsors many school and community activities including Spirit Week, school socials, food drives during the holidays, etc.

Yearbook - This staff is chosen in the spring from qualified 7th grade students. The students must have a teacher's recommendation and complete a yearbook application. The students must be willing to work hard, but the reward is great when you see the final product. The staff members become skilled in photography, page design, and writing captions.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is essential for a good working relationship between the school and home. We make every effort to communicate with parents on an ongoing basis and would encourage you to do the same. The following is a list that we hope you will find useful.

Agenda book - Each student will be given an agenda book at the beginning of the school year. This book, besides containing all of our local school rules and procedures, will be used by your child to record daily homework, to carry as a hall pass, and to check out books in the media center. In addition, it can be used as a means of communication between parents and teachers.

E-Mail - Every teacher has an email address. The email address works the same for all county employees. To send an email, simply type **the first and last** name of the student's teacher using all lower case letters. There should be an underscore between the first and last name. The remainder of the address is @gwinnett.k12.ga.us. For example, **john_doe@gwinnett.k12.ga.us**.

Homework Hotline - Each team of teachers is assigned a telephone number that is used as a one-way means of communication. The team will make a brief recording giving the day's homework assignment as well as making any needed announcements. Students or parents can simply call this number daily to hear the current homework assignments and upcoming projects.

Marquee - This sign is located in the front of the school and is used to announce upcoming events.

Newsletters - There are two types of newsletters. Team newsletters, which are sent home every 9 weeks, are used to highlight topics that will be studied during the upcoming nine weeks and to give general information that is specific to the team. School newsletters are also sent home every nine weeks. These letters contain information that affects the entire school.

Parent Conferences - The parents of every child will be offered a personal conference to be held sometime before winter break.

School Web Site - The school website contains a great deal of information. From this website, you can contact your child's teacher, find announcements, monthly menus, the history of Dacula Middle, the PTA handbook, information about clubs and activities, and other helpful links. The school's web address is **<http://www.daculamiddleschool.org>**.

CONNECTIONS

During the 2007-2008 school year, each student will be assigned two connection classes. These classes, which meet for 70 minutes, will rotate on a daily basis. For example, connections A class would meet on Monday followed by connections B class on Tuesday.

All students are expected to take 2 PE's and 1 Health class each school year. Connections classes, with the exception of band, orchestra, and chorus, change every nine weeks and are assigned by computer. Band, orchestra, and chorus, last the entire year and count as one of the two connections classes.

During the first few weeks of school, students will have the opportunity to join band, orchestra, and chorus. Students will also be oriented to the connection classes and procedures.

The following is a list of connections classes offered at Dacula Middle:

Band, Orchestra, Chorus, PE, Health, Art, Family & Consumer Science, Computer Skills, Math Intervention, Reading Intervention, Drama, Math Enrichment, Real Tech, Guitar, Spanish, Musical Keyboards, Writing Enrichment, and Problem-Solving.

CONNECTIONS CLASSES

Art - The art connections curriculum includes sequential instruction of art fundamentals and techniques. Lessons are structured to promote familiarity with the elements of art and the principles of design and to foster self-confidence in individual expression through creative problem solving and exploration of media.

Career Education - The career connections curriculum includes objectives for students to develop a sense of personal worth, to recognize responsibility for decision-making, to utilize goal-setting strategies, to understand the role of work in our lives, to identify reliable resources of career information, and to understand the value of lifelong learning. Each grade level uses different materials including want ads, applications, interview role-playing, videos, articles, skits, and activity-related worksheets. Many adults volunteer as speakers for this class, exposing students to a wide variety of careers.

Computer Skills- This class is designed to take each student at their individual level and move them toward competency and self-sufficiency in the use of the computer applications in their academic studies and life long learning. Focus for the **sixth grade** students is keyboarding skills and proficiency in Word processing. Sixth grade students are also introduced to spreadsheets and create a multimedia presentation based on research about the history of the technology development. **Seventh grade** students work on keyboarding skills, Word processing proficiency and spreadsheets. The 7th graders create projects using simple Logo programming in the Micro Worlds EX software. The **eighth grade** curriculum emphasizes skills in Word Processing,

graphics, multimedia presentation and Internet research. The students investigate a career in which they are interested and use this as a basis to build personal portfolio websites.

CREATE (Creative Research Experiences And Technology Exploration), founded at Dacula Middle in 2001, is a Gifted/Honors course for students in Grades 6, 7, and 8. Technology is integrated throughout multimedia projects as students explore content interests linked to History, Geography, Sciences, and the Digital Arts. Student-created projects include photographic arts, animation, video, and digital music.

CREATE students master the skillful use of computer software programs as authoring tools to create knowledge products for a specific audience.

Drama- This connections class is open to any student in all three grades. It introduces the student to the main points of interest in theatre. An **all-year** version is offered in 7th and 8th grades only. Any student who is interested in the all-year class can audition during the spring of their 6th grade year. Intro to Drama is *not* a prerequisite to the all-year class.

