

# The Shaker Middle School Handbook

For Students and Families

2024-2025



North Colonie Central School District

Shaker Middle School  
475 Watervliet-Shaker Road  
Latham, NY 12110  
518-785-1341

# North Colonie Central School District

## Shaker Middle School



### **Building Administration:**

#### **Building Principal**

Davis Chamberlain

#### **Skylight Hall Principal**

Bill Pickett

#### **Algonquin Hall Principal**

Lauren Sheeler

#### **Wright Hall Principal**

Thea MacFawn

#### **Haystack Hall Principal**

Nicole French

# BOARD OF EDUCATION

A local Board of Education is an agency of New York State governed by State law and the regulations of the Commissioner of Education. The North Colonie Board includes nine members who serve five-year terms. The North Colonie Central School District's Board of Education establishes policy, has the fiscal responsibility to provide a budget, and directly hires the superintendent of schools. As your elected representatives, the Board exercises the community's rights of citizen control over public education. To review all of the North Colonie Board of Education Policies, please go to northcolonie.org. On the homepage, click on Board of Education and then the policy link.

## North Colonie Board of Education Leadership

**President:**

Mrs. Linda Harrison

**Vice President:**

Mr. Matthew Cannon

**District Clerk:**

Emily Trombley

**BOE Committee Chairs:**

**Audit Committee:**

Mary Nardolillo/Mary Alber

**Budget Committee:**

Mary Nardolillo

**Community Board Relations Committee:**

Matthew Cannon/Mary Alber

**Curriculum Committee:**

Samuel Johnson/Nicholas Comproski

**Employee Relations Committee:**

Michelle Dischiavo/Melissa Veino

**Long Range Planning Committee:**

Samuel Johnson/Nicholas Comproski

**Policy Committee:**

Linda Harrison

**Superintendent of Schools:**

Ms. Kathleen Skeals

**Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services:**

Ms. Naté Turner-Hassell

**Assistant Superintendent for Business:**

Ms. Cybil Howard

## Handbook Table of Contents

Letter from our Principal	6
Purpose of our Handbook	7
Shaker Middle School Vision	7
THE BEGINNING OF A NEW SCHOOL YEAR	8
MIDDLE SCHOOL LIFE OVERVIEW	8
ACTIVITIES AND INTERSCHOLASTICS	8
ATTENDANCE	10
BACKPACKS	13
BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS AND DISCIPLINE	13
BREAKFAST/LUNCH	15
CAUGHT BEING A BISON PROGRAM	16
CHROMEBOOKS	16
COMMUNICATION TOOLS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS	17
DROPPING OFF ITEMS DURING THE DAY	17
ELECTRONICS POLICY	18
EMERGENCY DRILLS	18
FOOD AND DRINKS WHEN LATE	19
FORGOTTEN ITEMS	19
GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES	19
HEALTH OFFICE	20
INCLEMENT WEATHER	20
LOCKERS	21
LOST AND FOUND	21
LUNCH PERIODS	22
MORNING ARRIVAL	23
PARENT/GUARDIAN PICK UP AND IDENTIFICATION	23
PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)	23
PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA) - SPECIAL EDUCATION	23
PHONE CALLS	24
SECURITY OF PERSONAL PROPERTY	24
STANDARDIZED TESTS GRADES 6-8	24
STAYING AFTER SCHOOL	24
STUDENT IDENTIFICATION CARDS	25
STUDENT SCHEDULES	25
STUDENT SIGN-IN	25

<b>SUPPLY LISTS</b>	25
<b>TEXTBOOKS</b>	25
<b>TRANSPORTATION EXPECTATIONS</b>	25
<b>VISITORS</b>	26
<b>WORKING PAPERS</b>	26
<b>ACADEMICS</b>	27
<b>ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT ROLLS</b>	27
<b>ACADEMIC INTEGRITY EXPECTATIONS</b>	28
<b>ACADEMIC SUBJECTS</b>	29
<b>HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS</b>	30
<b>STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	31
<b>DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT</b>	33
<b>DEFINITIONS</b>	34
<b>NOTICE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY</b>	35
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	35
<b>APPENDIX A - Daily Class Schedule</b>	36
<b>APPENDIX B - Attendance Reporting Guidelines</b>	37
<b>APPENDIX C - Important District Phone Numbers</b>	38

## **Letter from our Principal**

Dear Students and Families,

Welcome to the start of the school year! I hope your family enjoyed a safe and restful summer. At Shaker, we are proud to have served generations in our community, inspiring learning for growth and empowering young people to make a positive impact on our world. Our school serves students in grades 6, 7, and 8 and our students are remarkable in every regard. While we could easily rest upon our laurels of excellence, we don't. As a faculty and staff, we continually strive to do better for our students. Thank you for selecting North Colonie as your home.

We prioritize building relationships with our students and community to strengthen our ability to support all students, while providing the best, most engaging, and rigorous learning experience we can. Our teachers, staff and administration have years of experience supporting and teaching students. This work is our calling, and there is a place for every student at the middle school. The diversity of our staff and student body reflects our values as a school and our mission to provide a safe, vibrant, and inclusive learning environment that promotes equitable opportunities for all students to achieve academic goals while giving them the tools and resources to achieve personal growth, well-being, and balance.

Please make sure to regularly check your emails from our school and the district. We will promptly share information with you once plans are finalized for any events. Additionally, take the time to review this handbook as a family and discuss the policies and procedures. It's important for parents to know the expectations for themselves and their children, and to commit to following the policies that are in place. If you have any questions or concerns that are not addressed in the handbook, please don't hesitate to contact the school.

In addition, our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) does tremendous work for our student body, and I strongly encourage you to consider joining and participating whenever possible. This is a great opportunity to support our students with fun, social, and academic events and projects. Your participation as a parent or guardian is very important in helping us to reach our goals, and we are grateful for your time and support.

We look forward to a great school year with much student growth and many successes! Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions as you prepare for the upcoming school year.

Sincerely,

Davis Chamberlain  
Shaker Middle School Principal

## **Purpose of our Handbook**

This handbook informs our students and families about what is needed to prepare for the school year. Please use this as a guide for the daily operations at the Shaker Middle School such as school hours, extracurricular activities, weather procedures, school events, school rules, and many other important topics.

Within this handbook you will become familiar with the expectations as well as find information on compliance with education laws and civil rights. Please see a list of important phone numbers at the end of this handbook, in Appendix C, to seek out help when needed.

## **Shaker Middle School Vision**

Shaker Middle School's enduring vision is to provide a safe, supportive, and inspiring environment where students can become independent learners. We aim to provide all students with high-quality opportunities, services, and instruction to help them thrive by mastering core academic and technological skills. Additionally, we strive to encourage our students to develop lifelong reading and critical thinking habits, as well as to gain knowledge of a foreign language and the fine arts. Lastly, we aim to instill in our students the importance of embracing healthy lifestyles and activities, respecting others, making good decisions, exercising civility and self-discipline, and taking reasonable responsibility for their actions and education.

In this environment, students will develop essential academic, technological, and social skills that foster literacy, critical thinking, and respect in a diverse society where they can make lifelong contributions.

## **Interesting Facts**

- School Colors: The colors for the North Colonie Central Schools are royal blue and white.
- School Mascot: The Class of 1960 voted that the "Bison" would be our mascot.

## **Brief History of the North Colonie Central Schools**

Our school district was established on June 22, 1950, through the consolidation of ten former typical and union-free school districts. The district is roughly in the shape of a kite, with its center located approximately at the Latham traffic circle.

At the time of consolidation, four districts had already closed their one-room schools and sent their children to neighboring districts on a contract basis. Of the six districts maintaining their elementary schools, only two, Loudonville and Latham, had enough children and large enough buildings to maintain a graded program. The others, Newtonville, Goodrich, Airport, and Boght, operated one-, two-, and three-room schools and taught multiple grades.

In 1951, the board called for special district meetings twice to vote on initiating an elementary school building program; both times, the issue was narrowly defeated. In 1952, the proposal to build additions to the Blue Creek, Forts Ferry, and Loudonville Schools was approved by a 3-1 majority. The Forts Ferry School and the Loudonville School additions were opened for classes in February 1954, and the Blue Creek School was first occupied in September 1954. With the completion of these facilities, the Airport School was closed, sold, and moved from the site, and the Newtonville School was converted into quarters for the central district's administrative staff. The Bought School was closed when the Forts Ferry School opened its doors.

In the spring of 1954, the district voters overwhelmingly supported a proposal to buy sites for two additional elementary schools and a future junior-senior high school. This was followed by a bond issue to construct the Southgate School in the Hamilton Park-Knob Hill area, the Boght Hills in the Boght section, and an addition to the Goodrich School.

In early 1956, the voters approved the bond for Shaker High School, and in June 1957, a referendum approved the construction of additions to the Southgate, Forts Ferry, and Goodrich Schools. The first students entered Shaker High School in September 1958, and the additions to the elementary schools were opened the same fall. The North Colonie Central Schools administrative staff is located at 91 Fiddlers Lane, Latham, New York 12110.

