

TUNKHANNOCK AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

*** MISSION STATEMENT ***

*To maximize the potential
of each student through
Motivation, Guidance
and Education.*

Tunkhannock Area Middle School

2008-2009 Student Handbook

WELCOME

We hope that this new comprehensive handbook will provide needed information to students and their families. Many district policies and building rules are presented in condensed versions. Changes have been made that will help our school run smoothly thus supporting academic concentration. If any questions arise from reading this handbook, please contact the school office at 836-8242.

Please take the time to read the entire handbook carefully with your child.

The handbook signature form and the Internet and Computer Access permission form must be returned to school.

Signatures indicate understanding of the handbook and the information provided.

The Tunkhannock Area School District does not discriminate in its educational programs, activities or employment practices based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion ancestry, union membership or any other legally protected category. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with state law including the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act and federal law, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title XI of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

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Tunkhannock Area Middle School

2008-09 STUDENT/PARENT SIGN-OFF SHEET

Please complete this form clearly, in black or blue ink, tear out and return to homeroom teacher immediately. (ALL FORMS DUE BACK BY 9/3/08)

STUDENT NAME: _____ **GRADE:** ____ **HR:** ____ **Section:** ____

USE OF STUDENTS' PICTURES AND IMAGES:

Please see the "Media Release Policy" located on Page 14 for further details on the use of student pictures and images for school purposes.

[] Check this box if you **DO NOT** want your child's picture or image used for school publications, activities, recognitions, or press releases.

Parent/ Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

HANDBOOK RECEIPT SIGN OFF

By signing below, students and parents acknowledge they have received a copy of the TAMS Student Handbook for the 2007-2008 school year. Parent and student signatures below indicate awareness and acknowledgement of student responsibilities as defined in the student handbook.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

This form is valid until September 30th of next school year.

Tunkhannock Area School District
2008-2009 Internet and Computer Access Permission Form

Student Name: _____ **Grade:** ____ **HR:** ____

I have read and understand the CONDITIONS and RULES for USE of the INTERNET and COMPUTERS mandated by the Tunkhannock Area School District and posted on all user sites. I agree to the conditions and rules as stated. I understand that failure to observe any of the rules and conditions may result in the suspension of privileges to use the internet and/or computers.

I give permission for the above named student to have access to the internet and use computers. I understand that there cannot be constant monitoring by school authorities. I also understand that while on the internet, it is possible for my child to encounter, purposefully or accidentally, material that may be considered by some to be objectionable.

Parent Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

I, the above named student, have read and understand the CONDITIONS and RULES for USE of the INTERNET and COMPUTERS mandated by the Tunkhannock Area School District and posted at all user sites. I agree to the conditions and rules as stated. I understand that failure to observe any of these rules and conditions may result in the suspension of privileges to use the internet and computers, as well as other repercussions.

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

*** For more detailed information on Internet and computer Access for students please refer to School Board Policy #815.**

TUNKHANNOCK AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL - RATIONALE

There are a number of reasons why the Tunkhannock Area School District chose the middle school concept. One of the most important is that pre- and early-adolescent youths need a school and program of their own. In the past, during the middle years of education, many of their needs were not met. Our children today mature physically and intellectually at an earlier age. In today's knowledge explosion, the fifth and sixth grades study and master material their parents learned in the later years of senior high school. By this age, the children have learned the basic skills of communication and have explored the world about them. They are ready for a different kind of atmosphere and a more diversified program than an elementary school. Yet these children are not ready for a high school or a junior version of one, which often pressures the student too hard and leads to early sophistication by forcing them to conform to the intent of much older children. They are ready for a school program that is designed around their age group.

GENERAL EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES OF THE TUNKHANNOCK AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL

1. To instill in all students a love and respect for their country. All students should not only be aware of their rights as citizens but also be aware of their responsibilities as citizens.
2. To provide every student with strong fundamental knowledge so he/she may continue his/her educational growth
3. To attempt to instill in all youngsters a desire to learn for the sake of learning.
4. To provide a program that will successfully accomplish the transition from the self-contained elementary school to highly departmentalized high school.
5. To establish a child-centered school to prepare youngsters to operate in a complex society as worthy members.
6. To provide the youngster with an opportunity to develop self-reliance, independence, and responsibility to his/her highest individual potentials.

The No-Taunting Pledge

I will pledge to be part of the solution.

I will eliminate taunting from my own behavior.

I will encourage others to do the same.

I will do my part to make my community a safe place, by being sensitive to others.

I will set the example of a caring individual.

I will eliminate profanity towards others from my language.

I will not let my words or actions hurt others.

And if others won't become part of the solution,

I will.

Accident Insurance

An insurance accident policy is made available to cover all students who wish to purchase it. The student is covered by this insurance going to and from school as well as during school hours. It also covers the students at school-sponsored activities if he/she is a participant or a spectator. There is also available a 24-hour student accident insurance policy. This policy covers students the full 24 hours a day anywhere. The cost of these policies for the different grade levels is indicated on the application form.

All accidents or injuries occurring during the school day must be reported to the teacher, nurse or office on the same day that it happens. It is very important to have verification of any accident or injury sustained when filing for insurance purposes.

Activity Bus Run

Activity busses are provided each school day unless otherwise notified. These busses are for students who remain after school for organized school activities or for disciplinary assignments. **Students may not utilize activity busses as a means of transportation home for any other reason without special authorization from school officials.** Activity busses will depart from the front of the high school beginning at approximately 5:30 P.M. Appropriate, orderly, and courteous behavior is expected at all times when waiting for the activity bus.

Address Change

Students must inform the attendance office immediately when they have changed their residency or phone number. Students and their families are expected to provide updated emergency contact information as is necessary.

After School Activity Program

The ASAP Center provides after-school academic support and enrichment activities for Tunkhannock Area Middle School students. As members of the ASAP Center, students who may be struggling are given opportunities to grow in an alternative learning environment. Programming is designed to impact not only the academic needs of the ASAP members but also build social skills such as conflict resolution, resiliency, and decision making. The ASAP Center works closely with community members and civic groups to offer clubs that introduce students to experiences they might otherwise not encounter. Parents may contact the ASAP Center office in the Middle School at 836-0651 for additional information.

Arrival and Early Dismissal

Students will be allowed in the middle school at 7:50 A.M. and should use the main entrance. Students may not be on school property prior to the school start time. Upon entering the school, students who eat breakfast in school should go directly to the cafeteria. All others must report to homeroom. Prior to homeroom, students may only use the bathrooms on their respective academic floors.

Students reporting to homeroom after 8:15 are tardy to school and will be disciplined as found necessary. According to Board Policy #204, Pg. 4/9, students who are chronically late to school beyond six (6) times per semester may be referred to the local magistrate for failure to comply with the attendance policy. Students tardy more than six (6) times during the year will be assigned a detention for each subsequent tardy.

Parents are reminded that a student cannot leave school during the day without permission from the office of the principal. If such permission is necessary, the student must bring to the office, before 8:20 A.M., a **written** request from the parent/guardian **ONLY!** This request should indicate the time the student will be dismissed and the reason for leaving school early. If the request is granted, the student will be issued an "Early Dismissal" form that must be presented to the teacher(s) whose class(es) will be missed and **MUST BE RETURNED** to the office **before** leaving the building. Any student who has a specific afternoon appointment must be picked up by 2:40 P.M. All students walking, being picked up by a person or car must wait until 3:00 P.M. and proceed to the parent pick-up parking area located at the main entrance of the building.

Assemblies and Public Performances

The Board recognizes the value to students sharing their talents and skills with community and students through student participation and performances. The Board endorses performances when they constitute a learning experience, which contributes to the educational program. In various assemblies and programs student respect for the individual/individuals must conform to the required standards of conduct. At no time are students allowed to shout out in a disrespectful manner or interfere with the program or performance. Acceptance of the performance is to be shown in a traditional manner of applause. Auditorium or gym facilities during a performance are to be utilized appropriately without any abuse to any furniture or equipment.