Family & Consumer Sciences - The FACS program is designed to prepare students to effectively balance home, family, and work roles required in our challenging technological society. FACS at the middle school level is an exploration of a broad body of knowledge comprised of four major areas of study: 1) Foods and Nutrition, 2) Textiles and Apparel, 3) Individual and Family Development, and 4) Housing and Consumer Economics.

Guitar - In Guitar we learn current popular music as well as some old favorites through chords and notes on the guitar. We also learn to read notes on the music staff and tablature. By playing the guitar we learn the basics of musicianship and strive to incorporate many styles, genres, and cultures in the music we play and the music we listen to in class. Grades are based on student recitals, listening activities, worksheets, skills checks and written tests. Check with your child's teacher on availability of this Connections class for the current school year.

Health - Health education is an on-going process that begins in the early years and continues across the life span. Good health is essential to personal happiness and to strong families and communities. A student's health directly influences his or her success in school. Understanding of factors, which predispose, enable and reinforce healthy and unhealthy behavior, is necessary. All students enroll in a Health/PE class, which focuses on the various aspects of fitness and nutrition. They also take health classes emphasizing drug education, self-esteem, family life education, violence prevention, growth and development, and communicable disease.

Math Enrichment is a hands-on interactive course designed to extend and enrich the current math AKS students are learning this year in their math classes. Students use technology and manipulatives to explore mathematical concepts. The concepts covered will challenge critical thinking skills, further develop problem-solving skills, and enhance understanding of how math relates to life outside of the classroom.

Math or Reading Intervention - Math Intervention is a connections class that reinforces what is being taught in math class. A variety of activities are used to help students be successful in their math class. Some of these activities include basic math fact drills, games, worksheets, and hands on activities.

Reading Intervention is a connections class that reinforces reading skills. Students will work on improving comprehension, increasing their vocabulary while practicing different types of reading strategies. Some activities may include making visuals, role playing, reading games, and group work. Students are also encouraged to develop a love for reading.

Media Assistant - During this connections class students learn about the organization of the media center and the technology used by assisting the media staff. Students will perform the following duties: organize and shelve books, check in books and check out books, assist students with questions or problems, operate video equipment, deliver notices and messages as well as other assigned duties. There is a selection process. Only 8 students per grade level are selected for this connections class.

Music - Band, Chorus, and Orchestra - These year long programs are offered at 6th, 7th, and 8th grade levels. These classes are held during the connections portion of the school day with very little after school rehearsal. Students are required to perform in two or three evening concerts per year.

Music Keyboards - This is a nine-week class provided for students not in band, chorus, or orchestra. The focus is on improving listening and processing skills as well as reading a musical score while playing the keyboard.

Peer Leadership - Peer Leaders are chosen at the end of the 6th and 7th grades. The selection process includes an application form, teacher recommendations, and an interview with a counselor. Peer Leadership is a connections class during the eighth grade year. The students who are selected may work with other students individually, or in small groups on academic or study skills. They may act as a big brother or sister to younger students, act as hosts and hostesses for special events, and may also help teachers or clerks.

Physical Education - Students are provided opportunities to succeed in a variety of movement and fitness education activities that assist them in acquiring motor skills, health-related fitness abilities, knowledge, positive attitudes, and self-esteem. Opportunities are provided through a wide range of activities including team sports, rhythms, individual sports, outdoor education, and fitness activities.

Spanish - In Spanish, students will be introduced to a different language and different cultures. They will learn greetings, farewells, and expressions of courtesy; as well as basic vocabulary related to the calendar, weather, time, sports and leisure, family, home, school and food. The goals of the class are to use Spanish to ask, to answer and to give information, and to explore the culture of Spanish speaking countries. Emphasis will be placed on communication and meaning.

Dacula Middle School



School of Excellence

CURRICULUM

Dacula Middle School is committed to Gwinnett County Public School's mission statement: "The mission of the Gwinnett County Public Schools is to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills and behavior for each student, resulting in measured improvement against local, national, and world-class standards."

Dacula Middle School produces world-class learners through its focus on learning, using the academic knowledge and skills (AKS) as the core content for the curriculum.

The AKS for each grade level (6th, 7th, and 8th) spell out the essential knowledge; skills and behavior students are expected to master in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and connections classes. Students receive 5 hours of academic instruction and 70 minutes of connections instruction per day.

Each parent and student will receive a book containing grade level AKS at the beginning of the year. Teachers use the AKS, curriculum guides, textbooks, technology, research, and other materials to enrich each student's education and to ensure optimal student success

COURSES

6TH GRADE

Language Arts - The sixth grade language arts curriculum will involve two major components: grammar/composition and literature. We concentrate on grammar concepts and application through the writing process. The literature book, novels, and student selected library books will provide students with instruction in the different genres of literature, along with the many elements of reading and reading comprehension.