## **THE BEGINNING OF A NEW SCHOOL YEAR**

The start of the new school year is an exciting time for everyone involved - from our administrators and faculty to our students and families. A tremendous amount of effort is put into preparing the school building, professional development, processes, and policies to ensure a successful experience in the middle school. We are excited to see our returning students and to meet and work with new students from elementary school as well as students who are new to the North Colonie community.

Our school building accommodates over 1,550 students, each assigned to one of four halls: Skylight, Algonquin, Wright, or Haystack. Each hall is overseen by a designated hall principal who is responsible for handling daily administrative tasks. The hall principal is there to assist students in any way they can and supports them in making good decisions. If you need help in any of your classes, you can contact your hall principal, who will work with you to address the situation.

During your middle school years, your school guidance counselor will be a crucial figure in your journey. They are not only responsible for helping you plan your school career, but are also available to listen and discuss any challenges or concerns you may have. Your voice is not just heard, but valued. We are here to support you, and your counselor is a key part of that support system.

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL LIFE OVERVIEW**

Students who arrive at school between 7:20 and 8:04 a.m. will wait in the cafeteria and may pick up a “grab and go” breakfast. Between 7:55 and 8:04 a.m., students are dismissed to their homeroom classrooms for attendance. Students must be seated in the homeroom classroom by 8:05 a.m., or they will be considered tardy or absent depending on the time of arrival. During homeroom, students recite the pledge of allegiance and listen to morning announcements.

The first class starts at 8:15 a.m. and the last class ends at 3:00 p.m. The bell rings at 3:00 p.m. for dismissal and most students will head to the buses or they may stay after to receive extra help from teachers, attend a club, or play on a sports team.

There are nine class periods, including six twenty-minute lunch periods between 11:15 a.m. and 1:32 p.m. (see Appendix A). Students attend various classes such as math, science, English, history, foreign language, family and consumer sciences, technology, innovation, and physical education.

The middle school uses a bell system to signify the changing of classes. Students will have four minutes between most class periods to get to the start of their next class. During some lunch periods, the time to switch classes is three minutes.

Students who are not in their designated classrooms on time will receive a warning. Persistent tardiness will result in disciplinary measures.

- See Appendix A for the Daily Class Schedule

## **ACTIVITIES AND INTERSCHOLASTICS**

At Shaker Middle School, there is a wide variety of activities available for students. These include all athletic teams (both middle and senior high school level), dances, clubs, field trips, assemblies, inter-hall activities, and other events outside of the regular school program.

We believe it's important for students to have both academic enrichment and social activities for a well-rounded school experience. However, participation in these events is not guaranteed. A student's academic performance and behavior will be considered for participation in extracurricular activities.

Administrators and teachers will collaborate to determine a student's eligibility for specific programs or events. A student's eligibility to participate is reviewed on an individual basis, encompassing various factors, including behavior. Students who are deemed unable to participate will be informed in advance of an event.

Continued disciplinary issues or problems during extracurricular activities may result in the loss of future privileges. At the middle school, we believe that good citizenship and satisfactory academic performance are



the responsibility of each student. Students who are suspended from school are not allowed to participate in any extracurricular activities during the suspension.

### School Attendance/Extracurricular Involvement:

Our school's primary mission is to provide a thorough, comprehensive education to our students. In order to participate in any after-school or evening events or activities, students must attend school for at least three hours during a school day. This three-hour period can occur at any time during the day, whether in the morning or afternoon, or a combination of both. Students need to fulfill the primary objective of our school to take part in extra school events and activities.

There are exceptions to this rule for family or emergencies that require a student to be absent for the entire day, such as religious observances, funerals, or other necessary family activities. These events are typically known in advance and the student's hall principal must approve participation in events.

### Training Rules for Athletes:

Athletics are considered extracurricular activities; therefore, they follow the same guidelines. **Rules #4 and #5 are especially noteworthy for 6th, 7th and 8th grade middle school athletes.** There are specific training rules in effect, by which students should abide by if they wish to take part in athletics. The behaviors that could result in being dropped from a team are:

1. Smoking and/or use of smokeless tobacco, e-cigarettes, etc.
2. Possession, use of, or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages or drugs.
3. Possession of unauthorized/stolen equipment.
4. Conduct – any behavior which reflects unfavorably on the school, the team, the coach, or other students, and could result in school suspension, criminal penalty, indictment or other consequences.
5. Poor academic performance – if there are issues with academic performance, a student could be removed from an athletic team. Coaches, teachers, and administrators work together to monitor the academic performance of athletes.

Penalties for violation of the training rules range from being suspended from a team for a period of time, to being removed from a team for the remainder of the season, to being suspended from athletics entirely for a period of time.

Student athletes who are suspected of having violated a training rule will be given the opportunity to meet with the coach, principal, and athletic director to discuss the infraction. **(Refer to BOE Policy #5280 for additional information.)**

### Activities:

Clubs and other activities will be offered within the school schedule and in some cases after school. Students will be informed of the activities available, meeting dates and times via morning announcements during homeroom, class announcements, our website, or through the office.

As with all extracurricular activities, student participation is contingent upon academic performance and/or behavior.

### Field Trips and Assemblies:

Events are organized periodically by teachers to enhance the curriculum. Students who do not attend will not suffer academically as a consequence. Whenever feasible, our aim is to offer each student at least one enriching experience during the school year. Students may be excluded from field trips and/or assemblies due to behavioral issues.

Some specific sites, such as a museum, art gallery, or privately owned building, require an entrance fee. The students are responsible for covering the cost of the fee. If a student has paid for a field trip but is unable to attend, we cannot offer a refund if site being visited will not provide a refund. This policy applies regardless of

the reason for canceling a trip. This is especially relevant for students whose conduct prevents them from participating in a field trip. (It is expected that such students will still attend school.) Refunds will only be issued to students for canceled field trips if the school itself receives a refund.

### Activity Nights:

Activities are held at various times throughout the school year and are exclusive to Shaker Middle School students. These events are sponsored by the Shaker Middle School Student Council, Builder's Club, PTA, or other relevant organizations. Students should be mindful of the end time of the events and ensure that they have transportation arranged to pick them up promptly.

Please be aware that due to fire regulations and space constraints, not all students wishing to attend an activity may be admitted. Information regarding ticket sales will be communicated to students, and tickets will be sold on a "first come, first served" basis, with each student allowed to purchase only one ticket.

When a student purchases a ticket, their name and the ticket number will be recorded. Upon arrival at the activity, both the student and the ticket number will be checked. No student will be allowed entry using a ticket not purchased by them. If a student is unable to use a purchased ticket, they should return it to the selling organization before the activity, where they will receive a refund, and the ticket will be offered to the next student on the waitlist. **It is important to note that tickets may not be sold or given away.**

This system has been put in place to ensure fairness for all middle school students and will be strictly adhered to. Students who are found to violate these rules will forfeit the opportunity to attend future activities. It is important to remember that attendance at any event is a privilege, and students with inappropriate behavior in school will have this privilege revoked.

### Student Council:

Each hall is responsible for electing class officers. Students who serve on Student Council will be responsible for planning and organizing school-wide social and educational activities and may be asked to assist the administration in developing and implementing school policies. If you have an interest in school government activities, plan on getting involved in your hall's Student Council.

### Criteria for Student Council Candidates:

- Students must have received effort and conduct grades of E or G, and an A or B (refer to the Academics section of this handbook for further details) in all subjects the previous year. This information was forwarded to all elementary principals for publication to grade 5 and 6 students. Please reference the last report card you received before completing and submitting a petition. Advisors will still verify your eligibility once your petition has been submitted.
- All officers must be willing to come in before school, stay after school, and work during activities to carry out the job to which they are elected.
- All officers must be willing to organize grade level, hall and school activities.
- Elections are held at the beginning of the school year. At that time, petitions will be available in your hall office.
- Officers or representatives may be removed from office for academic reasons or for behavior that is not consistent with the standards of the Student Council. Officers and representatives must serve as role model citizens; continual minor or serious incidents may result in a student forfeiting their position.

## ATTENDANCE

To avoid the interruption of your child's educational life, please try to schedule appointments, vacations, etc., around the school calendar. The hours for each school day are 8:05 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

### Student Absence Overview:

- If a student is going to be absent, a parent/guardian must notify the school every day the student is out. There are a few ways to inform us of a student's absence by following the Attendance Reporting

Guidelines (see Appendix B). Otherwise, the hall secretary will contact the parent/guardian at home or work during the day to find the reason for the absence.

- The hall principal will thoroughly investigate habitual unexcused absences. Absence from school without the knowledge and consent of a parent/guardian is called truancy which is an infraction of school regulations and New York State Law.
- Excessive absences of any kind are always a concern; instructional time in the classroom cannot be replaced. Periodically, letters are sent to parents/guardians regarding excessive absences, underlining the seriousness of this matter.