Athletic Bag Storage

Upon arrival at the middle school, students may bring large athletic bags that do not fit in their own locker, to the storage area located next to room 225, at the entrance to the 6th and 7th grade halls. Large bags will be accepted in this area from 7:50 to 8:15 A.M. Students may not pick up bags until the close of their school day.

Athletic Program

The Tunkhannock Area Middle School Athletic Program is offered after the school day. All activities are equal for girls and boys, which is in full compliance with the federal government's Title IX regulations. The activities we offer are as follows:

<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Co-Ed</u>
Cross Country (7 & 8)	Cross Country (7 & 8)	Skiing (6-8)
Football (7 & 8)	Field Hockey (7 & 8)	Soccer (7 & 8)
Wrestling (7 & 8)	Basketball (7 & 8)	Volleyball (7 & 8)
Basketball (7 & 8)	Track (7 & 8)	
Track (7 & 8)	Softball (8)	
Baseball (7 & 8)		

Athletic Eligibility

The Interscholastic Athletic Program fosters the growth of school loyalty within the student body as a whole and stimulates community interest. The games, activities, and practice sessions provide many opportunities to teach values of competition and sportsmanship. In order to eligible to participate in these activities, a student must:

1. Maintain a record of academic proficiency sufficient to insure that participation in interscholastic athletic activities will NOT interfere with his/her instructional program - PIAA regulations are followed.
2. Attend school regularly.
3. Return all school athletic equipment
4. If a student is assigned a detention for discipline reasons, temporary loss of extra-curricular activity for those days may result.

It is required that each student be covered by the Student Accident Insurance available, or its equivalent, be in good physical condition, and be free of injury, as determined by the District Physician, before participating in any inter-scholastic athletic event. Participation in athletics is a privilege and not a right. The athlete must earn this privilege through dedication, desire, discipline and appropriate behavior.

Attendance

Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in the Tunkhannock Area School District during the days and hours when school is in session. A Principal may excuse a student for temporary absence when satisfactory evident is presented such as mental, physical or other urgent conditions deemed reasonable cause for student's absence. It is the responsibility of the parents or legal guardian to report a student absent from school and that the condition or justifiable absence falls into one of the categories in order for the attendance officer to justify the absence as a reasonable cause.

1. The Board of Education considers these conditions to constitute reasonable cause for absence from school:
 - a. Illness/Quarantine
 - b. Required Court attendance
 - c. Death in Family
 - d. Family/Educational Trip Pre-arranged
 - e. Religious Holiday
 - f. Impassable Roads as determined by bus transportation provision
2. The Board of Education will recognize other justifiable absences for **part** of the school day:
 - a. Medical or Dental Appointments
 - b. Pre-arranged Family Education Trips or Tours
 - c. Family Emergency
 - d. Conference Required by Outside Agencies
3. The following are examples of situations that would constitute an unexcused and/or unlawful reason for missing school:
 - a. Babysitting siblings or household chores
 - b. Unapproved trips or vacations
 - c. Hunting or fishing
 - d. Oversleeping or missing bus
 - e. Vehicle problems
 - f. Failure to complete school assignments
 - g. Absences not excused by a medical doctor after 10 days of absence in a school year
(24 P.S. 13-1327 Compulsory Attendance Truancy Elimination Plan 8/2006)
 - h. Visiting relatives
 - i. Shopping
 - j. Previous day or evening athletic or activity event
4. Students may be granted an excused absence for educational tours and trips. However, the parents must make arrangements at least five (5) days in advance. The number of approved total days for a family educational trip is five (5) days. Days of absence beyond the pre-approved five (5) will be counted as unlawful/unexcused absences.
5. Due to the 2006 Pennsylvania Department of Education Truancy Elimination Plan, the P.D.E. has directed all schools to allow a maximum of ten (10) absences before a medical excuse is required for each and every day of future absence. After ten (10) days, a failure to return a medical excuse upon return to school or within 3 school days, will result in the absence being declared unlawful. This unlawful day(s) may be sent to the Magistrate for disposition without future contact from school officials.
6. The Tunkhannock Area School District has responsibility for identifying and investigating habitually truant students and, if possible, modifying his/her educational programs to meet particular needs and interests.
7. The Tunkhannock Area School District may issue written notice to any parent/guardian who fails to comply with compulsory attendance statute with three days or more of unlawful absence. Students may receive one-day, in-school suspension. The notification will be a letter signed by a school official and mailed to the parents or guardians by certified mail. The parents/guardians by the acknowledgement of the receipt of the certified letter indicating three days of unlawful shall recognize subsequent unlawful absence of one half day or more will justify action from the school official to commence legal proceedings through the local magistrate. A school official, as per the policies of the Tunkhannock Area School District, may select alternating course of action.
8. When a student is absent from school, the student must bring to the office upon his or her return a written excuse from the parent/guardian or doctor stating the reasons for absence and the date of absence. It is mandatory that an excuse be brought to the office within three (3) days of the last recorded day of absence or the students will be assigned an unexcused absence from school.
9. When habitual absenteeism is seen, a medical excuse may be mandated. At that point any excuse not signed by a doctor will be recorded as an unexcused absence.
10. If it is necessary to leave the school because of illness or some other emergency, the student must receive written permission from the nurse and confirmation by the principal. No student can be allowed to go home for illness unless an adult is home.
11. Even though a student may claim illness on an excuse, if the situation, in the judgment of the administrator is too frequent, it may become necessary to require a Medical Doctor's Excuse.

12. In the event of an absence it shall be the responsibility of the student to make up any work missed while absent or, in the case of pre-arranged educational trips, secure the class work before leaving on the trip. Assignments are posted on EdLine.

Behavioral Expectations for Students

1. Students are to walk in the building. Running impacts the safety and well-being of the individual students and others.
2. Appropriate behavior and courtesies in responding to teachers, staff and others is expected.
3. Conscientious effort and active involvement in the academics and extra-curricular activities are necessary for total growth and maturation.
4. Behavior in the cafeteria is a matter of good manners. Maintaining an acceptable lunchroom environment is the responsibility of everyone.
5. Upon dismissal from cafeteria, students are to report to their lockers/homerooms promptly without loitering.
6. Students are required to keep the lavatories in an orderly fashion when utilized.
7. Students may not have any open containers in their possession throughout the school day.
8. Gun Chewing is not permitted.
9. It is expected that students will complete all homework assigned by the teacher.

Building Usage After School Hours

No student is to remain in the building after dismissal unless a teacher or coach supervises him. During and after school, students are to remain in their designated areas for all practices or rehearsals.

Bicycles, Skateboards, Roller Blades and Scooters are PROHIBITED on school property at ALL times.

Cafeteria and School Lunch Program

The Middle School has a fully equipped cafeteria. Students may purchase their lunch in the cafeteria or bring their lunch from home. Beverages may be purchased separately in the cafeteria for those students who bring their lunch.

Good health habits begin early in a child's life. Having a balanced diet will enhance the student's school day.

