

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL



977 Balls Hill Road
McLean, Virginia 22101
www.fcps.edu/CooperMS

Student Handbook

COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The Cooper Middle School mission focuses on the nurturing and preparation of our students, helping them to function in the 21st century as informed, productive, and responsible citizens.

The Cooper Code of Conduct

Courteous

- We use appropriate language
- We follow the dress code
- We accept others' uniqueness

On Time

- For school
- For class
- For lunch

On Task

- We focus
- We participate
- We follow procedures

Prepared

- We bring supplies
- We complete assignments

Excellence

- We give our best effort
- We take responsibility for our actions
- We cooperate and have a positive attitude

Respectful

- To staff
- To students
- To property

General Information

James Fenimore Cooper Middle School
Fairfax County Public Schools
977 Balls Hill Road, McLean, VA
22101

Main Office 703-442-5800

Attendance 703-442-5858

Guidance Office 703-442-5812

FAX 703-442-5897

<http://www.fcps.edu/CooperMS/>

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ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Principal - Ms. Arlene Randall
Assistant Principal – Todd Franklin – 8th Grade
Assistant Principal – Frank Stevens, 7th Grade
Director of Student Services – Ms. Michele Boak
Counselors -
Ms. Fisher
Ms. Skrabut
TBA
Attendance Secretary – Ms. Smith
Building Supervisor – Ms. Miller
Cafeteria Manager – Ms. Romeo
Clinic Aide - Ms. Long
Finance Secretary - Ms. Holmes
Guidance Secretary - Ms. Ahearn
Librarian – Ms. Psaltis
Part time office assistant – TBA
Principal’s Administrative Assistant – Ms. Herb
Psychologist – Ms. Romita
Social Worker – Ms. Sheng
Speech Clinician – Dr. Saferstein
After School Specialist – Mr. Frengel
Technology Specialists -
Mrs. Dorman
Mr. Cunningham

GOT A QUESTION OR PROBLEM? WHOM TO SEE...

Bus problems
Mr. Stevens, Grade 7
Mr. Franklin, Grade 8
Checkout of school
Front Office
Discuss class problems
Teacher/Counselor
Discuss personal problem
Counselor
Join a club
Club Sponsor or Mr. Frengel
Locker problem
Mr. Fatherree
Pre-arranged absences
Ms. Ahearn, Guidance Secretary
Schedule concerns
Guidance Counselor
Set-up parent/teacher conference
Guidance Counselor

GRADING AND REPORT CARDS

Each student will be evaluated in seven subjects each nine-week grading period. The Fairfax County Public Schools’ grading scale is as follows:

Symbols	Scale	Quality Points
A	93-100	4.0
A-	90-92	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	83-86	3.0
B-	80-82	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	73-76	2.0
C-	70-72	1.7
D+	67-69	1.3
D	64-66	1.0
F	BELOW 64	0.0

Interim reports are issued during the fifth week of a nine-week grading period. At any time prior to the end of the quarter when a student receives a D or F or the student’s performance declines two letter grades from the previous nine-week mark, the parent will be notified. Students, whose grades are C or above, receive a progress report from each teacher at the same time interims are issued. Each teacher has developed a design for arriving at grades. This design indicates how quarter grades and final grades are determined. In order to be promoted, a student must pass English, math, science, and social studies.



Guidelines and Procedures

THE SCHOOL HOURS

The school day begins at 7:50 a.m. and ends at 2:40 p.m. **NO STUDENTS ARE ALLOWED IN THE BUILDING BEFORE 7:30 A.M.** Students should be in their first block at the 7:50 AM bell. Students arriving after 7:50 AM must sign in at the front office and get a pass.

Kiss and ride students go to the back of the building. Walkers must be off school grounds by 3:00. Students leaving school during the school day must bring a note from a parent/guardian to the front office in the morning and obtain a dismissal pass. A parent/guardian will need to come in and present a photo ID to pick up a student.

Parents must report student absences and tardies by calling the attendance telephone number and leaving a message. This service is available for use 24 hours a day.

THE ATTENDANCE TELEPHONE NUMBER IS 703-442-5858.

Delayed openings and early closings are announced on major radio and television stations. Also, announcements are made through FCPS Keep In Touch. This program sends messages to parents through their email. Please go to the FCPS website to subscribe. Please **do not** call the school. Information is also posted on the FCPS web site. (www.fcps.edu)

STAYING AFTER SCHOOL

Late activities are held on designated afternoons with late buses taking students home. Students must **prearrange with the supervising teacher and their parent** at least one day in advance of staying after school. Students are required to sign in with their supervising teacher. Students must pre-arrange after school sessions with their teachers or sponsors. All students must be in activities by 2:50. Teachers will send lists to the front office and request bus passes. Students will be sent to the main office to be picked up if they are not in an assigned activity.