### Excused School Absences:

An excused absence is for an unavoidable cause such as illness. The following list represents absences that shall be deemed “excused.” This list is not exhaustive:

- Personal illness or injury;
- Serious illness or death in immediate family (including absences to attend a funeral service);
- Doctor or dental appointments;
- Required court appearance/legal obligation;
- Academic activity/program recognized by the District to be an educationally equivalent experience;
- Religious Holiday observance;
- Out-of-school suspension (where tutoring is arranged for and attended);
- Internal suspension;
- Military obligations.

### Unexcused School Absences:

An unexcused absence is generally one that is avoidable but with the knowledge and consent of a parent/guardian; however, the school has no authority to excuse you. The following list represents absences that shall be deemed “unexcused.” This list is not exhaustive:

- Personal/family vacation;
- Overslept/tired;
- Missed bus/ride/traffic/weather;
- Sporting activity not part of the interscholastic athletic program;
- Activity not recognized by the District to be an educationally equivalent experience;
- Academic activity program not recognized/sponsored or required by the school district;
- Suspension (where tutoring is arranged for but not attended);
- Homebound instruction (where tutoring is arranged for but not attended);
- Other absences not otherwise deemed “Excused”.

### Assignments while Absent:

- We will not provide specific assignments for students who are to be absent due to a family trip that takes place during designated school days. Students are to contact each teacher directly in this event, but there is no guarantee that assignments will be provided. Please plan family trips to coincide with regular school vacations.

- Students are given time to make up work when absent. If you have an excused absence for three or more consecutive school days, a parent/guardian may request absentee assignment, if assignments are not already posted digitally. Arrangements for delivery of absentee assignments will be made through the hall secretary. No absentee assignments will be given if an absence is unexcused.

### Chronic Absenteeism:

- Excessive absences of any kind are always a concern; instructional time in the classroom cannot be replaced. The hall principal will investigate habitual unexcused absences.
- Periodically, letters are sent to parents/guardians regarding excessive absences. Students who are absent from school on a regular basis for other than excused reasons may potentially face action in Family Court.

### School Day Tardiness:

Students are expected to arrive at school on time unless there is a legitimate reason or unforeseen circumstance. Attendance is taken during homeroom between 8:05 and 8:15 a.m. Students who are not seated in homeroom at 8:05 a.m. will be marked as tardy or absent depending on the time of their arrival.

The cafeteria doors close at 8:05 am and all students will be directed to the main office where they will be considered late.

If a student does not produce a doctor's note to excuse a tardy arrival, the tardy arrival will be recorded as unexcused.

- Each time a student accumulates 3 unexcused tardy arrivals, the hall principal may institute disciplinary action, including detention. Your assistance in getting students to school on time is greatly appreciated.

### Class Tardiness:

- Students have 4 minutes to travel between classes.
- If a student is late to their classroom without a pass, the teacher will mark them tardy.
- Students who are consistently tardy without a pass lose instructional time and cause disruptions to the class environment.
- Chronic class tardiness may result in a disciplinary referral.

### Early Dismissal:

- If a student must be excused early for any reason, including doctor/dental visits, personal reasons, participation in school events, athletics, etc., a parent/guardian must contact our school using the Attendance Reporting Guidelines (see Appendix B).
- When we are notified, students are given a pass for early dismissal.
- When it's time for dismissal, students must show the pass to the classroom teacher and then go to the main office to wait for parents/guardians to arrive.
- Parents/Guardians must come into the school main vestibule to sign students out of the building.
- If students return to school before the end of the day, they must come into the main office to sign in and obtain a pass to their next class.
- Parents/Guardians do not need to accompany students into the building upon drop off.

### Truancy:

- Truancy is defined as absence without the knowledge or consent of the parent or the school. Such absence is a serious infraction of school regulations and will result in disciplinary action. Detentions/internal restrictions ranging from counseling to external suspensions may be assigned and a grade of zero will be recorded for tests, quizzes, or assignments missed.

## **BACKPACKS**

**Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, students must leave all backpacks in their hall lockers during the day. We have a plan to help students practice using their lockers consistently.**

To help manage this change, we are instituting a number of supports to help our students:

- The first few weeks of school will include significant locker and schedule support;
- Locker numbers and combinations will remain the same for students from year to year;
- Students can carry a purse, pencil case, or small bag;
- We will ensure that all students have an operational locker;
- Teachers will try to limit school supplies to only essential items;
- **All electronic devices, including but not limited to, AirPods, headphones, smart watches, Fitbits, gaming systems, and any type of cellular phones, MUST be kept in student lockers. The use of headphones is only permitted if required by a specific class.**

There are several reasons for our policy about backpacks:

- Backpacks generally contain all academic books, folders, and notebooks which creates an unsafe amount of weight for our students to carry all throughout the day. We are hearing that some of our students have back issues due to the weight of their backpacks;
- We need to teach our students organizational skills that are more useful than carrying everything in their backpacks;
- The hallways are extremely congested with every student carrying a backpack and this is a safety issue;
- We have had a few students fall due to carrying heavy backpacks causing significant impact and injury;
- We don't know what could be in a student's backpack which presents concerns for possible danger.

## **BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS AND DISCIPLINE**

### Prohibitions:

Students are not allowed to smoke in the school building or on school grounds. The Board of Education has implemented severe restrictions against smoking in school or on school grounds. **(See Board Policy #5312.3)**

Students are also not allowed to possess tobacco, nicotine products, electronic cigarettes, vaping devices, and all associated products on school grounds. Any tobacco or nicotine products, electronic cigarettes, or vaping devices will be confiscated and discarded, and disciplinary consequences will ensue.

- Drugs and alcohol are prohibited on school grounds. (See Board Policy #5312.17 and #5312.1-R)
- The use or possession of weapons on school premises is prohibited. (See Board Policy #5312.2)
- Students are prohibited from possessing or sharing prescription and/or nonprescription medication while on school property.
- Fabricating a bomb scare orally or in writing is a serious offense. There will be school and legal consequences.
- Students are not permitted to gamble on school grounds or at school activities. If violated, disciplinary consequences will be assigned.
- Laser pointers are prohibited on school grounds.
- Skateboards are prohibited on school grounds.
- There is absolutely no talking allowed during emergency drills.
- Running or dangerous conduct in classrooms, hallways, and the cafeteria is prohibited.

- Undergarments worn as outer clothing are not allowed to be worn during the school day for the health and safety of each student. Students should dress appropriately for building temperatures during the various seasons.
- Students are prohibited from taking photographs, videos, and audio recordings in school or at school programs without teacher/administrator permission.

### Student Discipline Overview:

- Students may receive disciplinary action for failure to meet school rules.
- Teachers or school principals may assign after-school detention. Students are expected to notify their parents or guardians when detention is assigned.

When the school behavior code is not adhered to, the following disciplinary actions will be put into effect:

1. Removal from a Classroom
2. Restricted Lunch/Lunch Detention
3. After-School Detention
4. Internal Restriction
5. External Suspension

### Removal from a Classroom:

- Teachers may request that a student is removed from a classroom.
- A hall monitor will take the student from the classroom to the hall principal's office for discussion and further action, if necessary.

### Restricted Lunch/Lunch Detention:

- Students who do not follow the cafeteria expectations or the code of conduct will be prohibited from entering the dining room for a set period of time. (Days absent will not count towards the specified period of time away from the cafeteria.)
- Upon receiving a referral for restricted lunch, the hall principal will determine the number of appropriate days and go over the expectations with the student. If assigned to restricted lunch, students should go directly to a location specified by the hall principal.
- During this time, students can either bring a bag lunch from home or obtain lunch from the school cafeteria.
- Students will be placed in lunch detention for their lunch period.

### After-School Detention:

- Report to the designated detention room by 3:06 p.m. and the period ends at 4:30 p.m.
- Student misbehavior will not be tolerated.
- Students are expected to remain silent and complete their school work.
- Trips to the bathroom are for emergencies only. Students have been informed that the bathroom should be used before the detention period begins.
- Electronic devices are not allowed to be used in detention.
- All other school rules should be followed while in detention.

### Internal Restriction:

- The internal restriction program is designed to support students in modifying negative behavior by providing a highly structured environment.
- The program aims to enhance student conduct, raise awareness of the consequences of one's actions, and cultivate personal responsibility and improved decision-making skills for students who repeatedly violate the school's code of conduct.
- Students assigned to internal restriction will spend the entire school day, 8:05 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. in a classroom specified for this program.
- All class work will be provided and completed under supervision.

### External Suspension:

- Students will be removed from school for a period of time based on the frequency and severity of the rules violated.
- School assignments will be provided for completion at home.
- A building administration re-entry meeting with parents is required to return to school.
- Additional tutoring may be available.