Nutritious lunches are being served in our cafeteria. The school nurse and home economics teachers are available for consultation on nutrition concerns. Students are encouraged to make healthy choices. Desserts and drinks are available as a supplement and are not considered lunch. Behavior in the cafeteria is an important factor. The following are necessary for suitable student behavior in the cafeteria environment:

1. All students must eat in the cafeteria during the period that they are assigned.
2. The breakfast program is conducted in the middle school cafeteria between 7:50 and 8:10 A.M. Students must immediately report to homeroom following breakfast.
3. When student behavior is a problem in the cafeteria, students may be instructed to sit in another location. They are not allowed to leave their assigned seats without permission from a cafeteria monitor. Further poor behavior will result in a disciplinary referral.
4. Each student is expected to clean up his/her own area. This includes the table, chair, and his/her immediate area where he/she is seated.
5. At no time should there be any throwing of food or any other objects.
6. Students are to be aware of their conduct - rudeness will not be tolerated in the lunch area.
7. Students are to enter and leave the cafeteria in an orderly process under the supervision of the cafeteria monitors.
8. Student cooperation is expected at this time.
9. Students may only get out of their seat to use the lav, return trays, dispose of garbage, and purchase snack.
10. Students may go outside for recess at the discretion of the cafeteria aides and administration. Students not dressed for the weather will not be permitted to go outside.
11. **Administration has the authority to assign seats to the entire grade to maintain order and safety if necessary.**

Camera and Video Recorders

The use of cameras and video recorders of any kind (including cell phones equipped with same) is prohibited from the time students enter the building until the time they leave unless authorized to do so by administration or their designee. Penalties for misuse of cameras or video recorders will mirror those for the misuse of cell phones.

Cell Phones

The school recognizes that cell phones offer a degree of safety for parents and students during after-school hours. However, the potential for misuse of cell phones during school hours is high and therefore requires tight guidelines. Issues related to privacy, cheating, inappropriate content/communications, and overall distraction to the learning environment are very real problems schools have experienced. For these reasons and others, **students' cell phones must be stored in students' lockers in the "off" position from the moment students enter the building until 3:00 P.M. or the official early dismissal time on specified days.** Students excused to leave school early may not use cell phones until they leave the building. Again, student cell phones must be turned off and must be stored in lockers if students wish to bring them for use after school. Cell phones are not to be on students' persons, in the bags or purses, or in any other place other than their lockers during the school day. Students are to store their cell phones in their locker immediately in the morning before homeroom. * **The school district will not be responsible for lost or stolen cell phones.**

Penalties for the misuse of cell phones are as follows:

- 1st Offense = Detention and cell phone is confiscated until retrieved by parent
- 2nd Offense = Two detentions assigned, cell phone confiscated until retrieved by parent
- 3rd Offense = Three days ISS, student banned from possessing cell phone on school property

Cheating

A student who is caught cheating will receive a zero for that assignment as well as one day in In-School Suspension for the first offense.

Computer Literacy Program

An orientation will be conducted for students in grades 5 through 8 at the beginning of each school year. 5th Grade students will be assigned to a scheduled computer class once a week for the entire school year. All grades will gain additional experiences by integrating technology throughout the curriculum.

Detention Program

The Tunkhannock Area Middle School Detention Program has been designed to be a positive learning experience for our youngsters. The program should foster a sense of our willingness as a staff and faculty to provide an opportunity for the individual student to modify a behavioral pattern or accomplish the various academic tasks that may have been deficient. Detention is held two days a week from 3:30 – 5:30 P.M. Students who receive detention may take the activity bus home or be picked up by a parent/guardian.

Procedural Guidelines

1. Students must serve detention on the day it is assigned unless otherwise approved by administration.
2. Parents are responsible for arranging transportation home from school.
3. The detention program will be conducted in the Middle School.
4. The duration of the period is from the close of the regular school day until 5:30 p.m.
5. Upon the student's dismissal from detention, the student is escorted to the late bus staging area.
6. Walkers are to be dismissed from the front door of the main building & are to leave the school grounds.
7. Students who are receiving a ride home from their parent/guardian are to exit the front door of the building. Parents are to wait for the students at the front of the school building. **Please be prompt.**
8. The supervising teacher will report any student absent from detention to the office. If a student "cuts" detention, an additional detention will be assigned. Further "cuts" will result in a day of ISS in addition to the detention.

Discipline Policy

The school board has enacted a policy procedure where matters of consequence are concerned. Policy #233 is meant to act as a guideline for school administration when determining a penalty for student misconduct.

LEVEL I Administrative Action:

- Level I misconduct will result in disciplinary action ranging from a warning, to an afternoon detention, or an in-school suspension (3 days or less).

LEVEL II Administrative Action:

- Level II misconduct will result in a disciplinary action ranging from afternoon detention to a three (3) day in- or out-of-school suspension.

LEVEL III Administrative Action/Category A

- This level of misconduct is a serious situation the school must address directly. Penalties range from three (3) day in- or out-of school suspensions to a ten (10) day out-of-school suspension. All suspensions of more than three (3) days will include an informal hearing with the principal, assistant principal, or other designated administrator. In cases of more than three days, students and parents will be notified of the charges in writing as well as the time and place of the informal hearing. Suspended students will receive notice of the procedures and responsibilities that apply to suspensions from school.

LEVEL III Administrative Action/Category B

- This level of misconduct requires the most severe disciplinary action(s). Students guilty of this category of misconduct will be suspended from school for ten days and may be referred to the superintendent with the recommendation for an expulsion hearing. An expulsion from school is an exclusion from the school program of more than ten (10) days. In such cases, a formal hearing is conducted before the school board and may result in a permanent expulsion from school. Expelled students who are under 17 years of age are still required to comply with compulsory school attendance laws. Students facing expulsion will be notified in writing of their rights, the procedures of the formal hearing, and the time and place of the expulsion hearing. Law enforcement personnel will be called to respond to Level III misconduct as is necessary and required by law.

Examples of Levels of Misconduct

Level I Examples

- dress code violations
- late to class
- skipping class
- false or misuse of passes
- littering
- unintentional but unsafe behavior
- minor classroom disruptions
- running in the hall, horseplay, pushing, shoving, etc.
- disrespect to school personnel (minor)
- public displays of affection

Level II Examples

- repeated Level I offenses
- misuse of computers and/or internet
- disrespect to school personnel
- threatening others (minor)
- physically harassing others
- profanity
- failure to report to detention
- late to class (3rd offense and beyond)
- truancy (1st offense), unexcused absences
- possession/consumption/distribution of tobacco products (first offense)
- abusive communication to others (written, verbal or non-verbal)
- false reports to school personnel
- forgery or use of forged documents
- leaving school property without permission
- harassment involving unwarranted sexual comments
- possession of material deemed to be profane, violent, obscene, sexually suggestive, and/or promoting hate and/or intolerance

Level III/Category A Examples

- repeated Level II offenses
- fighting (minor)
- threatening others (major)
- profanity directed toward staff
- vandalism (minor)
- stealing/theft (minor)
- insubordination/defying school officials
- endangering the safety and health of others
- truancy (multiple offenses), unexcused absences
- possession, consumption, & distribution of tobacco products (second offense and beyond)

Level III/Category B Examples

- repeated Level III offenses
- fighting (major)
- possession of weapons
- arson
- vandalism (major)
- stealing/theft (major)
- threatening school personnel
- possession, consumption, distribution of controlled substances/
alcohol or look-alike substances
- causing false fire alarms or other fraudulent emergency
situations
- harassment involving unwanted sexual advances and/or touching

*** Any student who receives in school or external suspension or is expelled from school may not participate in after-school activities or be present on school grounds for the days of the suspension/expulsion.**

Additional Disciplinary Offenses:

Disorderly Conduct: A person is guilty of disorderly conduct if, with intent to cause public inconvenience, annoyance or alarm, or recklessly creating a risk thereof, he: (1) engages in fighting or threatening, or in violent or tumultuous behavior; (2) makes unreasonable noises; (3) uses obscene language, or makes an obscene gesture; or (4) creates a hazardous or physically offensive condition by any act which serves no legitimate purpose of the actor. A student who demonstrates disorderly conduct will face immediate disciplinary action and potential charges will be filed with local law enforcement official if warranted.