Mathematics - The main focus of our sixth grade math program is to develop individuals who will have the foundation to think logically and work to solve problems dealing with daily life. We concentrate on basic math skills with fractions, decimals, integers, and percent. These skills are extended into pre-algebra, geometry, statistics, and probability.

Science - Sixth grade science deals with the application of scientific process skills to the study of Earth science. Topics included for study are astronomy, meteorology and the Earth's atmosphere, features of Earth's surface and the processes that shape the land, rocks and minerals, volcanoes and earthquakes, geologic time and ecology. Students will experience hands-on laboratory learning, group work and problem solving activities.

Social Studies - Sixth grade social studies is the first of a two-part course of study in international perspectives. The areas of concentration are the countries in North America, South America, Australia, Oceania, and Europe, with a focus on Germany and Russia. The focus of this course is to develop an understanding of the culture, political structure, history, economy, and geographical significance of the regions studied.

7TH GRADE

Language Arts - The following communication skills are significant components of this course: reading, listening, writing, and speaking. These skills, along with basic grammar skills, are integrated with the writing process. Students are exposed to all major forms of literature, enabling them to improve vocabulary, reading, and study skills. Textbooks, novels, newspapers, magazines, library books, and computers are utilized in achieving these goals.

Pre-Algebra - Math is a useful, exciting, and creative area of study that can be appreciated and enjoyed by all seventh grade students. It helps them develop their ability to solve problems and reason logically. It offers these curious, energetic students a way to explore and make sense of their world. The 7th grade math curriculum is a Pre-Algebra course designed to expand students' knowledge of numbers, computation, estimation, measurement, geometry, statistics, probability, discrete mathematics, patterns, functions, and the fundamental concepts of algebra.

Science - Seventh grade life science encompasses six major units including interdependence of life, energy flow and nutrient cycling, structure and function of cells, organization of life, genetics and heredity, and evidence of evolution. Frequent lab activities offer students the opportunity to explore these life science concepts. Science education enhances a student's ability to think, create, and analyze in a logical manner. It also promotes opportunities to apply

learning to situations that would develop marketable skills and provides a basis for further study of science.

Social Studies - To meet challenges in a global society, seventh graders will concentrate on Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Students will gain an understanding of the geographic significance of each region including its culture, history, political, and economic systems.

8TH GRADE

Language Arts - This course emphasizes the development of knowledge and skills in reading and writing. Students are exposed to a variety of literary genres, which are found in novels, short stories, poetry, and nonfiction. Vocabulary, elements of literature, literary devices, and insights into the literature are studied through these literary selections. Writing techniques and style are also developed as students write pieces, which include essays, persuasive research papers, character sketches, and short stories. Vocabulary, spelling, and grammar are addressed through students' writing, reading, and focused mini-lessons.

Mathematics - Eighth grade students will be provided an integrated algebra and geometry course. This course will provide students with a strong foundation for high school mathematics. The underlying themes of problem solving, reasoning, communication (bridging everyday life to mathematical language and connections to real life situations) are woven throughout the curriculum.

Science - The eighth grade curriculum for science involves students working individually, in small groups, teams, or as a class unit. The curriculum is centered on a variety of interesting topics in the field of Physical Science. Some topics included are Chemistry, Forces and Motion, Gravity, Waves (sound and Light), Electricity and Magnetism, and Energy. Students participate in a variety of hands-on activities that relate to curriculum topics. Process Skills are implemented throughout the year as well as through a school-wide Science Fair Project.

Social Studies - Students are acquainted with major periods, events, and key figures of Georgia history from colonization to the twentieth century. Special emphasis is given to Georgia's global connection. In Georgia government, the relationship between the local, state, and national government is stressed. An emphasis is also placed on the geography of Georgia.

PROBE CLASSES

PROBE is the gifted education program which provides an accelerated, rigorous academic curriculum in Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies for the intellectually advanced student. In addition to the sixth-grade AKS, teachers will extend the curriculum and provide enrichment activities. Identified PROBE students will be taught on a team with gifted certified teachers and will be placed in gifted classes for the four content areas.

PROBE CREATE (Creative Research Experiences and Technology Exploration). This AKS-based Connections course for PROBE students, uses multimedia technology to focus on physical, earth, life, and social sciences.

SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSES

Students who are consistently experiencing academic difficulties due to learning or emotional issues (that are documented by due process) are supported by the special education program.

ESOL CLASSES

DMS has been serving a small yet steady population of students whose first language is not English. These learners from various ethnic and language backgrounds attend a segment or two of ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) classes in Language Arts and Social Studies. The small class size, slower pace of instruction and trained ESOL teachers allow for the acquisition of English and the learning of academic content in a less threatening environment. The primary goal of the program is to facilitate the learning of English for these ESOL students so that they can participate successfully in their academic classes. In addition, the language and academic progress of first year and second year exited ESOL students are closely monitored by the ESOL teachers and their academic teams.