### Violations of the following rules will result in additional disciplinary action:

- Students must bring their Chromebooks, necessary assignments, textbooks, notebooks, and writing materials.
- Chromebooks are to be used for work completion only. Cell phones, earbuds, Smart watches and other electronics are not allowed and must be placed in student lockers.
- Students are expected to work on school subjects at all times, otherwise, work will be assigned.
- Students should keep track of assigned work and it will be checked periodically.
- Talking to other students is not allowed – no exceptions.
- Students are expected to fully cooperate with supervisors and tutors, and be respectful to all adults in charge. Rude responses or lack of cooperation will not be tolerated.
- Snacks are not allowed.
- There will be one bathroom break in the morning and one in the afternoon.
- During the period of suspension, students are not allowed to participate in extracurricular activities. If the suspension period includes a weekend or a holiday, then this time is also included in the activities ban.
- Students are expected to follow all instructions and directions as given.

### **BREAKFAST/LUNCH**

- North Colonie is able to offer free breakfast and lunch to students for approximately the next four years. Individual students or families do not need to take any action to be eligible. This program includes one free meal at breakfast and one free meal at lunch. Additional snacks or beverages can be purchased separately.
- Breakfast is offered through a grab-and-go model. Students can pick up breakfast from the cafeteria between 7:20 a.m. and 8:59 a.m. Breakfast must be consumed in the cafeteria or classroom only.
- During lunch, there is a self-serve line with numerous items to choose from. Students who bring their own lunch may also purchase juice, milk, and snack items using cash or money in their LINQ Connect Account. Vending machines for drinks and snacks are also available.
- Each student will have a 20-minute lunch period. We have lunchroom aides to supervise students during each lunch period. Our lunch aides ensure a safe and orderly dining area and their instructions are to be followed for everyone's safety and comfort.

- Since all students use the cafeteria, we expect them to maintain the neatness and cleanliness of their eating areas at all times. Everyone eating in the dining room is to use a tray and observe the posted rules.
- Please check the district website under Food Services for current menus.

### LINQ Connect Account:

North Colonie uses [Linq Connect \(lingconnect.com\)](http://lingconnect.com) as a secure and convenient way for parents to pay for their child's snacks and drinks beyond the free school-provided meal. Once you register, you can:

- set up automatic payments
- make manual payments
- view account balances
- receive low balance notifications
- monitor your child's spending
- view payment history

### **CAUGHT BEING A BISON PROGRAM**

- This is a student recognition program whereby staff and faculty can write a Bison award for a student who is seen exhibiting characteristics such as showing bravery, providing inspiration/inspiring others, supportive to others, open-minded to new ideas, experiences, people, or neighborly actions.
- Each Bison award is given to the student's hall office. A random weekly drawing is done and winners will receive a small prize and a morning announcement shout-out.
- A quarterly celebration is held for every student who received a Bison award during that period.

### **CHROMEBOOKS**

- Chromebooks will be provided to all middle school students free-of-charge while they are students at Shaker Middle School. Chromebooks issued in 6th grade will be the same devices used through all three years of middle school and they are taken home by students over the summer.
- Chromebooks will be treated much like a textbook or library book; parents/students are responsible for any loss of or damage to the device.
- It is also our expectation that in addition to the physical care of the Chromebook, students will use it appropriately and behave as responsible digital citizens. Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated by the district, and we will take a proactive approach to educating staff, students and parents about these issues.
- Safety is paramount, and the district will ensure that GoGuardian and Google filters are set to actively monitor and alert staff to the use of inappropriate words and/or words that are deemed threatening in any way.
- If a Chromebook breaks or is in any way not functioning, students can contact one of the representatives of our IT Support Team in the middle school. While the Chromebook issue is being assessed, students are given loaner devices.

### **Prohibited Chromebook Activities:**

- Unauthorized subscriptions using school accounts.
- Hosting of online groups without authorization.
- Lending or selling of software without express written permission from the copyright holder.
- Unauthorized downloading of information onto district owned hard drives.
- Unauthorized attempts to access passwords of others, to harass others by e-mail and other such actions.



- Any malicious attempt to destroy material of another user including the uploading or creation of computer viruses.
- Unauthorized copy of software.
- Revealing student account numbers to other students.

## **COMMUNICATION TOOLS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

### **Infinite Campus Parent Portal:**

- The Campus Parent Portal is a secure application that provides access to your child's school progress. It aims to strengthen the partnership between North Colonie parents and teachers.
- You will be able to view your child's schedule, grading information (report cards, etc.), NYS assessments, immunizations, and attendance data using the Parent Portal.
- If you have children in multiple schools, you only need one account, and you will automatically have access to all your children.
- Only parents/guardians with legal rights to student records may receive a Parent Portal account.
- You can update your email and/or phone number by logging into the Parent Portal, clicking on <More> in the main menu, selecting <Family Information>, and clicking the <Update> button to add or revise contact information for household members. Please allow 48 hours for changes to take place.
- If you need assistance, please send an email to ITTechTeam@nccsk12.org. Your message will be forwarded to the appropriate school administrator, who will respond to your inquiry
- For additional information, please visit the North Colonie homepage, click on District Services, and then Instructional Technology

### **Parent Square:**

- ParentSquare is one central tool for all communication from school to home. It provides two-way communication that fosters awareness and keeps parents informed of all the happenings in their child's education. Notifications are sent via email, text, phone call and push notification. All notifications, such as school closings and delays, news and upcoming events, will be sent through this platform.
- This application provides different information than the Parent Portal.
- For questions or to stop receiving all notifications, please contact North Colonie's Director of Technology Julie Scriven at 518-785-5511, extension 3333.

## **DROPPING OFF ITEMS DURING THE DAY**

We urge all parents/guardians to carefully read this section and seek your support in helping us maintain the safety of our building and minimizing disruptions to students' day.

- There is a continuous flow of people entering and leaving the school every day to drop off items that students have forgotten. This situation can create safety risks, so it's important for us to keep our entrances as secure as possible. The fewer people entering the school, the safer our main entrance will be.
- With the exception of medical needs and rare special circumstances, there is generally no need to bring forgotten items to students at school.
- Bringing forgotten items to school can disrupt classroom lessons when students have to leave and return to retrieve their items.
- It's crucial for us to teach our students to be responsible, self-sufficient, and resilient. To achieve these goals, students should develop strategies to remember important deadlines and assignments. We

encourage them to use calendar reminders, set alarms, and utilize post-it notes to remember to bring necessary items such as lunches, clothing, instruments, sports equipment, and water bottles.

## **ELECTRONICS POLICY**

- Between the hours of 7:55 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., students are not allowed to use personal electronic devices. Examples of electronic devices include, but are not limited to, AirPods, headphones, smart watches, Fitbits, gaming systems, and any type of cellular phones. **All devices of this kind MUST be kept in student lockers.**
- All devices will be turned off and placed in the students' backpack before exiting the cafeteria after breakfast.
- We strongly advise against our students bringing expensive devices into school. Shaker Middle School is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged electronic devices.
- Any Shaker Middle School employee may confiscate an electronic item from a student. Upon the confiscation the student's device will be left at the main office and a parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the device.
- The student who had the device out will work with their hall principal to set up a time for detention.
- These infractions do not go on a student's permanent record.
- If you have any questions, please contact your child's hall principal.

## **EMERGENCY DRILLS**

### **A. Fire Drills:**

- The signal for a fire drill is the same as the signal for a fire alarm. It is, therefore, important that all rules are followed, since it is impossible to determine whether the signal indicates a drill or an alarm. The signal is continuous accompanied by flashing lights from the alarm box.
- When the alarm sounds, students are to pass quickly and quietly out of the building. Teachers must accompany the pupils outside, and they must see that no one stands less than 100 feet from the building.
- THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO TALKING DURING A FIRE DRILL. When the corridor bells sound, pupils are to return to their classes using the same door for entrance that was used to leave the building. Pupils should pass quickly and quietly to their rooms unless directed otherwise.
- IN THE EVENT THE REGULAR EXIT IS BLOCKED, STOP, TURN AROUND, WAIT, AND LISTEN FOR INSTRUCTIONS.
- Look for special fire exit instructions in each of your classrooms.

### **B. Severe Weather Drill:**

- Teachers will close the blinds as students are exiting the room
- Students and teachers should go into the hallway and line up against the walls away from any glass.
- Teachers will take attendance after their class is safely in place in the hallway
- The nurse will be called if anyone becomes ill during the drill.
- Teachers will take attendance again after returning to class

The National Disaster preparedness Committee has reported that high roof areas, such as gymnasiums and auditoriums, are most susceptible to damage during weather storms such as hurricanes and tornadoes. Although the likelihood of such a storm striking this area is slight, we must be prepared for such an eventuality. With prior warning and the necessary alerts, students will be directed into designated areas. When students

arrive at their designated areas they are to stand, face the wall, and remove eyeglasses. Absolute quiet must be maintained.

#### C. Lockdown Drill:

- Per Building Safety Plan

#### D. Shelter-in-Place Drill:

- Per Building Safety Plan

#### E. Bus Drills:

- Section 3623 of the Education Law requires that emergency drills on school buses be held a minimum of three times per year.
- Further information and direction will be given by the responsible individual.