Bullying: Bullying is any condition or act that creates a pattern of abuse or harassment. Bullying may be physical, verbal or written. Bullying will not be tolerated in the Middle School and all instances of bullying will be fully investigated. Bullies will be dealt with swiftly and sternly. See Board Policy #249.

Hazing: Hazing is defined as any activity that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental health, physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or membership in or affiliation with any organization recognized by the Board. All incidents of hazing will be investigated and appropriate actions administered using the guidelines of Board Policy #247.

NOTE: *The examples given above are used by administrators to respond appropriately to student misconduct. Administrators will have the final discretionary power to determine the level of misconduct and the appropriate disciplinary response. This discretionary power includes but is not limited to restricting student privileges (i.e. attendance at social and school events, school trips, extracurricular activities, etc.), assigning lunch detention, completing approved community service and participations in behavioral contracts.*

Students must realize that the expectations and procedures for appropriate behavior listed with in this handbook are in effect in the middle school building, on any portion of the school campus or district property, on school busses, at bus stops, or in attendance at home or away activities, competitions, and special events.

Dress and Grooming

Clothing should be clean and neat at all times. All outerwear must be placed in lockers. Bookbags and purses must be placed in lockers; students are not permitted to take these items to class.

Students will not be permitted to wear any of the following items on school property: Students are also expected to comply with updated dress codes per district policy.

1. Sunglasses and hats (or items that completely cover the head).
2. Clothing with inappropriate slogans and/or drugs, alcohol, tobacco, violence, sex or suicide. This also includes statements on clothing that might suggest several meanings.
3. Clothing that resembles pajamas.
4. Slacks or jeans must be secured at the waist and they may not touch the floor. Repeated warnings will result in disciplinary measures being taken.
5. Shirts must be no lower than 2" from the collar bone.

6. Half-shirts or cut-off shirts or any clothing that exposes a bare midriff on any student, tank or halter tops, sundresses, cut-off, cut-up or any clothing with holes that create immodesty are not allowed.
7. All dresses, skirts, and shorts must extend to a length that is at least equal to the arms and hands fully extended to the sides.
8. Excessively baggy clothing, **full camouflage outfits (hunting gear) or clothing that signify a non-school group or gang.**
9. Spandex, tights, leggings, tube skirts, or skin tight clothing of any type, unless worn under appropriate dress.
10. Any jewelry that is pointed, spiked or has sharp edges, or is in a location on the body that may cause injury or be distracting to the educational environment, or any chains that may jeopardize a student's health, safety or welfare.
11. Flip-flops, sandals and shoes with heels above 1 1/2" are dangerous in the stairwells and are prohibited.
12. All laces on shoes must be securely tied.
13. Inappropriate visible tattoos.
14. Colored hair is considered a distraction to learning and is prohibited.

Teachers and building administration will enforce the Dress Code Policy. Administration or their designee will determine if a student is in compliance with the dress code. Students who violate the dress code policy will be instructed to change into appropriate clothing. If he/she does not have appropriate clothing in his/her possession, the parent/guardian will be contacted. If the parent/guardian cannot bring appropriate clothing to school, the student will spend the day in ISS. It is the responsibility of both the parent and the student to abide by the dress code.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

The possession, use, distribution or consumption in an fashion of illicit drugs and/or alcohol not medically issued are strictly forbidden while students are in attendance at school, at home or away school activities, competitions, or special events. Tunkhannock Area School District defines illicit drugs in board policy #226 and indicates the following:

1. Any dangerous controlled substances prohibited and restricted by law
2. Any "look-a-like" substances that have a physical appearance substantially similar to that of a controlled substance
3. Non-controlled substances that have a stimulant or depressant effect
4. Caffeine or phenylpropanolamine pill, capsule, or tablet or substance or compounds that contain these two substances
5. Any prescription or patent drug except those for which permission to use in school has been granted for medical reasons
6. Any non-regulated product, in any form, used for purposes of creating a physical, psychoactive or mood altering effect including but not limited to gases, propellants, solvents, butane, propane, Salvia divinorum and other inhalable, intravenous or digestible substances
7. Drug paraphernalia which is that equipment, apparatus and/or gear generally associated with the use/abuse of alcohol, narcotic drugs or mood altering substances. Examples may include items such as pot pipes, cigarette rolling papers, roach clips, lighters, aerosol cans, CO2 cartridges, etc.
8. Any performance enhancing substance

EdLine

For the 2007-2008 school year, the Middle School will be using EdLine to inform parents of student progress, assignments, attendance, etc. Parents and students will receive user ID's and passwords to access student data online. EdLine will provide attendance, grades, discipline reports and teacher assignments/homework.

Extra-Curricular

Participation in extra curricular activities is a privilege that assumes with it a high standard of good behavior both in and outside of school. Students must maintain appropriate and acceptable behavior while participating in extra-curricular programs at TAMS. Sportsmanship must be exhibited at all times, and respect for coaches, advisors, fellow team members/students, officials and opposing teams is expected through the duration of activity period. Students who do not adhere to these behavior guidelines may be subject to sanctions, discipline, or removal from the activity. Extra-Curricular activities at the Middle School include: Student Council, Builders Club, After-School Activity Program (ASAP), Jazz Band, various intramural athletic programs and school sports.

Field/Class Trip

The Board recognizes the value of student social events and class trips enhancing and enriching the school experience for children of this school district. As participants in school social events and class trips, students shall be held responsible for compliance with rules set forth in advance for their conduct, and infractions of these rules will be subject to the same disciplinary measures as are applied during the regular school program. The class trips are of substantial impact for the total growth of the student. When a child demonstrates inappropriate behavior on such trips, the respective teacher will facilitate notification to the building principal and appropriate guidance and recommendations will be provided to manage and modify such behaviors considered unacceptable.

*** Students may be deemed ineligible for class trips based on chronic or severe infractions of school rules.**

Fire Drill Regulations

In order that we may safely vacate our building in case of emergency, it is imperative we conduct our fire drills as orderly, quickly and quietly as possible. When the fire bell rings, all students will remain quiet and listen for orders from their teacher. Close windows and turn lights out before leaving.

Students will leave the room in single file and proceed to the assigned exit. Teachers will accompany their students taking their roll books with them. Upon reaching the outside, move away from the building, but stay with your class in order that attendance can be taken. Remain outside and away from the building until an all clear signal is given, then proceed back into the building the same way you left. Report any absences to head teacher.

All students are required to participate in fire drills. Due to the importance of a rapid evacuation, students will not be permitted to stop at lockers to attain cold weather gear. A fire drill will be conducted once a month as required by state law.

Free or Reduced Price Lunch

To apply for free or reduced price lunch, a parent must fill out an application and return it to the office. All information completed by the parent on the free and reduced price lunch is kept confidential. All applications are forwarded to the Food Service Director who will then process the application and inform the parent concerning their eligibility. One application is all that is required for an entire family. Our mealtime lunch system provides confidentiality for our free and reduced lunch students.

Fundraising

Fundraising for school-related activities and programs must be conducted according to the procedures and guidelines set forth by advisors, coaches, and other district-approved personnel. Students who participate in school fundraisers involving the collection of monies and/or sale of items must see to it that all funds and items for sale are delivered to the appropriate individuals promptly. All fundraising activity must be approved by the middle school administration. **The board prohibits the collection of money in school or on school property or at any school-sponsored event by a student for personal benefit.**

Grading

The grading system as described in this section is to be used by all teachers in Grades 5 – 8. Report cards are issued every nine (9) weeks. Students are graded on a numerical system according to the following:

Criteria

93 – 100	Excellent
85 - 92	Above Average
78 - 84	Average
70 - 77	Below Average
Below 70	Failing

Pass/Fail Codes

The following codes are used for courses that are rated Pass/Fail:

Medical (PE courses only)
Pass
Fail

Guidance Department

The Middle School has two counselors who work in several different areas with the students. The counselors act as a liaison between the teachers and parents and assist students in their academic, personal, social and vocational development. The counselors meet with the students as individuals and groups and are available to the students as needed. The standardized testing program and the interpretation of the results to students and parents are another aspect of the counselors' responsibilities. The counselors work with the teachers and the community in helping the students develop career awareness with a variety of approaches ranging from community speakers to field trips. The counselors also assist in planning parent visitation days as well as evening programs designed to further acquaint parents with the school program.