Middle School Promotion Criteria 2007-08

Sixth Grade

Sixth grade students must earn a minimum of a 70 average each semester in 5 out of 6 subjects (two of which must be Math and Language Arts) in order to earn promotion to the seventh grade.

First Semester = first and second nine weeks
Second Semester = third and fourth nine weeks

Seventh Grade

Seventh grade students must earn passing scores on the English/Language Arts, Reading, Science, and Social Studies subtest of the the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) and a passing score on the Math CRCT/Gateway Assessment.

Eighth Grade

Eighth grade students must earn a minimum of a 70 average each semester in 5 out of 6 subjects (two of which must be Math and Language Arts) in order to earn promotion to the ninth grade.

First Semester = first and second nine weeks
Second Semester = third and fourth nine weeks

In addition to passing 5 out of 6 subjects, eighth grade students must also achieve passing scores on the Georgia Writing Assessment, and on the Reading and Math subtests of the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT).

Special Education and English Language Learner Programs – Grades 6, 7 & 8

Please note that decisions regarding students in special education programs will be guided by their IEP. Decisions regarding ELL students will be guided by the student's academic progress as stated in the student's "AKS Modification and Intervention Plan for ESOL Students."

Summer School Opportunity

A student who earns a passing grade in a subject area for one semester and fails in this subject area for the other semester may attend summer school to earn promotion. This allows a student to make-up for a semester failure, but not for a year long failure in a particular subject. Middle school students who attend summer school will be able to take a maximum of two subject area classes for promotion. Seventh and eighth grade students who have not passed Gateway or CRCT subtests may attend summer school and/or retake the sections of the Gateway or subtests of the CRCT that they failed at the end of summer school.

Dress Code 2007-08

Dacula Middle School acknowledges that good grooming and personal attire positively affect student achievement and conduct. Dacula Middle's dress code is designed to reduce the likelihood of distraction or disruption and to maintain an academic focus in the classroom and on campus. Students will be expected to observe modes of dress, styles of hair and personal grooming that support the "First Comes Learning" atmosphere at Dacula Middle School.

If in the judgment of an administrator or a member of the staff, a student is dressed inappropriately, the parent will be called to bring the student appropriate clothing. A record of dress code violations will be kept and consequences assigned for repeat violations of the DMS Dress Code.

1. Shirts/Blouses/Tops/T-shirts – Blouses/shirts should be constructed so the tops of the shoulders are covered (no halter tops, spaghetti straps, tank tops, tube tops, or bare shoulder tops of any type will be allowed). Blouses/shirts that expose any portion of the waist, hips, or midriff are not allowed. All shirts or blouses should either be collared or have a non-revealing (no cleavage) neckline.

Other blouses/shirts that are not appropriate for school include, but are not limited to, low-cut, see through, backless, or tube tops. Clothing with rips or holes will not be allowed. Boys are not to wear sleeveless shirts. Shirts may not be longer than 12 inches above the knee, approximately to the first knuckle of the thumb. If shirts are beyond this length, students will have to tuck the shirt in their pants, shorts, or skirts.

2. Clothing shall fit appropriately. Pants and shorts must be worn fitted at the waist at all times and are not to be so large that the crotch sags revealing underwear or drags on the ground/floor. Belts should be worn with all pants with belt loops. Athletic spandex/stretch pants of any length are not permitted by themselves.

3. Headgear- Headgear is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to caps, hats, hoods, doo-rags, bandanas, wave caps, sweatbands, headbands, sunglasses, or any other head covering. No combs, rakes, curlers or picks can be worn in the hair.

4. No student clothing shall display words or symbols that advocate or depict violence, drugs, alcohol, sex, racial slurs, demonic pictures or writing, illegal gang affiliation or other illegal activity expressed or implied. Clothing with student writing on it should not be worn.

5. Shorts, skirts, and dresses should reach below the fingertips when arms are placed to the side of the body with relaxed fingertips.

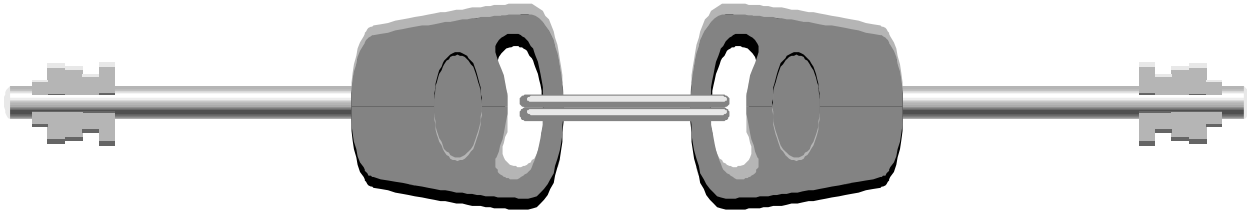
6. Shoes- Health regulations and safety factors require that shoes be worn at all times at school (bedroom shoes, flip-flops, beachwear, hee-lies or athletic sandals are not permitted.)