#### F. Building Evacuation Procedure:

- Per Building Safety Plan

### **FOOD AND DRINKS WHEN LATE**

- When students arrive late to school or are returning from an appointment with treats from Starbucks, Dunkin', or other spots, please remember that these items are not allowed in classes or lockers.
- These items create distractions in the classroom and spills can create sticky messes.
- We ask that families save these treats for times away from school or during lunch time in the cafeteria.
- Any food or drink items that students bring in when they arrive late will be confiscated and held in the main office (drinks in the refrigerator and food items on a table)

### **FORGOTTEN ITEMS**

- Students, if you call to request a forgotten item, tell your parent/guardian to deliver the item to the main entrance. Parents/Guardians may complete a form at the "Drop Off" station in the lobby and you will be notified that the item has arrived. You may also check for items in between classes.

### **GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES**

Middle school is a time of transition and growth. The middle school guidance department works with students (individuals, groups) to help them reach their academic and social potential.

#### Department Goals:

- To encourage students to recognize and make the best use of their capabilities.
- To build self-confidence and self-esteem.
- To help students deal with personal and social concerns.
- To teach students decision-making and problem solving strategies.
- To assist with the transition from elementary school to middle school, and from middle school to high school.

#### Key Counseling Areas:

- Helping each student know him or herself. This includes helping students explore interests, capitalize on strengths and develop plans to address weaknesses.

- Educational guidance and goal setting. Counselors meet with students and parents to help select courses and review standardized test results. Counselors will also act as a support with teachers, students and parents to facilitate solutions to academic and/or behavior problems.
- Personal counseling and/or referrals for students experiencing any number of problems - academic, social, family, etc.
- Helping students balance the demands of school, family and friends. Special attention is paid to teaching "life skills" such as organization, study skills, time management, responsibility, cooperation, communication, teamwork and other habits and attitudes that will serve students well in any classroom, job or social situation.
- Communicating regularly with parents to build strong and effective partnerships between home and school.

## **HEALTH OFFICE**

### **Student Illness or Injury during the Day:**

- Students who are ill or injured during the school day should report immediately to the nurse for evaluation. If necessary, the nurse will reach out to the parent/guardian.
- In the event of an early dismissal due to illness or injury, the nurse will explain the protocol to return to school and issue an excused dismissal pass.
- Should the parent not be able to pick up the sick student, New York State Education Law mandates that schools may only release a child to a designated emergency contact person.
- **Although highly discouraged, students may call home to be picked up if they are not feeling well. In this case, the student's early dismissal will be marked unexcused and then absent unexcused for the remainder of the day.**

### **Medication Administration by School Nurses During School Hours:**

State Requirements for Administration of Internal Medication require that the school nurse must have on file a written request from the parent/guardian to administer medication as specified by the family physician. A verbal or telephone request from the parent/guardian or physician is not acceptable. The medication should be delivered to the school nurse by the parent/guardian with a physician's prescription. Contact by the parent/guardian enables the school nurse to discuss the student's problem and assess any changes in the condition or in the treatment. No medication should be sent to school with the child unless there is [written physician approval](#) that a student is required to carry it, such as an asthma inhaler.

### **If a student must receive medication during school hours, the following is required:**

1. A current written request from the family physician must be on file with the school indicating the medication required, specific administration instructions, and the order duration.
2. In addition to the request from the family physician, a written request is needed from the person in a parental or guardian relationship.
3. If necessary, an adequate supply of medication, syringes, and needles must be delivered directly to the nurse by the person in a parental or guardian relationship with the child, ensuring a secure and controlled process.
4. All medication must be kept in the health office in a locked drawer, wholly separated from any other supplies.
5. Procedures for administering medication in general and the specific procedure for each individual student receiving medication must be periodically evaluated.

## Administration of Medication by a Parent/Guardian:

A person in parental or guardian relationship to a student may come to the school to administer medication in the main office lobby. The medication must be taken by the student in the lobby - medication can never be brought into the school and then taken. Also, a school nurse is not required to be present.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

- In the event of heavy snow, impassable roads, or other weather related instances which necessitate the closing of our schools, an announcement will be posted on the district's web page and will also be communicated via a Parent Square email and/or text message to families.
- The decision to close or delay the starting time of school will be made as early as possible.
- Parents are urged to check the website or news stations for the announcements rather than call the school district.

## **LOCKERS**

- Our school provides an individual locker for each student within their specified hall. This locker will hold books, school supplies, coats, backpacks, and various other items. A locker ladder can be purchased to create shelving and organizing space.
- A second smaller locker (will not fit a backpack) is assigned to each student in the locker room for use during physical education classes.
- The district will not be financially liable for loss of items from school lockers.
- Lockers come under school jurisdiction and may be searched with reasonable cause. Students will be advised about the timeframe for cleaning out lockers in the month of June before the end of the school year.
- All lockers must remain closed securely when not in use.
- Locker combinations must not be shared at any time. If a student feels that someone knows their combination and has been opening their locker, the student can go to their hall office to request a new combination.
- All electronic devices, including but not limited to, AirPods, headphones, smart watches, Fitbits, gaming systems, and any type of cellular phones, MUST be kept in student lockers.

## Important guidelines regarding lockers:

- Hall lockers are narrow, not very deep, and will get jammed when filled with too many items or when attempting to store items larger than the locker area.
- Keep non-school items to a minimum. Magnetic pencil holders and mirrors that completely fill the width of the inside of the locker door will jam a locker if placed on the inside of the door. Instead, they can be placed on the sides or back of the locker. Locker ladders can be used to help keep lockers organized.
- Do not completely cover the inside of the locker door with wallpaper, or it may jam, causing it to stop closing.
- Paper and tape must not touch the door mechanism or the locker glide. The locker glide runs the entire height of the locker on the right side of the inside door. There must be an uncovered/untapped inch around the entire inside door. Magnets that are not flat will cause the locker to jam. There is a shelf 9" from the top.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

- Lost items accumulate quickly at the start of the new school year. Students who have lost items should check the lost and found in the main office and the cafeteria.

- The main office lost and found contains expensive water bottles, small items such as jewelry, electronics, glasses, calculators, etc.
- The cafeteria lost and found includes items left behind in the morning, during lunch periods, and after school. Typically, this includes various clothing items, water bottles, lunch boxes, school supplies, etc. Any clothing items left are periodically donated to our in-house clothing drive or external charities.
- If a student believes they left an item on the school bus, they should call the Transportation Department at 518-785-9486.

## **LUNCH PERIODS**

- See Appendix A

## **MORNING ARRIVAL**

- Students are not allowed in the school building before 7:20 a.m. unless supervised by a teacher, coach, or staff member. Once students arrive at school, they must stay in the building until dismissal unless they are dismissed to an approved adult.
- Students have different ways of getting to school, such as taking the district bus, being driven, walking, or biking. They can enter the cafeteria after 7:20 a.m.
- If a student needs to see a teacher or go to their hall office during the homeroom period, they must first check in during homeroom to be marked present and then receive a pass to go wherever necessary.
- If a student arrives at school after 8:05 a.m. and is not seated in the homeroom classroom, they must go to the main office to sign in and receive a late pass. Accumulating three unexcused tardy arrivals during the homeroom period will lead to disciplinary action, such as detention.

### **Bus Drop off - Morning:**

- Buses drop off middle school students at the high school and students are expected to walk over to the middle school.
- There are adult monitors stationed between the high school and the middle school to help direct students to the middle school.
- There are some buses that drop off students at the middle school based on special circumstances.

### **Car Drop off - Morning:**

- All students who are getting driven in with a parent or guardian must be dropped off at the HIGH SCHOOL in the morning and walk over to the middle school (unless they have a disabling situation or are carrying something very heavy). The only exception to this is if the student is carrying an exceptionally large or heavy instrument or sports equipment.
- There are adult monitors stationed between the high school and the middle school to help direct students to the middle school.
- Students being dropped off late to school after an appointment, or due to another reason that causes a tardy arrival, may be dropped off at the middle school.