Homebound instruction is arranged through the counselors. Parents are encouraged to contact the Middle School counselors whenever they have a question on their student's progress.

Hall Privilege During Instructional Time

Any student leaving the classroom during regularly scheduled instructional periods will be required to use the hall pass, found in the back of their planner, before exiting the room. It is also the responsibility of the student to sign out upon departure from the room and sign in at the time of their return. Each teacher will be required to keep sign-out sheets on file for a period of one week. This policy is being implemented to aid in the maintenance and integrity of the school. Should a student lose his/her planner, they will be required to pay \$5 to cover the cost of replacement.

Homework Requests

Parents may request homework, only after their child has missed two (2) consecutive school days, by calling the school office (836-8242) before 9:00 AM. Parents will be required to pick up homework and books after 3:20 P.M.

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain assignments from their teachers, for missing work, requested through pre-arranged excuses for educational trips and medical appointments, Students are responsible for making up all homework and class work missed while absent from school. Students should consult their teachers whenever they have missed any schoolwork. **Daily homework assignments are available on Ed Line (see Pg. 12).**

Honor Roll

The Honor Roll will be announced and published after each marking period. A student must have an average of at least 85 to be recognized as an honor roll student along with no grade lower than 78 or an "F" in a pass/fail course. A student will attain High Honors with an average of 93 with no grade lower than an 85 or an "F" in a pass/fail course.

Internal Suspension Study Program

School Board Policy #233 authorizes the use of an internal suspension study program when warranted by building administration usually for incidents of Level II or III infractions. Repeated incidents of Level I infractions may also lead to assignment of internal suspension study. The ISS program is held in school and supervised by the assistant principal and monitored by teachers throughout the day. Every reasonable attempt is made to ensure that students obtain their assignments for the day(s) they are assigned to ISS. Students will also be required to complete an academic or behavior packet.

Liability of Students

Students are issued textbooks for the subject areas studied and are responsible to note the condition of the textbook on the inside cover. When a student accepts this textbook, it is expected that the text will be returned at the close of the school year in satisfactory condition minus the fair wear and tear of materials. Any student who is abusive to the text will be held responsible for the replacement cost. If items are lost or misplaced, the student is responsible for replacement value of the text or materials. Teachers will make this appraisal at the end of the school year.

Library

The Middle School Library has a collection of over 19,000 books, magazines and several newspapers available to all students. There are computers available for research and Accelerated Reader (AR) testing. The district internet policy applies to library computers. Every student is scheduled for a library period in each five-day cycle. The library is open during class periods and homeroom periods. Students are required to have a signed pass from a teacher in order to enter the library during posted hours.

The following are the Middle School Library Rules:

1. Library books may be borrowed on a regular loan of two weeks. Books may be renewed as needed.
2. Overdue books are subject to a .5 cent fine per late school day. Students are responsible for notifying library staff of absences, to avoid fines on those days. Library fines/obligations must be paid by the end of each marking period to obtain report card.
3. Magazines and newspapers are to be used in the library. Back issues may be signed out on a limited basis.
4. Lost or damaged books are charged to the student to whom they are entrusted.
5. Books are not transferable.
6. Courtesy and good citizenship are expected in the Middle School Library at all times.

Locks/Lockers

Students are issued a lock and locker at the beginning of the school year. Students are responsible to insure that the lockers are maintained in a clean manner. Locker rules are as follows:

1. All school lockers are and shall remain the property of the school district.
2. Students may visit their lockers in the morning before first period class, after lunch periods, at the end of the day, and only at other times as directed by their teachers.
3. Each student must keep his/her locker neat and clean.
4. Magnetically fastened signs or posters are not permitted on the inside or outside of the lockers. Decals of any type are forbidden.
5. School issued locks must be placed on student lockers at all times. Personal locks are prohibited.
6. Mirrors made of glass are prohibited.
7. Replacement cost of damaged locks is \$5.00. Student must always have a school issued lock on locker.
8. It is not permitted for students to share lockers and/or locker combinations.

Important –Lockers may be searched at any time by school officials when warranted. Locker searches are conducted when reasonable suspicion exists that a student’s locker may contain items that are illegal, dangerous, constitute improper use, or otherwise violate school rules and policies.

Lost and Found

If you have lost an article of value, report it to the office after a thorough search has been completed. If an article has been found, try to determine its owner or turn it in to the office immediately. Please make every effort to keep all personal possessions accounted for at all times.

Media Release

During the current school year, your child’s image/photograph or work may be included in a classroom or school project that could be used in one of the following ways:

1. Used as a demonstration project/activity in education workshops/classes/conferences
2. Used as a sample project/activity on CD’s created by Tunkhannock Area School District for use in education workshops and student classrooms
3. Posted on the school or TASD web pages on the Internet
4. Submitted as samples to program publishers or as contest entries to sponsors
5. Appear on videotape made during a student presentation of their project, or in broadcasts or videotapes demonstrating computer multimedia in general
6. Videotaped to appear in a school related program to be sued by a local television station or school/county project
7. Used in a printed publication such as a newspaper or magazine
8. **No last name or address will be included with your child’s picture when publishing on the Web**

There is no monetary compensation for the use of the work, but it will help many teachers get more use out of their computers, and show other students a good example of what can be done. Please sign the release form at the beginning of the booklet and return this sheet to your child’s homeroom teacher. Your permission grants us approval to publicize without prior notification. Thank you.

Music Program

Chorus and Band are available for all students. Each grade level has a chorus performance group and band. Rehearsals are held during the school day and concerts are presented in both the winter and spring.

Vocal Music - As members of the chorus, students learn correct vocal technique and perform music from many time periods. Students have the opportunity to perform with the chorus in area nursing homes and elementary schools, and at times our choruses are asked to present programs for various community activities. Chorus students are encouraged to perform solos in the annual eighth grade recital held at the end of the school year.

Concert Attire: All band, chorus and string students are required to wear appropriate attire, which is in accordance with the dress code policy, for each performance.

Girls: White blouse and black pants or skirt **Boys:** White dress shirt with collar and long tie and black pants

Concert Attendance: Winter and Spring concerts are mandatory for all band, chorus and string students.

Instrumental Music - Our Middle School Instrumental Program is open to all students who choose to play a band instrument in the bands arranged by grade level. Parent permission is necessary. Each year, during the first month of the school year, students are given the opportunity to join our band program. Common band instruments used in our program are flute, oboe, clarinet, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, trumpet, trombone, F horn, baritone horn and percussion. Several students in the upper grades play bass clarinet, baritone saxophone and tuba.

Lessons are offered free of charge during the school day, and our band rehearsals are held by grade level twice each week during Band/Chorus/Academic Achievement Periods. The eighth grade band will be given opportunities to participate in Community events when the schedule permits. Band students are encouraged to perform solos in the annual Instrument Recital Night. Also, eighth grade students are encouraged to participate in our Marching Band/Color Guard, which performs with the eighth grade band in parade events.