7. No pajamas or sleepwear of any kind are allowed to be worn at school.
8. Hair shall be clean and neatly groomed. Hair, which is painted or dyed unnatural colors or hairstyles that have an unnatural appearance, will not be permitted. Any form of hairstyle or makeup (including glitter) which is considered contrary to good hygiene or which is distracting or disruptive to the educational process will not be permitted. As styles change, so may restrictions.
9. No body piercing other than ears will be permitted.
10. Tattoos, stickers or drawings on skin are not allowed.
11. Heavy winter coats are not to be worn during the day. Those are to be left in homeroom. No heavy winter coats are to be worn after Spring Break.
12. Students may not wear trench coats or other long coats that resemble the style of a trench coat to school.
13. Jewelry or accessories that may be used as weapons are not allowed to be worn at school. This includes, but is not limited to, wallet chains, mouth grills, jewelry such as spiked rings, spiked bracelets, two or three finger rings that are joined and bulky chains worn around the neck or waist. Sharp objects that could pose a danger, such as spikes or safety pins, are not allowed on clothing or book bags.
14. The following clothing or symbols have been identified by the Gwinnett County Police Gang Taskforce as being commonly identified with gangs. Administrators will consider overall indicators to assess the appropriateness of the student's attire. We are looking for patterns of behavior and dress and not necessarily individual indicators.

Wearing the following could result in a dress code violation:

- a. Gang related attire includes but is not limited to the following: long bulky chains and necklaces, large oversized pendants, gang-styled belt buckles, bandanas, altering clothing from its original form to change the names and/or intended marking on the clothing, sweatbands and/or headbands, and draping articles of clothing, towels, or other objects out of pants pockets or over the shoulder or neck area, extra-long belts with excess hanging loosely, and suspender(s) worn off the shoulder.
- b. Wearing clothes in an asymmetrical pattern such as rolling up one pant leg, wearing a dominant color every day of the week, jerseys (other than community recreation league jerseys) with the numbers 8, 13, 14, or 88 (or any other numbers that have been deemed as gang related by the Gang Taskforce).

Any article of clothing, including footwear, perceived to be a threat or safety hazard to the student or the school community, will not be allowed.



KEYS TO SUCCESS AT DACULA MIDDLE SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE - In order to be successful in middle school, it is important for a student to have good attendance. Whenever possible, students should avoid being absent.

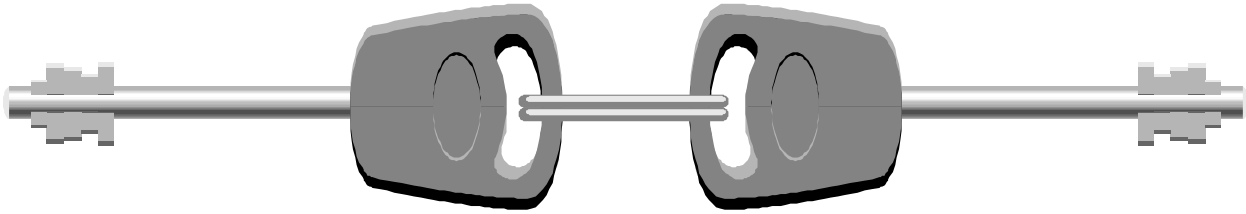
HOMEWORK - In middle school, the average student will have homework three to four nights a week. These assignments provide practice in the subject areas and help students better understand their class work. Homework is graded in middle school and must be completed and given to the teacher on time.

HOMEWORK HOTLINE - This is a telephone number given to students and parents. Homework for the day can be found by calling this number.

MAKE-UP WORK - Students are expected to make up all work they have missed when they are absent from school. **REMEMBER**, it is the student's responsibility to **REQUEST** make-up assignments upon returning to school. If students are absent for several days, parents may call the school to make arrangements to pick up the work that their child has missed. Please call your child's homework hotline. It is an excellent way to be aware of class and homework assignments.

ORGANIZATION - Students must learn to keep class work, homework, and study sheets in the proper notebook. Notebooks should be kept in order by subject, date, etc. so a student will be able to locate his/her work at all times. Teachers work with students to form good organizational skills.

PROGRESS NOTIFICATIONS - These reports inform students and parents if there are academic problems. Progress Reports go home at the end of the 5th week of every nine-week grading period.



KEYS TO SUCCESS AT DACULA MIDDLE SCHOOL (Cont'd)

REPORT CARDS - Middle school students receive a report card at the end of each nine-week grading period. Report card envelopes must be signed and returned to the appropriate teacher.

TEACHER EXPECTATIONS - Students should pay close attention to the teacher on the first day of class. Teachers explain their grading procedures and classroom organization to help students know what to expect. If students know what the teacher expects of them, it will be much easier to be successful in his/her class.