### **Early Arrival:**

- Students should not be in the school building before 7:20 a.m. unless it is for a prearranged reason and is supervised by a teacher, coach, or staff member. Once students arrive at school, they must remain in the building until dismissal unless otherwise dismissed to an approved pick up adult.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN PICK UP AND IDENTIFICATION**

- Beginning on the first day of school in September 2024, all individuals picking up a student from school during school hours must be prepared to show identification.
- The only individuals allowed to pick up a student are those listed on the Summary tab in IC or through verbal verification from the parent/guardian if the pickup person is other than the parent/guardian (ex. aunt or uncle picks up)
- As continued from prior years, only individuals age 18 or older can pick up middle school students

## **PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)**

- PTA is the oldest and largest child advocacy group in the nation. New York organized the first state PTA congress in 1897. Currently, NYS PTA has a membership exceeding 348,000 in more than 1600 local units and councils.
- The Shaker Middle School PTA is a not-for-profit association. Our mission is to make every child's potential a reality by helping provide opportunities for them to grow personally and socially. We are committed to enhancing and enriching the education of our students and fostering a sense of community within our school.
- Becoming a member is the easiest way to support the PTA. The cost is \$10 per member and any family member, student, or community member can join. Becoming a member doesn't require you to attend meetings but you're always welcome to attend all or part of a meeting. Meetings give you the opportunity to get to know other parents, school administrators, and teachers. More information can be found online at [northcolonie.org](http://northcolonie.org) under the Shaker Middle School tab and then the PTA link.
- The PTA helps support a number of activities at the middle school, including:
  - Spirit Day Raffle Prizes
  - Caught Being a BISON Program
  - Minute to Win It Competition
  - Student Council Dances
  - Blue and White Day End of Year Celebrations
  - Shaker Middle School Musical
  - 8th grade trip to the Great Escape
  - Staff Appreciation
  - 6th Grade T-shirts – The PTA helps provide funds to give a Shaker Middle School t-shirt to each incoming 6th grader
  - 8th Grade Class Gift – In the high school, each class is responsible for raising money for field trips or proms. \$250 is given to the 8th grade classes to get them started.
  - Fall and Spring Scholastic Book Fairs
  - Apparel Sales
  - Restaurant Nights
  - Guptill's Skate Days

## **PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA) - SPECIAL EDUCATION**

The North Colonie Special Education PTA was chartered on January 15, 2008, with 31 members. The North Colonie Special Education PTA is the first of its kind in our region. It serves special education and gifted students in grades pre-K through 12. New members are welcome to join by attending upcoming meetings or by contacting the president.

More information can be found online at [northcolonie.org](http://northcolonie.org) under the Shaker Middle School tab and then the PTA link.

## **PHONE CALLS**

- If a student must call home, there is a phone in the main office in addition to phones in each hall office, and the guidance office. Students cannot make phone calls or send text messages from a personal device during school hours of 8:05 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. UNLESS they come to the main office and ask if they can use the personal device only while in the office.
- To keep the school day as productive as possible, we ask that students communicate daily with parents/guardians and make clear arrangements regarding plans for after school and travel arrangements. This helps to avoid the need for phone calls throughout the day.

## **SECURITY OF PERSONAL PROPERTY**

- A consistent message we emphasize with students throughout the year is to avoid bringing unnecessary valuables to school. If students do bring valuable items to school, they should ensure that their hall and gym lockers are properly closed. Students should never share their locker combinations, and they should not allow others to use their lockers.
- Despite these precautions, items may occasionally be lost or stolen. We make every effort to locate and return lost items to their rightful owners. However, the school cannot reimburse parents/guardians for lost items if they are not found. We appreciate the support of all parents/guardians in discouraging students from bringing valuable items to school.
- During physical education classes, any personal items of value should be locked in the student's locker or given to the P.E. teacher for safekeeping.
- Students are reminded to check the various lost and found locations when they lose items. There are lost and found areas in the locker rooms, the cafeteria, and the main office.

## **STANDARDIZED TESTS GRADES 6-8**

- All Shaker Middle School students in grades 6-8 will take the New York State Assessments in both English Language Arts and Math.
- Students in eighth grade will also take the New York State Science Assessment.
- Seventh and eighth grade students who score below the state reference points might be eligible for Academic Intervention Services (AIS).

## **STAYING AFTER SCHOOL**

- Students can only stay after school for a valid reason with an adult.
- The regular dismissal bell rings at 3:00 p.m. At this time, students will exit the building to locate their school bus, or locate their ride with a parent/guardian.
- Students are only allowed to exit the building from the front entrances or the cafeteria doors. Students should never exit the building from any other door.
- Students may only stay after school if there are pre-arranged plans such as obtaining extra help, attending a club, chorus/band/orchestra rehearsal, or serving detention. Students with pre-arranged plans must be in the proper building location when the 3:05 p.m. bell rings. Students are only allowed to enter a location after 3:05 with a pass. Students whose plans fall through must come directly to the main office to obtain a late bus pass to wait in the cafeteria for the late bus or for a parent or guardian to pick them up.
- After dismissal, students may not leave the middle school campus, loiter within the building, or enter other school buildings.



- **After dismissal, students may not leave campus and return to ride the late bus, loiter within the building or enter buildings they are not assigned to.** Students who violate these rules will face disciplinary action.

### Late Buses:

- Regular dismissal from the middle school is at 3:00 p.m. If a student stays after and needs to take a late bus home, it leaves from the high school around 4:15 p.m. This is the last bus run within our district.
- Students can check with the main office to determine which late bus they need to ride.

### **STUDENT IDENTIFICATION CARDS**

- All students, grades 6-8, must be photographed each year for an identification card that displays their name, photo, and student number barcode. Students should get into the habit of having the card with them at all times.
- IDs are used to check out books in the library, and attend student events such as dances. They are also a valuable security tool in quickly accounting for students on field trips or emergency evacuations.
- Students are required to carry their ID with them while on school grounds or attending school events.
- Please encourage your child to demonstrate responsibility by safeguarding their ID.

### **STUDENT SCHEDULES**

- Students can view their schedules in the Campus Student Portal in the backpack section of the application.
- Parents/Guardians can also view a student's schedule using the Campus Parent Portal
- Schedules for the new school year are not available until late August and families will be notified when they are ready to be viewed

### **STUDENT SIGN-IN**

- Anytime a student comes to school at or after 8:05 a.m. they must enter into the main office to sign in through an electronic system called Raptor. Students must also sign-in using Raptor when returning to school from an appointment.
- Raptor will print a time-stamped pass which students must give to the teacher of the class they are in at the time of arrival.

### **SUPPLY LISTS**

- Student supply lists can be found at [northcolonie.org](http://northcolonie.org). From the homepage, click on Shaker Middle School, and then School Supplies in the School Links section.

### **TEXTBOOKS**

- Students are responsible for their assigned textbooks, which must be returned in June with the same identifying number as when issued in September.
- Fines for lost or damaged books must be paid before new textbooks are issued.

### **TRANSPORTATION EXPECTATIONS**

Students are expected to be safe, responsible, and respectful while riding the bus. Riding the school bus is a privilege extended to you; conduct that endangers the safety of others will result in removal from the bus. The bus driver's directions are to be followed at all times. Violations of the rules will result in the following actions being taken:

- The bus driver/aide will first warn the student to stop the inappropriate action immediately. The driver may need to stop the bus to address the behavior. Failure to stop the action will result in the student being assigned to a front seat on the bus.
- A second violation will be written up by the driver and turned over to the Director of Transportation and forwarded to the hall principal for action. After consultation between the director and hall principal, a decision will be made as to who will contact the parent/guardian by telephone or letter to inform them of the problem. The parent/guardian will be notified that the student is in danger of losing transportation privileges for up to five days. A copy of the action taken will be forwarded to the director or hall principal as needed.
- A third violation may result in automatic suspension for up to five days. Parents/guardians will be notified and invited in for consultation with District administrators.
- A fourth violation will result in a meeting with the parent/guardian, student, driver (if necessary), hall principal and Director of Transportation. Determination of “long term loss” of transportation privileges will be recommended to the Superintendent and/or School Board.

Some behaviors are totally unacceptable on/off school buses at any time. **Students who violate these rules will lose their transportation privileges for up to five days for the first offense and receive more stringent discipline for subsequent offenses.** These rules are:

- Fighting
- Vandalism (i.e., cutting seats or seat belts – all damages will be billed at cost of parts and labor to the families of the students involved in vandalism)
- Opening and/or leaving through emergency exits
- Throwing objects in or at the bus
- Smoking/Vaping
- Drug/Alcohol possession
- Bringing weapons on bus
- Sexual harassment
- Intimidation
- Insubordination

A late bus run is available from the middle school at approximately 4:30 p.m. from Monday through Thursday. Students may only ride the late bus if they have stayed after school with a teacher or for a school activity. To ride the 4:30 p.m. bus, middle school students are required to have a bus pass completed and signed by a teacher or administrator.

## **VISITORS**

- In an effort to maintain safety and security for our building, all visitors are required to present a photo ID. Information such as name, date of birth, and photo will be digitally scanned into the system and the visitor will be issued a temporary photo ID for the duration of their visit. Once a visitor’s information is in our system, we will be able to print a new photo ID for subsequent visits.
- Visitors are not allowed to enter the school during school hours unless they have made an appointment or have approval by school administrators.
- Parents who do not have an appointment may be asked to leave and arrange future appointments with the person they wish to meet.