After school is an extension of the school day. The Cooper Code of Conduct and the FCPS "Student Rights and Responsibilities" (SR&R) apply to all after school activities.

MANDATORY AFTER-SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS

Student detention session with classroom teacher: Teachers and/or teams can decide upon progressive steps resulting in student assignment to teacher supervised after school detention.

Assignment to Homework Club: Teachers may assign students who have failed to make up tests or other work to these after-school sessions. Teachers may also assign students to our Homework Intervention Program (HIP), when needed, during the day.

Administrative Detention: This is the most punitive detention. There will be no eating, drinking, talking, use of entertainment devices or leaving the room. Students will be urged to use the bathroom or get drinks of water before detention begins. Students must sit silently. Resting or sleeping with head on desk is not permitted.

Cooper Guidelines and Procedures:

BUS REGULATIONS

Bus service is provided for middle school students living more than 1.5 miles from school. Stops and times are designated and adjusted as needed for maximum overall efficiency. To provide the safest possible situation on the bus, it is necessary that all students follow reasonable and sensible safety procedures.

1. Students will have assigned seats.
2. Remain seated while bus is in motion.
3. Follow the directions of the driver and safety assistants to improve bus safety at all times.
4. No shouting or screaming which may distract the driver.
5. Keep heads, hands and limbs inside bus windows.
6. Report all safety violations to driver and/or assistant principal.
7. In addition, the following is **not** permitted at any time on the bus:
 - Throwing objects on the bus or out the windows
 - Possession of water projectiles, weapons or live animals
 - Operation of doors or standing in the door well
 - Bullying, fighting, rowdiness, harassment or smoking

In addition, any acts of vandalism, profane language, and/or obscenities will be reported to the office. Parents will be notified when the safety of a bus is being jeopardized by the actions of their children. Bus service may be suspended/denied to students with repeated safety violations.

LATE BUSES

Late bus service is provided for pre-arranged, after-school activities. **STUDENTS MUST NOTIFY THEIR PARENTS THE NIGHT BEFORE AND MAY REMAIN ONLY IF THEY ARE UNDER A TEACHER'S SUPERVISION.**

Late bus times will be announced after the opening of school. These buses are for students who wish to stay after school to receive help from a teacher or to participate in club or intramural activities.

ALL STUDENTS USING THE LATE BUSES MUST BE UNDER THE DIRECT SUPERVISION OF A TEACHER-SPONSOR UNTIL THE BUSES LEAVE THE SCHOOL GROUNDS.

Students staying after school may not leave the school grounds and return to ride the late bus. A list of late bus routes is posted on the wall in the main foyer and cafeteria.

FOOD AND DRINK

Drinks other than water must be consumed in the cafeteria. Students with early and late lunch may have a mid-morning or mid-afternoon snack in the block designated by their team. Gum chewing is **not** permitted at school. Students who are staying for late activities can buy a snack which must be consumed in the cafeteria between 2:40 and 2:50 p.m. (Times are subject to change.)

CAFETERIA PROCEDURES

The Cooper Code of Conduct applies in the cafeteria. Enter the cafeteria on time, in a quiet and orderly manner. Remain at your assigned table. Obtain a restroom pass from a cafeteria monitor. Passes for academic purposes must be obtained in advance from the faculty member you need to visit. Follow clean-up procedures as directed. When dismissed, leave the cafeteria in an orderly manner.

Consequences for inappropriate behavior in the cafeteria:

Students who do not follow cafeteria procedures will be reminded of the expectations by staff.

Creating a caring and cooperative Cooper

ATTENDANCE POLICY

All students are expected to be in school each day. **If the student is going to be absent from school, his/her parent or guardian should call 703-442-5858 to record a message on our 24-hour Attendance Line.** If a parent or guardian does not call the school, **a written excuse is required.** The written excuse must be submitted to the main office on the first day of the student's return to school. **All students arriving late and/or leaving early must sign in/out** in the main office. If someone else (sister, brother, aunt, neighbor, etc.) picks up a student, they must have a note from the parent/guardian and present a picture ID.

Excused absences include:

Illness of a student, death in the family, doctor/dental appointment, observance of religious holiday, suspension (except for certain substance abuse violations,) approved pre-arranged absence, or other reasons acceptable to the principal.