TUTORING - Each teacher provides tutoring before school on Wednesdays for students who need extra help.

TEAMS - Most students are assigned to an academic team, which consists of four teachers. However there may be a two or three teacher team at any grade level. Teams work together to coordinate learning activities for students.

ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM - This program is designed to help students master the grade level Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS). Instruction in each content area is designed to give students additional time and opportunity to master the AKS objectives from the previous nine weeks. Our Academic Assistance program will consist of two sessions enabling students to register for one or two subjects. Session I will meet on Monday and Tuesday each week while Session II will meet on Thursday and Friday each week. These sessions are in the morning before school.

**Dacula Middle School
Attendance Protocol
2007-08**

The school's phone dialer will notify parents any day a student is absent.

Students with 15 absences during the 2006-2007 school year:

- *Attendance counselor identifies students, meets with students and develops attendance goals.
- *List of students is given to principal, AP, and student's homeroom teacher.
- *Letter sent to parents from principal.

Students who have acquired 5 absences of any type:

- *Grade level clerk runs daily query to track students who have 5 or more absences.
- *Clerk calls the parents to determine cause of absence and informs homeroom teacher of reason for absence. Homeroom teacher prints email and attaches to the appropriate form in the student's attendance folder.
- *Clerk continues to call for every absence from that day on.
- *Attendance counselor runs weekly query to track student absences.
- *Attendance counselor sends letter home regular mail.

Students who have 5 unexcused or 8 total absences:

- *Attendance counselor meets with student and develops attendance goals.
- *Attendance counselor sends certified return receipt letter for students with 5 unexcused absences.
- *Attendance counselor sends another certified letter at 7 unexcused absences for students age 14 and over to inform parent and child of possible loss of driver's license.

Students who have acquired 8 – 12 absences:

- *Attendance counselor, using past knowledge of student's absences, will contact parent and maintain log of contact.
- *List of students is given to AP and student's homeroom teacher
- *AP sends letter home (exceptions – illness documented by physician and/or suspension).
- *Attendance counselor coordinates Student Attendance Review Committee (special SST) which will include student, parents, teachers, counselor, attendance counselor, AP and possibly the social worker to discuss reasons for absences. If reasons are not valid (unexcused) then parent will be required to provide a medical excuse for all future absences. If a note is not provided then the child will not be allowed to make up work and will receive a zero for all missed work.
- *Social worker may file a petition with Gwinnett County Juvenile Court for violation of the Compulsory School Attendance Law if attendance does not improve.
- *SRO will become involved if the parental responsibility is in question.
- *If student involved is receiving special education services, then an attendance objective may be added to the student's IEP.

Students who have acquired 20 unexcused absences:

*A Student Attendance Review Committee meeting must be held. Attendance counselor coordinates the SARCS which will include student, parents, teachers, counselor, attendance counselor, AP, and social worker.

*Social worker may file a petition with Gwinnett County Juvenile Court for violation of the Compulsory School Attendance Law if attendance does not improve.

Attendance Incentives

Falcon day - Freddie the Falcon will appear on close-circuit TV at various times during the school year. Homerooms having perfect attendance on these days will receive some type of award (e.g. honey buns) the following morning.

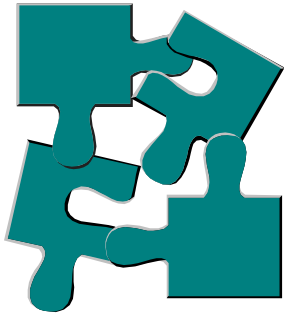
Monthly drawing – Names of students who have perfect attendance each month will go in a drawing by grade level for special rewards.

Semester attendance coupons - Students who have excellent attendance (3 or fewer absences/tardies) at the end of each semester will receive an ice cream coupon.

Testing awards – Homerooms with perfect attendance during each testing window will receive a pizza party. Names of students with perfect attendance during CRCT will go in a drawing by grade level for special rewards.

Special Ed. Students- In addition to the incentives listed above, additional incentives will be given by the student's special ed. teachers.

Students that had 15 or more absences the previous school year- Students who missed 15 or more days the previous school year will receive a pizza party if they miss 2 or less days per 9 weeks. They can bring a friend of their choice.



THE FOUR BASIC CONTRIBUTORS TO POSITIVE SELF-ESTEEM

During the middle school years parents frequently have concerns and questions regarding their child's self esteem. Due to the rapid changes in physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development, there are often great variations in the self-esteem of adolescents.

In general, self-esteem is a feeling that arises from having the following conditions fulfilled:

1. **UNIQUENESS:** The adolescent acknowledges and respects the qualities that make him/her unique and different and receives the same respect and approval from others.
2. **CONNECTIVENESS:** The adolescent gains satisfaction from his associations with others and is affirmed by others.
3. **POWER:** The adolescent has the resources and capabilities to influence his life in important ways, which means he has the skills to problem-solve, fulfill responsibilities, deal with pressure, and accomplish things.
4. **MODELS:** The adolescent has people to refer to that help him establish meaningful values, goals, ideals, and behavior.