## **WORKING PAPERS**

- Working papers should be obtained through the secretaries in the Guidance Counseling Department

## ACADEMICS

### ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT ROLLS

<u>Numeric Grade</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Grade Point Conversion</u>
97.0+	A+	4.0
93.0+	A	4.0
90.0+	A-	3.7
87.0+	B+	3.3
83.0+	B	3.0
80.0+	B-	2.7
77.0+	C+	2.3
73.0+	C	2.0
70.0+	C-	1.7
68.0+	D+	1.3
65.0+	D	1.0
<65.0	F	0.0

#### Achievement Criteria:

- **High Honor Roll:** Achievement grade average of 3.7+ and all Effort and Conduct grades are E or G
- **Honor Roll:** Achievement grade average of 3.3 – 3.69 and all Effort and Conduct grades are E or G
- **Merit Roll:** Achievement grade average of 3.0 – 3.29 and all Effort and Conduct grades are E or G

### EFFORT/CONDUCT GRADES

While there are clear distinctions among the ratings, individual judgment also plays a role. A student's grade should not be based on any single factor; instead, it should reflect an overall assessment of the student's effort and conduct. Each teacher should develop and share with students their criteria for determining effort and conduct grades. Anything that reflects on conduct, such as plagiarism, integrity, or citizenship, can affect grades. Following are the guidelines for Effort/Conduct ratings:

#### Effort Grades:

The effort grade is a means of positively recognizing a student's effort and are categorized as follows:

- **E = Excellent Effort:** Homework, class work and projects are consistently on time and meet or exceed described criteria. The student actively engages in class activities.
- **G = Good Effort:** Homework, class work and projects meet established criteria. Assignments are rarely late or incomplete. The student actively engages in class activities.
- **N = Needs Improvement:** Homework, class work, and projects frequently do not meet established criteria or have not been submitted. The student's engagement in class activities may be inconsistent.
- **U = Unacceptable:** Homework, class work and projects do not meet established criteria or are not submitted. The student's engagement in class activities may be inconsistent or not evident.

## Conduct Grades:

As the school has the obligation to encourage the development of positive social attitudes, students are evaluated on their progress toward these goals as follows:

- **E = Excellent Conduct:** The student is respectful towards others. Meets behavior expectations in all settings and follows school rules.
- **G = Good Conduct:** The student is generally respectful towards others and follows school rules.
- **N = Needs Improvement:** The student may communicate inappropriately, including minor transgressions of inappropriate language. In addition, the student may be occasionally disrespectful to adults, peers, or school property, and may occasionally break school or class rules, and/or may exhibit disruptive behavior.
- **U = Unacceptable:** The student frequently exhibits behaviors that are inappropriate. The student engages in several of the following behaviors: disrespectful towards peers or adults, breaking school or class rules, and/or exhibiting disruptive behavior.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY EXPECTATIONS

Violations of these expectations can result in lowering of conduct/achievement/assignment grade.

### A. Eight Cardinal Rules of Academic Integrity

1. **Be responsible.** Do not let other students in your class diminish the value of your achievement by taking unfair advantage. Report any academic dishonesty you see.
2. **Acknowledge your sources.** When writing a paper, whenever you use words or ideas that are not your own, use quotation marks where appropriate and cite your source using a citation. Include a list of sources you consulted or cited.
3. **Protect your work.** In examinations, do not allow your neighbors to see what you have written. You are the only one who should receive credit for what you know.
4. **Avoid suspicion.** Do not put yourself in a position where you can be suspected of having copied another person's work, or of having used unauthorized notes in an examination. Even the appearance of dishonesty may undermine your teacher's confidence in your work.
5. **Do your own work.** The purpose of assignments is to develop your skills and measure your progress. Letting someone else or a computer program do your work defeats the purpose of your education, and may lead to serious charges against you.
6. **Never falsify a record.** or permit another person to do so. Falsifying records may be a criminal act.
7. **Never fabricate** data, citations, or experimental results. Many professional careers have ended in disgrace, even years after the fabrication first took place.
8. **DON'T DESTROY TRUST.** Tell the truth when discussing your work with your teacher.

### B. Violations of Academic Integrity

1. **Cheating:** (a) using unauthorized notes, study aids, or information on an examination; (b) altering a graded work after it has been returned, then submitting the work for re-grading (assuming that such revision has not been authorized by the teacher); (c) allowing another person to do one's work and submitting that work under one's own name; (d) submitting identical or similar papers for credit in more than one course without prior permission from the course instructors.
2. **Plagiarism:** (a) submitting material that in part or whole is not entirely one's own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source. This also applies to the use of computer generated materials.

3. **Fabrication:** (a) falsifying or inventing any information, data or citation; (b) presenting data that were not gathered in accordance with standard guidelines defining the appropriate methods for collecting or generating data, and failing to include an accurate account of the method by which the data were gathered or collected.
4. **Obtaining an unfair advantage:** (a) stealing, reproducing, circulating or otherwise gaining access to examination materials prior to the time authorized by the teacher; (b) unauthorized collaborating on an academic assignment; (c) retaining, possessing, using or circulating previously given examination materials, where those materials clearly indicate that they are to be returned to the teacher at the conclusion of the examination; (d) otherwise undertaking activity with the purpose of creating or obtaining an unfair academic advantage over other students' academic work.
5. **Aiding and abetting academic dishonesty:** (a) providing material, information, or other assistance to another person with knowledge that such aid could be used in any of the violations stated above; (b) providing false information in connection with any inquiry regarding academic integrity.

## **ACADEMIC SUBJECTS**

In grades 6, 7, and 8 you are part of a hall "block" of approximately 110-120 students. The core classes for each grade are English, social studies, math, and science and they are each taught by different teachers by specific grade level.

### **6th Grade:**

In addition to core classes, students in 6th grade will take the following courses:

- World Language Exploratory: Students will take Spanish and will choose from either French, Russian, or German as a second language to explore. Each World Language class will meet every other day for one semester.
- Art: This is offered every other day for one semester opposite World Language.
- Physical Education: Offered every other day opposite health for one semester and music for the other semester.
- Innovation Labs: Offered daily to 6th grade students, each of six labs are approximately five weeks long.
- Band, Chorus and Orchestra: These are available to students interested in being part of a performing group.

### **7th and 8th Grade:**

In addition to core classes, students in 7th and 8th grade will take the following courses:

- Art, Family & Consumer Science, and Technology: These exploratory courses are studied at ten or twenty-week intervals by all 7th and 8th graders.
- French, German, Russian, and Spanish: Offered on a full-year basis for 7th graders, and a full year of either conversational or high school regents level language is mandated for qualified 8th graders.
- Physical Education: Offered every other day opposite health for one semester and music for the other semester.
- Band, Chorus and Orchestra: These are available to students interested in being part of a performing group.

## HOMWORK ASSIGNMENTS

Homework, an important part of the education program, contributes to the academic development of each student in the classroom, giving pupils an opportunity to apply the skills learned in class.

Homework also provides an opportunity to find practical applications of knowledge learned in school, and assists in preparation for further learning. It is therefore expected that appropriate homework will be assigned to North Colonie students as follows in the administrative regulations:

- Homework shall be defined as an **activity which is intended to extend beyond the time of the instruction period**, and is completed in a study hall and/or out of school.
- Teachers should assign homework with the following purpose in mind:
  - Practice and drill on work recently learned
  - Review of work learned over longer periods of time
  - Research and Discovery
  - Creativity
  - Preparation for class activities and assessments
  - Thoroughness
  - Planning of time
  - Development of good study skills
  - Adherence to assignment format
  - Promptness
- Assigned homework shall involve material that **must** be reviewed by the teacher. Homework assignments are expected to be collected and returned in a timely manner. Attention should be paid to quality and usefulness of assignments.
- Attention to individual differences among pupils is to be considered in making assignments. It is inappropriate to assume that all students can successfully complete the same assignment.
- The concept of homework will be introduced as early as kindergarten, with proper planning, communication and involvement of parent/guardian.
- In order to avoid overload situations when assigning homework, teachers should adhere to the following minimums and maximums: **Grade 6 – about 60 minutes daily; Grades 7 and 8 - about 60 to 120 minutes daily.**
- It is desirable to make some homework assignments on a long-range basis to give students experience in scheduling their own time.
- Homework assigned for a weekend will equal no more than that which would normally be considered for a night's work.
- Homework assigned for a vacation period should be of reasonable length. Students may be expected to use time during vacation periods for review and long-range assignments.
- The principal and/or department supervisor shall monitor the implementation of the policy and regulations governing homework to ensure full compliance by teachers.

## **STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The school has an obligation to educate students in the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. As part of their education, students should be made aware of, and should exercise, those rights and responsibilities as they exist within the school environment.

Click the link to access the [students' rights and responsibilities page](#).

## **STUDENT DRESS**

While the Board of Education does not establish a specific dress code, students will be expected to maintain dress and appearance which is appropriate for school in this community.

The use of any attire bearing an expression (phrase, word or words) or insignia (picture, symbols, patch or pin) which can be interpreted to be in any of the following categories is forbidden:

- is obscene or libelous, contains objectionable message, graphic, or language, including insults, whether directed to themselves or others;
- or any group;
- is harassing or discriminatory;
- displays or advocates the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or controlled/illegal substances, or
- displays known gang colors or identification.