8th Grade Band: These students are required to attend the Halloween Parade, combined HS/MS football game, winter & spring concerts and the Memorial Day Parade. Other band functions will be announced throughout the school year

Excellent Attendance Award

The Tunkhannock Area Middle School students are eligible to receive an Excellent Attendance Award. Students who attain this status receive an award. This accomplishment is also noted on the student's permanent record. To be eligible to receive this distinctive award, a student must attain the following:

1. Be in daily attendance when school is in session. A regular school year consists of 182 days.
2. A student who arrives late for school may be eligible for the award. The student must arrive at school prior to 10:20 a.m. and report to the office.
3. If it is necessary to leave school early for medical or other urgent reasons that impact the student, a departure time after 12:20 p.m. will not impact excellent attendance.

Personal Property [Entertainment]

Students are not authorized to bring such items as pagers, electronic games, stereos, or other personal entertainment devices to school. Such items do interfere with the educational process. Therefore, they are not to be brought to school. In the event that a teacher observes a student with entertainment type of items as outlined above, the item will be confiscated from the student and controlled. At the close of the school day the item may be picked up by the parent/guardian and a discipline referral may result.

Physical Education Participation and Excuses

It is a mandate of the Pennsylvania Department of Education that ALL students should participate in Physical Education, even if temporarily or permanently disabled. It is a commonly held belief that Physical Education classes will contribute to the emotional, social, mental and physical development of children, so they may become well-rounded adults and contributing citizens.

Today, it is acknowledged that quality Physical Education programs provide preventative health benefits for a lifetime and options for the use of leisure time, as well as preparation for the physical demands of daily life. The new Physical Education combines the development of motor skills that allow one to complete daily chores safely and efficiently and to participate in a variety of physical activity-based situations with active involvement in fitness enhancing activity.

Regulations to Remember When in Physical Education Class

1. All students should enter the locker room from the main gymnasium. Boys should enter through the entrance across from Technology and girls should enter through main hall. At the end of class, your physical education teacher will designate an area in the gym where you should wait until dismissed by the teacher. The rear locker room doors are used for emergencies only.
2. No horseplay at any time. For safety, equipment may only be used under supervised instruction.
3. Running in locker room is prohibited.
4. To keep locker room safe, glass containers, eating and drinking are prohibited.
5. No profanity. Conduct in gym, locker room and athletic areas should be respectful and courteous.
6. Keep bathroom area clean at all times. Flush toilets and urinals and wash hands.
7. Gym clothes must be brought to each and every class. Clothes cannot stay in the locker room after class. Students will not be allowed to return to hall lockers for gym clothes.
8. Only students scheduled for Physical Education class may be in locker room and gym areas. Permission from Physical Education teacher is required to enter at any other time.
9. Sneaker and shirts must be worn at all times. No spikes in gym or halls.
10. All jewelry is prohibited in class. It must be removed during class. It is highly recommended that students refrain from getting their "piercings" during the school year. Should a student receive a new piercing the student will be required to cover the piercing with tape or a band-aid.
11. Protective eyewear is available. It is recommended that students wearing prescription lenses use a safety strap.
12. Sunglasses are prohibited, unless part of prescription lenses.
13. Chewing gum is prohibited at all times.
14. Check bulletin boards in locker rooms for further information.

Not following regulations may result in grade adjustment!

What if you are not feeling well? Since you are in school you are expected to participate. Report that you are not feeling well to the physical education teacher. A high level of participation will not be expected. Menstruation is not an excuse for lack of participation. You will still be required to change into your gym clothes and participate to the best of your ability. Your grade will not be jeopardized under these conditions.

When do I need a medical excuse? If you have a disabling injury or illness you may be excused from class for a period of time. A written parental note will be honored for less serious situations, not to exceed one day. Any illness or disability preventing participation for more than one day will require a physician's medical excuse with specific time frame listed. This form should be presented to the PE teacher, who will have copies made for the nurse's file. All students are required to participate in physical education. Unless otherwise stated on the form, a physician's permission will be required to return to gym class. Lack of this permission will not excuse student from class. Medical excuses, which state "... until further notice ..." must be updated within two months from date received by teacher. It is the student's obligation to keep excuses current. Medical excuses, which expire, may affect Physical Education grade. (School fax # is 836-5796)

Can my parent write me an excuse? A student will be permitted two (2) parental notes per quarter to excuse them from PE class due to illness. If a student is to be excused for a medical reason in addition to the two (2) parental excuses a doctor's note must be provided.

What if I am unprepared? A student who does not have their gym clothes but is dressed to safely participate will be required to do so although they are still considered to be unprepared. The third and subsequent time per quarter that a student is unprepared for Phys. Ed. class he/she will be assigned a detention.

How do I make up a missed class? When a student legitimately misses a class, it is the responsibility of the student to make up the class requirements through an arrangement with the teacher.

What do I need to wear? Students are required to wear sneakers, athletic socks, gym shorts and a suitable T-shirt. All clothing must comply with school dress code. Proper clothing for Physical Education activities allows you to move freely and safely. A COMPLETE change from school clothes is REQUIRED! This is a necessity and courtesy to your parents, who buy your clothes, your fellow classmates, who interact with you, and as a benefit to your own personal hygiene. You are strongly reminded to take your gym clothes home weekly to be washed.

DO'S

- * Wear shorts at waist at all times
- *Tie hair back
- *Wear appropriate T-shirt
- *Wear elasticized waist shorts
- *Wear athletic socks

DONT'S

- *Have holes/tears in shorts or shirts
- *Wear jewelry
- *Wear cut-off shorts, boxer shorts
- *Wear loose or untied sneakers
- *Wear pantyhose

Where do I put my stuff during gym? The lockers in each locker room are full sized for ease of use. You may only use these during your scheduled gym class. Following each class, you must empty your gym locker and return your gym clothes to your hall locker. Clothes should be clean when attending gym class.

Parent/Guardian and Student signatures on the Handbook Signature Form recognize your understanding of the Physical Education Rules and Regulations

Public Complaint Policy

There is a school district policy, Policy #326, Pgs.1–3 that directs procedures for any number of complaints that the public would like to pursue. It is quite comprehensive. If after discussing a concern with an administrator that goes unresolved, please request a copy of this policy to determine other avenues of resolution you may have open to you.

Retention

The failure of any combination of two or more major subjects or failure of math alone may result in a student being retained in current grade level. As failure appears to be possible, the subject area teacher should contact parents. When retention is imminent, parents and student can expect to be contacted and “conferenced” on possible outcomes by the guidance counselor and/or teachers.

School Day Cancellation

On occasion it becomes necessary to cancel school for the day. This is usually in the winter when roads may become impassable. All cancellations or delays will be announced over radio and T.V. Every effort is made to do this before 6:00 A.M.

School Nurse/Medical Policies

The Nurse’s Office is designed to be an emergency station for all students who are injured or become ill during the school day. The nurse makes all decisions about your condition. **The school nurse makes all calls to parents, regarding injury or illness, from her office.** Students visiting the Nurse’s Office during the school day must have a pass, excusing them from their class. Students may not use the pay phone or cell phone to report illness home.

Preventing Spread of Infection: For the safety of all students, faculty and staff it is recommended that all open cuts be covered with Band-Aids or bandages. Because of the large population of students it is recommended that all bandage changes take place at home. The school nurse will cover any new wounds which occur at school.

Medication (Board Policy #210)

The school health services are under no obligation to give medications. This is a voluntary service, which the health department performs due to an interest in your child’s health.

Over-the-counter drugs are classified as “medication” and require written permission from the parent/legal guardian, stating the dose and time to be administered. In the case of prescribed medication, the nurse may, at her discretion, proceed to contact the prescribing physician and/or pharmacist to verify any change or questions regarding student’s medication. (A faxed order from the physician’s office will be accepted.)

ALL MEDICATION must be brought to school by a parent/guardian and delivered to the nurse or her designee. (Two labeled containers from the pharmacy are suggested and requested. No more than ONE (12) month supply should be delivered.) At the middle level, parents must annually send a written note, signed, for the school nurse to administer non-prescribed medications (Ex: ibuprofen, acetaminophen, Maalox). The medications will be administered according to the standing order on file at each level in the nurse’s office.