Basically, self-esteem is the impetus for positive growth in all aspects of development. Remembering that self esteem fluctuates greatly during early adolescence, the following are characteristics that a child with high self-esteem will demonstrate.

- ◆ Be proud of his accomplishments
- ◆ Act independently
- ◆ Assume responsibility easily
- ◆ Tolerate frustration well
- ◆ Approach new challenges with enthusiasm
- ◆ Feel capable of influencing others
- ◆ Exhibit a broad range of emotions and feelings

NATURE OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL LEARNER

Intellectual Characteristics

- I. Emerging adolescents display a variety of skills and abilities.
 - A. Students will range in development from the concrete manipulatory stage of development to the ability to deal with abstract concepts. They are intensely curious and growing in mental ability.
 - B. Middle schoolers prefer active over passive learning activities. They enjoy working with their peers on projects or activities.
 - C. They have a strong willingness to learn things they consider useful. Students enjoy using skills to solve “real-life” problems.
 - D. Often they are egocentric and will argue to convince others or to clarify their own thinking. Independent critical thinking emerges.
 - E. They are intensely curious as they grow in mental ability.
 - F. Independent critical thinking emerges during the middle school years.

- II. Studies show brain growth slows between the ages of twelve and fourteen.
 - A. Existing cognitive skills of learners should be refined.
 - B. Opportunities should be provided for enjoyable studies in the arts.
 - C. Self-expression should be encouraged in all subjects.

NATURE OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL LEARNER

Physical Characteristics

- I. There is a rapid acceleration in growth patterns.
 - A. The bones lengthen and the muscles increase in strength and coordination.
 - B. The glands begin to produce hormones causing sexual changes known as puberty.
 1. The height increases.
 2. The body breadth and depth increases.
 3. The heart and lungs grow to adult sizes.
 - C. The bones grow faster than the muscles so the adolescent appears to be the size of an adult but doesn't have the strength of one.
 - D. The legs are out of proportion with the rest of the body because they grow fastest. This creates an awkward and graceless period.

- II. Genetics as well as environment can affect the rate of development.
 - A. There is a tremendous diversity between the growth development of boys and girls.
 - B. Girls growth spurt occurs about two years earlier than the boys.
 - C. Girls develop the hips of an adult woman and lose their baby fat.
 - D. Boys develop the shoulders of an adult male.
 - E. Early physical developers generally develop faster intellectually and emotionally as compared to the late physical developers.

- III. There is a close relationship between the hormonal balance of the body and the nervous system.
 - A. This may cause extreme mood changes and volatility.
 - B. Hormonal changes affect the metabolic rate and dietary requirements.
 - C. Adolescents eat a great deal but can also be "picky" about their food.

- IV. Other characteristics of the physical development.
 - A. There may be a leveling or decrease in psychomotor skills during this time of growth.
 - B. The adolescent years are extremely active, normally healthy and relatively free of disease.

NATURE OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL LEARNER

Social Characteristics

- I. Middle School years are times when students test values and question authority.
 - A. The child needs adult support, understanding, guidance, and calm direction even though he/she is more apt to question authority.
 - B. Due to changing role models and family structure, the child is “bombarded” with conflicting values.
 - C. Students begin to weigh the values of their parents and family. Often this is a time when prejudices emerge.
 - D. Students are becoming less dependent and are facing greater expectations and responsibilities. In a sense, they are forced to adopt values at this time.
 - E. Values are being adapted at this time.
- II. Middle School students tend to be less family oriented and begin forming peer groups.
 - A. They feel the need to be a part of a group.
 - B. The peer group friend relationships are often superficial. Example - Best friends at lunch are often enemies at night and best friends again by morning.
 - C. The child is greatly influenced by the pressure of their peers, where status is maintained by conformity.
- III. Middle School students are quite conscious of status and its symbols.
 - A. The peer group serves as a status symbol to many.
 - B. Great attention is given to personal appearance in order to maintain status.
 - C. Students often determine status for girls with good social skills and physical appearance.
 - D. Students often determine status for boys with physical appearance and athletic performance.
 - E. Family status symbols (home, cars, and clothes) become very important to the middle schooler.
- IV. Middle School students have a great instability of interest.
 - A. They may be quite interested in activities of one sort then shift to something totally different.
 - B. Boy-boy, girl-girl friendships are particularly unstable as interest in the opposite sex begins to grow.
 - C. Students are receptive to group work within the classroom.
- V. Middle School students are more unlike each other than they are like each other, and a greater range of social skills are evident due to their varying levels of maturity.
 - A. Boys tend to be more boisterous, physically active, and engage in horseplay.
 - B. Girls are not as physically active. They tend to be chatty, giggly, and always on the phone.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ◆ Discouragement is the basis for most failure.
- ◆ One of the major roles of a parent is to be an encourager.
- ◆ Encouragement is the process of focusing on an individual's resources in order to build self-esteem.
- ◆ Learn to recognize some positive aspect in every trait.
- ◆ Encourage your child to pursue his/her own goals, provided the goals are socially acceptable.
- ◆ Methods of encouragement:
 - Showing faith
 - Building self-respect
 - Recognizing effort and improvement
 - Focusing on strengths and assets
- ◆ Recognize your own strengths by valuing yourself as a person, not only as a parent.
- ◆ Strategies for encouraging your child:
 - Give responsibility.
 - Show appreciation for contributions at home.
 - Ask your child for opinions and suggestions.
 - Encourage participation in decision-making.
 - Accept mistakes.
 - Emphasize the process, not just the product.
 - Turn liabilities into assets.
 - Show confidence in your child's judgment.
 - Have positive expectations.
 - Develop alternative ways of viewing situations.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS: THE DYNAMIC DOZEN