Unexcused absences include:

All-day truancy, class truancy, missing a ride on the bus, alarm not working, heavy traffic..

Students may make up work for excused absences. However, it is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with a teacher for make-up work.

TARDY TO CLASS PROCEDURES

Teachers will use their professional judgment when addressing tardiness. As a guide, when class begins, students arriving after the door is closed are considered tardy. Attendance must be updated each block in order for the front office to process accurate information. The following is a guideline for students, teachers and administration when working with tardy procedures:

For each quarter:

- ***If a student is tardy:*** A warning will be issued to the student by the teacher.
- ***If tardies continue:*** Teachers will contact parents regarding tardiness to their classroom.
- ***If tardies become chronic:*** Teacher will refer students to administration and consequences will be assigned. Examples of consequences are detentions after school, during school (lunch detention) and Saturday detentions.

Chronic attendance violations that continue after the consequences have been imposed will result in further discipline assignments from administrator.

HALLWAY PROCEDURES

When in hallways:

- Walk in the halls.
- Stay to the right when moving in hallways and on the stairways.
- Do not block traffic
- Keep volume at a conversational level
- Keep your hands to yourself
- Do not slam or kick lockers
- Do not consume food or beverages (except water)

Consequences for inappropriate behavior in the hallways:

- Teachers will monitor student behavior in halls and will inform administrators if students continually fail to observe hallway procedures. Administrators will assign progressive disciplinary consequences to students who repeatedly violate rules.

ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

Quietly enter the assembly with your class while listening for seating directions.

Show respect and appreciation by listening and responding appropriately.

Before standing, listen for dismissal directions.

PROCEDURE FOR LEAVING CLASSROOMS

Class time is valuable. Use time between classes for collecting materials and using the restroom. Use your Pass Card when seeking permission to leave the classroom for personal reasons. Teachers will use the Office Pass to send students out for teacher-initiated errands.

PERSONAL ITEMS

Personal (non-educational) items such as a radio, camera, handheld video games, iPod, and all other items that are not necessary for school use unless noted by the teacher or administration.

According to school regulations, a student may possess a cell phone on school property, however, the cell phone must be out of sight and turned off. Cell phones cannot be used during school hours or during after-school activities without permission from the principal or designee. (Students may use cell phones during the timeframe immediately after school.)

Cell phones cannot be used on school buses without authorization.

Consequences for inappropriate use or possession of prohibited items:

The items will be confiscated by staff and turned in to an administrator. These items must be picked up by a parent or guardian. Other items such as those delineated in the FCPS SR&R are also prohibited and carry mandatory sanctions. (Students and parents should review the information in the SR&R.)

FIRE DRILL PROCEDURES

Students should quickly and quietly follow teachers' directions to exit the building and remain with their own class. Upon arrival at the outside location, listen quietly for directions and roll-call. Students must listen and refrain from talking. When directed, re-enter the building in an orderly manner.

Any student not with his/her class should leave by the nearest exit and report to a staff member.

COMPUTER USAGE

The Cooper Code of Conduct and the SR&R apply to computer usage.

Students may use a computer with their class or with permission from their teacher. Students must always abide by the Appropriate Use Guidelines for FCPS information technology. Disciplinary sanctions will be imposed for violation of these rules.

Remember that your password should be unique and easy to remember. You should not use your name or your student ID as your password and do not share your password.

LOCKER PROCEDURES

Locker assignments and combinations will be listed on student schedules and students can begin using lockers when school begins.

Do: Use only your assigned locker.

Do Not: Give your combination to anyone else or leave your locker on "quick set."

Do: Leave your personal items such as backpacks, coats, hats, and non-instructional items in your locker during school. (Nothing should be left on top of lockers.)

Do Not: Install equipment or decorations on your locker that you cannot easily remove in June.

Do Not: Kick or force a jammed locker.

Locker problems and what to do:

Many lockers will need some adjustment in the beginning of the year, and a specific request procedure will be used to fix broken lockers during the first two weeks of school. After the first two weeks, students will follow these procedures for locker problems.

Lost combination: Go to Room 117/Mr. Fatherree to get combination.

Jammed lock or door: Go to Room 117 and Mr. Fatherree will call for custodial help.

Vandalism or graffiti on the locker: Report problem to main office staff.

Theft of items locked in the locker: Report problem to main office for administrative action. (REMEMBER: DO NOT LEAVE LOCKS ON QUICK SET)

Students who are delayed due to locker problems may enter class excused with a signed pass from Mr. Fatherree or main office staff.