Every effort will be made by the school nurse/designee to administer medication. However, the school nurse is not responsible for calling students when they forget. It is the parent’s responsibility to inform a student what time to come for medication. *Inhalers and epi-pens may be carried by a student having prior permission from the nurse and office. Students found carrying any drugs/medications will be referred to the building principal and Board Policy #227 will be applied, which may result in suspension/expulsion and/or legal action.

This policy affects all district-sponsored activities and trips.

Physical and Dental Examinations

School physical examinations are mandatory for all students in the 1st, 6th and 11th grades and for any student who transfers from out of state or needs a physical completed. Eye examinations are given once a year and ear examinations are given in 5th and 7th grades and to other students on teacher request or parent request. The student's height and weight are checked once a school year.

Dental examinations are given in grades one, three and seven during the school year. Parents will be notified of the examinations. The purpose of these examinations is to bring to the attention of the parents any deficiencies noted by the physician.

Parents may have their own physician give their child these exams, but this will be at the parents' own expense.

These examinations must be complete prior to the school scheduled examinations and proper documentation provided to the school nurse. Documented physical and dental exams must be completed before students progress to the next respective grade level. **The school nurse shall notify the superintendent of outstanding obligations which may consist of but not limited to non-compliance of the physical examination mandate.** The Superintendent will decide if the student may be excluded or if grade promotion is withheld.

Search and Seizure

The district school board has authorized school administrators to inspect and/or search students' lockers, their person, or their possessions. Such a search will be conducted only when reasonable suspicion exists that dangerous, illegal, or potentially disruptive contraband or objects are present in the places to be searched. Such searches may include the use of drug dogs as arranged with law enforcement authorities. In the event a search is ordered, the person whose locker, or possessions is about to be searched will be notified and allowed to be present for such a search. Such notification and presence will only be permitted when doing so does not jeopardize the safety and well being of students and staff, or the effectiveness of the search. All objects, contraband, or other items confiscated during searches will be secured and delivered to the proper authorities in a timely fashion. Items confiscated during searches may be used as evident in disciplinary proceedings.

Smoking

Student smoking, possession, or use of any form of tobacco is prohibited in the building or on the school grounds at any time. This includes areas of the parking lot, the walk, or streets bordering the school campus. Violations of the smoking policy may result in a suspension from school, referred to a smoking clinic, and the magistrate who may impose a fine consistent with Pennsylvania state law. Repeated offenses will result in additional consequences, which may result in an external suspension from school.

Student Assistance Program (SAP)

Tunkhannock Area Middle School has a Student Assistance Program (SAP). SAP is an intervention program staffed by teachers, guidance counselors, school nurse, administration and appropriate agencies from the community. The Student Assistance Team is trained to identify and refer "high risk" students for appropriate treatment by outside agencies. Referrals are made to the SAP team for students experiencing social, emotional, psychological, or family problems. Students may be referred to the SAP team by any school employee, a parent/guardian, or a student. Students will be given additional information about the referral process by guidance personnel.

Telephone

The phone is to be used before and after school and only after the office has granted permission. The phone is to be used for calls pertaining to school business only. Students may not be called to the phone during class time. Important messages will be delivered to the students.

Title I, Remedial Instruction

Students in the Middle School who are having difficulties with the basic skills of math and/or reading will have the opportunity of having remedial instruction in these subjects. Title I classes are offered to all fifth grade students by a Title I reading instructor. Regular education teachers also employ team teaching and inclusion practices to aid in remediation of basic skills. The computer lab is employed as a catalyst for building basic reading skills and enhancing performance. All classes are scheduled so students are not taken out of their regular academic classes.

Transportation and Safety Policy

Riding a school bus is a privilege provided by the Tunkhannock Area School District. When, however, the behavior of a student affects the welfare and safety of the other students, the privilege may be curtailed or taken away. The following rules and safety regulations are for each student's well-being. A student should:

1. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- a. Students may not be left off the bus at any stop other than the designated stop except by prior permission by a written note approved by the building administrator.
- b. Students may not take a guest home on a regular school bus run unless it is cleared through the driver that there is adequate seating on his bus and a written note is presented to the driver from the parent/guardian and approved by building administration.
- c. Respect the driver's authority and observe requests made by the bus driver and/or bus captain.
- d. Wait at the bus stop in an orderly fashion, out of the road, and away from traffic.
- e. Wait in an orderly fashion to board the bus when it arrives. Do not walk towards the door until the bus stops and the door is opened. (For example, No Pushing)
- f. Go directly to a seat and remain seated. Don't stand until the bus comes to a full stop at the place where you wish to leave the bus.
- g. Keep your arms and legs out of the aisle.
- h. Keep your hands, head, books, & bundles inside the bus. Do not eat, drink, smoke, or litter on the bus.
- i. Talk quietly. Quiet on the bus is necessary for the driver to be able to hear horns and other traffic sounds.
- j. Before leaving or entering the bus, look carefully both ways if you cross the road. Walk at least ten (10) feet in front of the bus.
- k. Refrain from willfully destroying or marking any part of the bus.
 - l. Refrain from fighting, fooling, or annoying other students. Throwing objects on the bus or out the window will not be permitted.
- m. Refrain from using profane or obscene language.
- n. Students are to sit in seat with feet on the floor facing the driver.

2. Disciplinary Regulations (Transportation Policy 810):

If any rules are disobeyed, the following disciplinary action will be taken:

- a. **First Offense** - A warning to the student by the driver. If the infraction is of a serious nature, the driver may chose to report the student to the building administrator.
- b. **Second Offense** - Bus conduct report will be filled out and a conference may be held with the building Administrator, student, parent and driver if possible. Based on the seriousness of the infraction, suspension of riding privileges could be anywhere from one (1) to ten (10) consecutive school days. During the time a student is suspended from riding a bus, he may not ride any other bus in the district, including the late run.
- c. **Third Offense** - Bus conduct report will be submitted to the building administrator. A conference may be held with the building administrator, student, parent and driver if possible. Based on the seriousness of the infraction, suspension of riding privileges could be over ten (10) consecutive school days if approved by the Superintendent of Schools based on the recommendation of the Transportation Committee.

3. Special Violations:

Any infraction of the bus rules and regulations can be serious enough to warrant immediate suspension from riding the school bus. The length of the suspension in special situations will be determined by the Transportation Committee and may be approved by the Superintendent of Schools after his review. The suspension could range from beyond ten (10) consecutive school days to the entire school year. Some examples of special violations are:

- a. Intentionally damaging a bus.
- b. Threats to drivers.
- c. Possession of a lighter, lighting firecrackers or smoke bombs on bus.
- d. Throwing objects or squirting water on the bus.
- e. Fighting.
- f. Use, possession or distribution of a drug, alcohol, tobacco, stimulant, or look-a-like while riding the bus.

4. Audio/Video Surveillance:

In order to provide the safest possible environment on the bus, the board permits the installation and use of an audio/video camera to be used when students are on the bus. The use of video surveillance equipment on transportation vehicles shall be supervised by the Superintendent. Bus contractors shall place cameras on buses as directed by district administration. Students shall not be notified. When video equipment is "onboard" and in use on district vehicles, the tape will either be released for erasure or retained as necessary as part of the student's behavioral record.

5. Only students involved in a supervised, district approved extracurricular activity may ride the late run activity bus.

Truancy

Regulations have been adopted referencing a student's skipping classes and school at the Tunkhannock Area School District. These regulations have been approved by the Board of Education. Any student found to be absent from class without just cause may be disciplined.

Any student found skipping school may be charged with an unlawful absence which may be sent to the magistrate. Disciplinary action involving suspension may occur.