Most people would agree that parenting is a difficult job. We receive little training in preparation for parenthood. Even if parents were “perfect people”, their children would experience some difficulties. The following are some parenting tips that others have found helpful in establishing guidelines for their children.

- ↪ **Active Interest** in their friends, activities, opinions. Make their friends feel welcome by providing food, a place to talk, etc.
- ↪ **Privacy** by not prying, opening mail, eavesdropping on phone conversations, etc. (However, parents should know where their children are and what they’re doing!)
- ↪ **Values** in important areas like sex, drugs, money, and religion. Children need parents with firm convictions, who act as positive models.
- ↪ **Listening** not only to what they say, but also to what is really meant. Respect their opinions but also know they may change.
- ↪ **Consistency** - Parents should clearly state rules on hours to come home, homework, chores, family and other responsibilities.
- ↪ **Independence** and individuality. Making decisions - and some mistakes - is essential in growing up.
- ↪ **Flexibility**. Adolescents see things from a fresh slant. Parents may need to do some rethinking about their own patterns.
- ↪ **Love and affection**. They may not show it, but adolescents still need parental affection and approval.
- ↪ **Set Limits**. Children this age need and expect limits even if they resent them.
- ↪ **Encouragement**. Be as encouraging as possible; we all need a support system. Whenever possible, focus on the positives because focusing on the negative can feel like a devastating attack.
- ↪ **Time**. Take time to talk, be with, and do things with your child.
- ↪ **Humor**. Recognize that anger is normal, yours and theirs. It needs to be expressed and handled. Remember that an adolescent’s “put-downs” of adult society are often part of the struggle for independence. Maintaining a gentle sense of humor helps parents weather outbursts.

TREAT FRIENDS, KIDS THE SAME

by Erma Bombeck

On TV the other day, a leading child psychologist said parents should treat their children as they would treat their best friend . . . with courtesy, dignity, and diplomacy.

“I have never treated my children any other way,” I told myself. But later that night, I thought about it. Did I really talk to my best friends like I talked to my children? Just suppose . . . our good friends, Fred and Eleanor, came to dinner one night and . . .

“Well, it’s about time you two got here! What have you been doing? Dawdling? Leave those shoes outside, Fred. They’ve got mud on them. And, shut the door. Were you born in a barn?

“So, Eleanor, how have you been? I’ve been meaning to have you over for a long time. Fred! Take it easy on the chip dip or you’ll ruin your dinner. I didn’t work over a hot stove all day long to have you nibble like some bird.

“Hear from any of the gang lately? Got a card from the Martin’s. Yes, they’re in Lauderdale again. They go every year to the same spot. What’s the matter with you, Fred? You’re fidgeting. Of course you have to go. It’s down the hall, first door on the left. And, I don’t want to see a towel in the middle of the floor when you are finished.

“Did you wash your face before you came, Eleanor? I see a dark spot around your mouth. I guess it’s a shadow. So, how are your children? If you ask me, I think summer school is great for them. Is everybody hungry? Then, why don’t we go in to dinner? You all wash up, and I’ll take up the food. Don’t tell me your hands are clean, Eleanor. I saw you playing with the dog.

“Fred, you sit over there and Eleanor, you can sit with the half glass of milk. You know how your elbows are when it comes to milk. There now, your host will say grace.

“Fred, I don’t see any cauliflower on your plate. Have you ever tried it? Well, try a spoonful. If you don’t like it, I won’t make you finish it, but if you don’t try it, you can just forget dessert. And sit up straight or your spine will grow that way. Now, what were we talking about? Oh yes, the Gerbers. They sold their house. I mean they took a beating but . . . Eleanor, don’t talk with food in your mouth. I can’t understand a word you’re saying. And use your napkin.”

At that moment in my fantasy, my son walked into the room. “How nice of you to come,” I said pleasantly.

“Now what did I do?” he sighed.