DRESS CODE PROCEDURES

You will be expected to follow the Cooper Dress Code Guidelines and the FCPS SR&R policy for dress code. Parents and students should review this information and direct any questions to their guidance counselor or a grade level administrator.

Cooper Dress Code Guidelines:

School is your place of business. School dress must be appropriate. It cannot detract from or disrupt the instructional program. The following rules apply:

- Hats and sunglasses are not to be worn in the building.
- Some clothing that is “in style” may not be appropriate for the school environment. Girls should not wear shorts, skirts or dresses that are too short or too tight.
- Clothing which promotes drugs, alcohol or violence is prohibited in Fairfax County schools. Clothing which contains inappropriate language or sexual innuendo is also inappropriate.
- Spaghetti straps and tiny tank tops are not permitted. Girls may wear short sleeve tee shirts.
- In general, all clothing should fit properly. If you have a question about an outfit it’s probably not appropriate.

Procedure for Students Dressed Inappropriately

Students who are not dressed appropriately according to the FCPS regulations and the Cooper Dress Code will be asked to cover the clothing, change clothes, or go home.

Borrowed clothing must be washed and returned to the main office the next day. Repeated infractions will result in disciplinary action and parents will be contacted.

RECOGNITION AND INCENTIVES

Privileges will be awarded to students doing the right thing. Currently we provide a variety of ways to reward students for good behavior including:

Periodically “Earned Time” to socialize with grade level peers during the structured study time built into the last block will be granted to students in good academic standing.

Leadership roles in the school.

Student Assistant assignments.

“Good News from School” notes sent home.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES AND NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES

Teachers and administrators will approach discipline as a part of helping students make better choices. Interventions will be progressive.

If a student fails to correct his or her behavior, more formal steps will be taken.

Teachers will inform their students of the specific classroom expectations for behavior and quality of work.

If students disrupt the classroom and interfere with the learning of other students, teachers will impose progressive disciplinary consequences as follows:

- Teacher intervention
- Teacher notification to parent and assignment to detention
- Referral to administration for formal discipline

QUIET STRUCTURED TIME

What is It? Quiet Structured Time (QST) is a block built into our school day to assist students with their organization, study skills and academic assignments in all subject areas. Students are able to utilize this time period to complete homework and to seek assistance from other teachers. QST does not take the place of after school support and intervention. This block serves as an additional resource for students to assist themselves in making sure they have their assignments and are prepared for the following school day.

How long is QST and when does it meet? QST takes place at the end of each day and is 27 minutes long. QST meets every day and is never dropped like the other classes.

Why does QST exist? As stated in the Cooper Middle School mission statement, our focus is on nurturing and preparing our students in order to help them function in the 21st century as informed, productive, and responsible citizens. As students transition away from elementary school and embark on the middle school journey, their academic responsibilities and expectations increase. At Cooper, we believe in a "Raise the Bar" philosophy for all students and our quiet structured time (QST) is an avenue we use to support this process.

QST gives our middle school students multiple opportunities at the end of each day to focus on their school work and receive individualized and small group instruction when needed. Our primary goal with this block of time is to raise the awareness level of all our students about the importance of being prepared for class, completing homework, following procedures and establishing strong work habit for success.

PROCESS: As the school year begins, students are assigned a QST teacher at the beginning of the year. This class appears as Block 8 on the student schedule. As the year unfolds, students are able to shift from one class to the next, during QST, in order to work with other teachers in the building. Students always report to their original QST teacher before moving to another classroom. **In order for students to report to another class, they must have a pass from a teacher.**

2 ways students can move during QST:

- (1) Teachers who would like to see specific students may give them a pass during the day.
- (2) Students may also request passes, as needed, in order to receive additional academic support.

Earned Time: If a student is in good academic standing (understands content, grades symbolize average to above average) and displays appropriate behavior in accordance with the Student Rights and Responsibilities, then he or she may earn the privilege to participate in our earned recreational time.

Earned Time is during Block 8 and is divided by grade levels. It is a block of time where the Cooper faculty rewards students who have earned the privilege to participate in activities with their friends during the Block 8 portion of the school day. The times and places for this earned time are decided upon by the teachers, counselors and administrative staff and may fluctuate throughout the year.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS FOR QST

Student Responsibilities:

Materials—Everyday students will be required to bring their assignment books, a book to read and/or one assignment to work on during Block 8. During the first weeks of school, students must also bring the Cooper Middle School Procedure Guide for review sessions. Other materials will be distributed and reviewed throughout the year.