Unlawful Harassment

The board strives to provide a safe, positive school climate for students and staff of the Tunkhannock Area School District. Therefore board policy #348 has been put into effect to provide guidelines that outline the parameters of harassment and its consequences.

The term "harassment" includes, but is not limited to, repeated, unwelcome and offensive slurs, jokes or other verbal, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, religion, ancestry, sex, national origin, age or handicap disability which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

"Sexual Harassment" shall consist of unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other inappropriate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Any complaints should be brought to the attention of Middle School administration. The district will act positively and aggressively to investigate alleged harassment claims and to effectively remedy them when an allegation is determined to be valid.

Weapons

Students may not possess any weapons on school property or at any related school function. The definition of weapons shall be anything readily capable of lethal and/or damaging use and possessed under the circumstances not manifestly appropriate for lawful uses, which it may have. The following are examples of weapons but it is not intended to be all inclusive: knife; cutting instruments; cutting tool; nun-chuck stick; firearms (loaded or unloaded), operable or non-operable; metal knuckles; explosives; noxious, irritating or poisonous gases; and poisons. Additionally, any replica, copy or imitation of any of the aforementioned weapons are, for the purpose of this policy, included in the definition of weapon if the same is possessed with the intent to threaten serious bodily injury or commit any offense violating school policy or the state penal laws. Pennsylvania State Law requires the school district to expel, for a period of not less than one year, any student who is found in violation of the weapons policy. Any weapons or replica thereof possessed on or about a person while on district property or while being involved in a school sponsored activity is strictly prohibited and is subject to seizure and/or forfeiture. The superintendent may recommend discipline short of expulsion on a case-by-case basis. Reference: Board Policy #218.1 on Student, Dangerous Weapons.

Withdrawal From School

All students withdrawing from the middle school must report to the guidance office and will be issued a withdrawal form. Each teacher must initial this form signifying that all books have been turned in and all obligations have been met. The final check will be made through the guidance office, which issues all transfer cards.

The phone is to be used before and after school and only after the office has granted permission. The phone is to be used for calls pertaining to school business only. Students may not be called to the phone during class time. Important messages will be delivered to the students.

Transportation and Safety Policy

Safety and the proper attitude in bus transportation, as well as in all phases of the school program, are of prime concern to all people associated with the Tunkhannock Area School District. The safety of all who utilize school bus transportation is imperative. Only through the cooperation of parents, students, teachers, school bus drivers, and administrators of the school district can this aim be achieved.

1. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- a. Students may not be left off the bus at any stop other than the designated stop except by prior permission by a written note approved by the building administrator.
- b. Students may not take a guest home on a regular school bus run unless it is cleared through the driver that there is adequate seating on his bus and a written note is presented to the driver from the parent/guardian and approved by building administration.
- c. Respect the driver's authority and observe requests made by the bus driver and/or bus captain.
- d. Wait at the bus stop in an orderly fashion, out of the road, and away from traffic.
- e. Wait in an orderly fashion to board the bus when it arrives. Do not walk towards the door until the bus stops and the door is opened. (For example, No Pushing)
- f. Go directly to a seat and remain seated. Don't stand until the bus comes to a full stop at the place where you wish to leave the bus.
- g. Keep your arms and legs out of the aisle.
- h. Keep your hands, head, books, & bundles inside the bus. Do not eat, drink, smoke, or litter on the bus.
- i. Talk quietly. Quiet on the bus is necessary for the driver to be able to hear horns and other traffic sounds.
- j. Before leaving or entering the bus, look carefully both ways if you cross the road. Walk at least ten (10) feet in front of the bus.
- k. Refrain from willfully destroying or marking any part of the bus.
 - l. Refrain from fighting, fooling, or annoying other students. Throwing objects on the bus or out the window will not be permitted.
- m. Refrain from using profane or obscene language.
- n. Students are to sit in seat with feet on the floor facing the driver.

CHANGES TO MIDDLE SCHOOL HANDBOOK 2007 – 2008

- Changed “tardy” time to 8:15 A.M. from 8:20 A.M.
- Under Athletic Eligibility added: “Discipline issues which result in detentions and/or suspension may result in temporary loss of extra-curricular activity for the days assigned.”
- Under Behavior Expectations for Students added: “It is expected that students will complete all homework assigned by the teacher.”
- Under Cafeteria & School Lunch Programs changed breakfast times to 7:50 – 8:10 A.M. from 7:50 to 8:20 A.M. Also, added: “Students will have the first two (2) weeks of school to decide where they would like to sit during lunch. After two (2) weeks they will be assigned to sit at that table for the rest of the year. Any seating changes will then need administrative approval.
- Added Cell Phones- The school recognizes that cell phones offer a degree of safety for parents and students during after-school hours. However, the potential for misuse of cell phones during school hours is high and therefore requires tight guidelines. Issues related to privacy, cheating, inappropriate content/communications, and overall distraction to the learning environment are very real problems schools have experience. For these reasons and others, **students’ cell phones must be stored in students’ lockers in the “off” position from the moment students enter the building until 3:00 P.M. or the official early dismissal time on specified days.** Students excused to leave school early may not use cell phones until they leave the building. Again, student cell phones must be turned off and must be stored in lockers if students wish to bring them for use after school. Cell phones are not to be on students’ persons, in the bags or purses, or in any other place other than their lockers during the school day. Students are to store their cello phones in their locker immediately in the morning before homeroom.
Penalties for the misuse of cell phones are as follows:
 - 1st Offense = Detention and cell phone is confiscated until retrieved by parent
 - 2nd Offense = Two detentions assigned, cell phone confiscated until retrieved by parent
 - 3rd Offense = Three days ISS, student banned from possessing cell phone on school property”
- Under Detention Program added: “If a student “cuts” detention, an additional detention will be assigned. Further “cuts” will result in a day of ISS (in-school suspension).”
- Under Dress and Grooming changed “Bookbags and large purses must be placed in lockers; students are not permitted to take these items to class” to “Bookbags and purses must be placed in lockers ... “ (took out the word “large”).
- Under Dress and Grooming added: “All dresses, skirts, and shorts must extend to a length that is at least equal to the arms and hands fully extended to the sides.”
- Under Drug and Alcohol Policy added: Board Policy #227, Pg. 2 - #6, #7 and #8.
- Under Locks/Lockers added: “It is not permitted for students to share lockers and/or locker combinations.”
- Under Personal Property [Entertainment] changed “At the close of the school day the item may be given back to the students” to “. . . item may be picked up by the parent/guardian.”

- Under School Nurse/Medical Policies added: “**Preventing Spread of Infection:** For the safety of all students, faculty and staff it is recommended that all open cuts be covered with Band-Aids or bandages. Because of the large population of students it is recommended that all bandage changes take place at home. The school nurse will cover any new wounds which occur at school.”
- Under School Nurse/Medical Policies added: “**Physical and Dental Examinations** - School physical examinations are mandatory for all students in the 1st, 6th and 11th grades and for any student who transfers from out of state or needs a physical completed. Eye examinations are given once a year and ear examinations are given in 5th and 7th grades and to other students on teacher request or parent request. The student's height and weight are checked once a school year.

Dental examinations are given in grades one, three and seven during the school year. Parents will be notified of the examinations. The purpose of these examinations is to bring to the attention of the parents any deficiencies noted by the physician.

Parents may have their own physician give their child these exams, but this will be at the parents' own expense. These examinations must be complete prior to the school scheduled examinations and proper documentation provided to the school nurse. Documented physical and dental exams must be completed before students progress to the next respective grade level. **The school nurse shall notify the superintendent of outstanding obligations which may consist of but not limited to non-compliance of the physical examination mandate.** The Superintendent will decide if the student may be excluded or if grade promotion is withheld.

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