Certain categories of clothing have been held to be impermissible by the Commissioner of Education on the basis of factors other than appropriateness of style, fashion or taste. These categories are those constituting:

1. Health and safety to the wearer and others, (e.g., long-haired sweaters worn near open flames and heating elements, or loose parts of clothing worn near machinery),
2. Possibility of damage to school property (e.g., metal cleats or shoes, long chains or straps, or clothing containing hardware which may scratch or gouge furniture),
3. Indecency,
4. Distraction so as to interfere with the learning and teaching process (e.g., noise producing adornment or appearance or clothing so bizarre or revealing as to be distracting to other students.)

Students will be asked to change their appearance to conform to these regulations. A student may be barred from regular classroom attendance until the matter has been resolved. Students may also be excluded from field trips and extra-curricular activities for inappropriate dress or appearance.

Classroom teachers have an educational obligation to encourage safe and appropriate dress. Students may be:

- asked to wear appropriate protective gear in certain classes,
- excluded from field-trips and extracurricular activities and programs due to inappropriate dress or appearance as determined by school administrators. (Reference: Board of Education Policy #5311.5)

## **DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT**

### **Student Harassment and Bullying Prevention and Intervention:**

For the complete policy statement please refer to BOE Policy # 5312.4 with related regulations. This policy can be found on the district's website at northcolonie.org. The following are excerpts from this policy.

#### **Reporting:**

Students who have been bullied, parents whose children have been bullied, or other students or staff who observe bullying behavior are not alone. They are not just encouraged, but also expected to make a verbal and/or written complaint to any school personnel. This is in accordance with the comprehensive training and guidelines provided, ensuring that their concerns are heard and addressed promptly.

As we prioritize prevention, we recognize the possibility of bullying incidents. In such instances, offenders will be clearly notified that their behavior is unacceptable and will be offered guidance on fostering positive relationships with others. If needed, the administration will take disciplinary action per the district's Code of Conduct. If the behavior involves criminal activity, local law enforcement will be notified.

This policy is designed to promote progressive discipline and intervention, a balanced approach that values understanding and growth over strict punishment. Responses to student violation of the policy shall be age-appropriate and include both consequences and appropriate remedial responses to a student or staff member who commits one or more acts of bullying. Consequences for a student who commits an act of bullying shall be unique to the individual incident and will vary in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors. Rest assured, these measures are consistent with the district's Code of Conduct, ensuring a fair and just process for all.

#### **Non-retaliation:**

All complainants and those who participate in the investigation of a complaint in conformity with state law and district policies, who have acted reasonably and in good faith, have the right to be free from retaliation of any kind.

**A complaint form is available on the district's website and in the Main Office, Hall Offices, and Guidance Offices**



## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Harassment:**

Harassment is defined in federal and state law, including penal law and regulation, in various ways. The Board acknowledges the importance of these definitions as standards, but its goal is to prevent behaviors from escalating to violations of the law and instead to promote a positive school environment and limit liability. According to the Dignity for All Students Act (§§ 10-18 of Education Law), harassment is defined as the creation of a hostile environment through conduct or verbal threats, intimidation, or abuse that unreasonably and substantially interferes with a student's educational performance, opportunities, benefits, or mental, emotional, or physical well-being. It also includes conduct, verbal threats, intimidation, or abuse that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for their physical safety. The harassing behavior may be based on any characteristic, including but not limited to a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender (including gender identity and expression).

In order to comply with federal standards, the district is required to address instances of harassment even if they do not create a hostile environment. Harassment may encompass verbal abuse, name-calling, and written statements, including those made through cell phones or the Internet, or any other behavior that is physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating.

### **Bullying:**

In order to facilitate implementation, provide meaningful guidance and prevent behaviors from rising to a violation of law, this policy will use the term bullying (which is subsumed under the term "harassment"), which is understood to be a hostile activity which harms or induces fear through the threat of further aggression and/or creates terror.

Bullying may be premeditated or a sudden activity. It may be subtle or easy to identify, done by one person or a group. Bullying often includes the following characteristics:

1. **Power imbalance** – occurs when a bully uses their physical or social power over a target.
2. **Intent to harm** – the bully seeks to inflict physical or emotional harm and/or takes pleasure in this activity.
3. **Threat of further aggression** – the bully and the target believe the bullying will continue.
4. **Terror** – when any bullying increases, it becomes a "systematic violence or harassment used to intimidate and maintain dominance." (Barbara Coloroso, *The Bully, the Bullied & The Bystander*, 2003)

There are at least three kinds of bullying: verbal, physical and social/relational.

- Verbal bullying includes name calling, insulting remarks, verbal teasing, frightening phone calls, violent threats, extortion, taunting, gossip, spreading rumors, racist slurs, threatening electronic communications ("cyber bullying"), anonymous notes, etc.
- Physical bullying includes poking, slapping, hitting, tripping or causing a fall, choking, kicking, punching, biting, pinching, scratching, spitting, twisting arms or legs, damaging clothes and personal property, or threatening gestures.
- Social or relational bullying includes excluding someone from a group, isolating, shunning, spreading rumors or gossiping, arranging public humiliation, undermining relationships, teasing about clothing, looks, giving dirty looks, aggressive stares, etc.
- The NYS Education Department website provides further guidance on bullying and cyberbullying prevention: <http://www.p12nysed.gov>

### Hazing:

Hazing is an induction, initiation or membership process involving harassment which produces public humiliation, physical or emotional discomfort, bodily injury or public ridicule or creates a situation where public humiliation, physical or emotional discomfort, bodily injury or public ridicule is likely to occur.

### Discrimination:

Discrimination is the act of denying rights, benefits, justice, equitable treatment or access to facilities available to all others, to an individual or group of people because of the group, class or category to which that person belongs (as enumerated under *Harassment* as defined above).

## **Notice of Equal Opportunity**

The North Colonie School District hereby advises students, parent/guardian, employees, and the general public that it offers equal employment and educational opportunities (including vocational education opportunities), without regard to age, race, creed, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion, disability, marital status, genetic disposition, or HIV or hepatitis carrier status.

Inquiries regarding this nondiscrimination policy may be directed to:

Title IX Compliance Officer  
Attn: Ms. Bongermينو  
North Colonie Central Office  
91 Fiddlers Lane  
Latham, New York 12110  
Telephone: (518) 785-8591, ext. 3133

Or:

Section 504 (Disabled) Compliance Officer  
Attn: Mr. Bardin  
North Colonie Central Office  
91 Fiddlers Lane  
Latham, New York 12110  
Telephone: (518) 785-8591, ext. 3333

Procedures and forms related to the established grievance procedures may be obtained from the appropriate compliance officer.

## **Conclusion**

This handbook has outlined the opportunities available at Shaker Middle School and also some of the school's expectations. Not every rule has been mentioned; the major areas have been highlighted. Take advantage of what Shaker Middle School has to offer. You'll find that the teachers and administrators will do all they can to help you succeed.

## **APPENDIX A - Daily Class Schedule**

## **APPENDIX B - Attendance Reporting Guidelines**

If your student is going to be absent, late, or picked up early, please follow these guidelines:

### **Students in Algonquin or Skylight Hall:**

1. Use the Google Form absence link at [northcolonie.org](http://northcolonie.org), or
2. Email the hall secretary: [SMSASAttendance@nccsk12.org](mailto:SMSASAttendance@nccsk12.org),  
or
3. Call the hall secretary: 518-785-1341, ext. 4530, or
4. Bring a note to the hall office during the homeroom period.

### **Students in Haystack or Wright Hall:**

1. Use the Google Form absence link at [northcolonie.org](http://northcolonie.org), or
2. Email the hall secretary: [SMSHWAttendance@nccsk12.org](mailto:SMSHWAttendance@nccsk12.org),  
or
3. Call the hall secretary: 518-785-1341, ext. 4536, or
4. Bring a note to the hall office during the homeroom period.

## **APPENDIX C - Important District Phone Numbers**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>Email Address</b>
North Colonie Central Office	(518) 785-8591	n/a
Shaker Middle School Main Office	(518) 785-1341	n/a
Athletics Department	(518) 785-5511	athletics@nccsk12.org
Communications	(518) 785-8591 x 3130	communications@nccsk12.org
District Registrar	(518) 785-8591 x 3135	n/a
Food Services	(518) 785-8591 x 3143	foodservices@nccsk12.org
Health & Safety	(518) 785-5511 x 3351	nurses@nccsk12.org
Mental Health & Wellness	(518) 785-8591 x 3124	PPS@nccsk12.org
Pupil Services	(518) 785-8591 x 3147	PPS@nccsk12.org
Superintendent's Office	(518) 785-8591 x 3102	n/a
Technology Support	(518) 785-5511 x 3373	ITTechTeam@nccsk12.org
Transportation Department	(518) 785-9486	transportation@nccsk12.org