Activity—Students will check assignments with peers on the team and will utilize the structured time to read silently, work on school assignments and/or seek assistance from another teacher in accordance with the policy. Students are expected to work throughout the session.

Attendance—Students must be on time for Block 8. The school-wide tardy policy will be enforced for this block. Attendance will be recorded on ClassXP. If a student has a pass to see another teacher or counselor they must **first** check in with their home-base Block 8 teacher and have their Block 8 Pass initialed before going to the teacher or counselor.

Removal from Block 8— Students are expected to display conscientious effort in classroom work, conformance to school rules and regulations, and the responsibility not to interfere with the education of fellow students or the orderly operation of the school. Students who are not able to follow these guidelines and the academic and behavioral expectations for Block 8 may be removed from the classroom setting and placed in an alternative instructional assignment.

COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL HONOR CODE

Caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect form the basis for good character. At Cooper, we are committed to a school that promotes and embraces these qualities. We provide a school environment that enhances character-building experiences, so the students can gain a full understanding of the Honor Code. Students are encouraged to demonstrate the personal qualities associated with character building and good citizenship while doing their best and behaving in an honorable manner. We believe the effort each student makes in meeting academic challenges is more important than achieving high academic marks. The Honor Code at Cooper addresses cheating, plagiarizing, lying, and stealing.

Cheating is...

- copying someone else's work
- allowing someone else to copy your work
- using notes, aids, or written materials in any form during a test
- talking, copying from someone else's paper, giving or receiving information by signs, gestures, or deception during a test
- sharing information from a previously taken test

Plagiarizing is...

- presenting someone else's work as your own without proper citations or acknowledgment
- copying word for word, without using quotation marks or giving credit to the source of the material
- failing to use proper documentation and bibliography
- having your parent or friend do a project which is then submitted as one's own work

Lying is...

- making an untrue statement with intent to deceive
- creating false or misleading impressions

Stealing is...

- taking or appropriating without the right or permission to do so and with the intent to keep or make use of wrongfully.

Below is Cooper's course of action if an honor code violation should occur: For each infraction, the student will be required to redo the assignment. For quizzes, tests, and projects, partial credit may be assigned for the grade. For daily homework, a failing grade may be assigned at the discretion of the teacher.

1. For the first infraction, a meeting will be held with an administrator, teacher, counselor and student. At this meeting, the incident will be presented by the teacher who reported the violation. The student will have an opportunity to respond and explain. The parent will be notified of the violation by the teacher when the referral is made to the administrator and the administrator will follow up with the parent after the honor code violation meeting. The record of this meeting will be sealed and destroyed at the end of 8th grade if no further infractions occur.
2. For the second infraction, we will conduct a parent conference, issue an alternative service assignment and place a letter in the student's file that will be forwarded to the high school.
3. For the third infraction, the administrator will enforce appropriate disciplinary actions in accordance with the Fairfax County School's Student Rights and Responsibilities handbook guidelines.

Reminders

Students will...

- avoid situations that might contribute to cheating, plagiarizing, lying, and stealing
- use sources in the prescribed manner
- report any violations of the Honor Code

Parents will...

- have knowledge of the Cooper Middle School Honor Code
- support faculty and administration in enforcing the Honor Code

Teachers will...

- conference with the student
- report the violation to the student's counselor and administrator
- record a failing grade for the assignment
- contact the student's parent or guardian

Counselors will...

- arrange for a conference

Administrator will...

- facilitate Honor Code violation conferences

Student and Parent Signatures

After reading this manual with a parent/guardian, please sign below and keep the guide with you in your binder. It will serve as a reference for you during school and teachers, counselors, and administrators will occasionally ask you to refer to it.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Cooper Middle School Calendar 2011-2012

September 6, 2011	School Begins
October 10	Columbus Day Holiday
November 4	First Grading Period Ends
November 7 - 8	Student Holidays
November 23	Students Released 2 Hours Early
November 24 - 25	Thanksgiving Break
December 23 - January 2	Winter Break
January 16	Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday Holiday
January 27	Second Grading Period Ends
January 30 - January 31	Student Holidays
February 20	Presidents' Day Holiday
March 30	Third Grading Period Ends
April 2 - 6	Spring Break
April 9	Student Holiday
May 28	Memorial Day Holiday
June 19	Last Day of School

Makeup Day Schedule	
Days Missed	Makeup Days
1 - 3	No makeup required
4	February 20
5	April 9
6	No makeup required
7	June 20
8	No makeup required
9	June 21
10	No makeup required