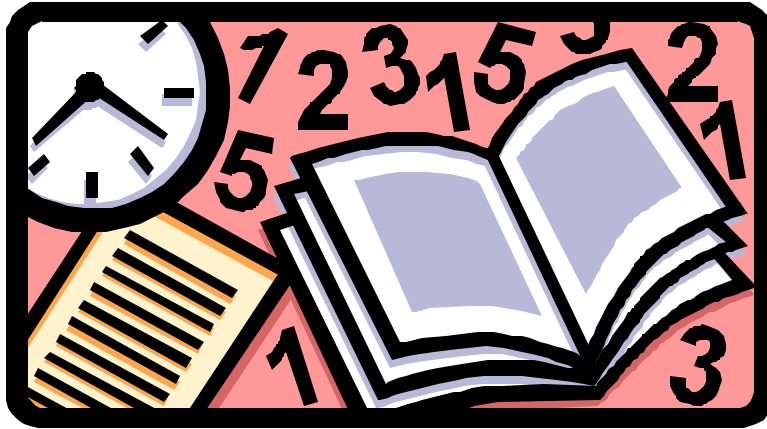


Sparks Middle School
STUDENT / PARENT
HANDBOOK
2003-2004



SPARKS MIDDLE SCHOOL
2275 18TH STREET
SPARKS, NV 89431
(775) 353- 5770

GLOSSARY OF SCHOOL TERMS

ABSENCES:

Parents are asked to call the school on the days that their child is absent or send a note with the student upon returning to school. Any parent whose child will miss a number of days for reasons other than illness or emergency should contact the school prior to the absences.

ACADEMIC WARNING NOTICES:

At the end of the fourth week of each nine week grading period, each student, who at that point, has a grade of “D” or less should receive an “Academic Warning Notice”. This warning notice will be sent to parents with a reason for poor class performance. Teachers are advised to use some flexibility in issuing warnings. If a student’s grade has dropped two or more grades below the previous nine weeks academic grade, then a warning should be sent. Upon receipt of an Academic Warning Notice, parents may contact the teacher to work out a program to improve the student’s academic deficiencies. Teachers are encouraged to maintain an open line of communication with parents. If parents observe a negative change in work habits/attitude, please contact a counselor.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Announcements will be made on a daily basis in the morning. Announcements contain important information for both students and staff. No personal student messages (such as Birthday Wishes) are allowed in the daily announcements.

ATHLETICS/ELIGIBILITY: Sparks Middle School participates with other middle schools in coed cross country, girls/boys basketball, coed wrestling, volleyball, and coed track. All students are eligible to try out for middle school sports. In order to participate, students must meet the following criteria:

1. All middle school students will be able to try out for a middle school sports program regardless of their previous or current grades.
2. In order to participate in a contest (including scrimmages with other schools) students must meet both of the following criteria:
 - a. Establish a 2.0 GPA in both academics and citizenship.
 - b. Have no F's in academics and/or citizenship.
3. Grades will be checked the Friday before the first week of scheduled contests.
4. Once the above criteria is met, students will have a grade check a minimum of every two weeks from the Friday of the initial grade check through the completion of the season.
5. Grades can be checked more frequently than every two weeks to establish a student's eligibility.
6. The 2.0 GPA grade check for academics and citizenship and the check for no F's in academics and/or citizenship is not a cumulative check. It is a measure of the student's performance over the last two-week period of time.
7. A first semester 9th grade pupil will be eligible for athletic competition and follow all other WCSD and NIAA regulations.

These regulations are subject to change.

ATTENDANCE:

The Nevada Revised Statue 392.122 is the basis for the WCSD Attendance Policy and Procedure 5113. NRS 392.122 allows the Board of Trustees to establish the minimum attendance required for promotion to the next grade or earning credit. The WCSD Board of Trustees has established a policy requiring **90% attendance** for promotion to the next grade or earning credit. **See the Supplementary Information section for more detailed information concerning the attendance policy.**

BICYCLES:

All bicycles should be parked in the bike rack yard located on the north side of the school building. The bike rack yard is locked during the school day until dismissal, however **ALL BICYCLES SHOULD BE LOCKED WITH A BIKE LOCK DURING THE SCHOOL DAY.** Bicycles **SHOULD NOT** be ridden in front of the school due to the extreme danger of school buses and autos entering and leaving. While precautions will be taken to secure bicycles while they are parked at school in the bike rack yard, the school district is not responsible for any damage or theft, which might occur.

BUSES:

Parents are to arrange transportation for their child to and from school, unless the student lives in an area designated for bus transportation by the Washoe County School District Transportation Department (353-5900). Riding the bus is a privilege and students are to conduct themselves in a safe and proper manner at all times. Students, who violate safety or behavioral rules on a bus, may face citation or removal from the bus. **SEE CODE OF CONDUCT.** Students who wish to ride a different bus home (friend's bus) must obtain a "Bus Permission Slip" from the office and have it signed by both a parent and a school administrator prior to riding that bus.

CAFETERIA:

All students are required to remain on school grounds during the lunch hour! Exceptions are granted to those students with parental permission who live within a 1-2 block radius of school and whose parent(s) are home during the lunch hour. Prior approval is required and permission is revocable if discipline or tardiness becomes an issue.

A monthly lunch menu is posted in the cafeteria as well as a list of a la-carte items available. Daily hot lunch is available for \$1.75. Every student can set up a lunch account in which moneys can be deposited in advance thereby eliminating the need for students to carry lunch money on a daily basis. Each student will receive a personal identification number (PIN) to access his or her lunch accounts. **THE CAFETERIA AND OFFICE DO NOT LOAN MONEY FOR LUNCHESES.**

CLINIC:

Sparks Middle School is equipped with a small clinic staffed by a clinical aide, located in the office. Unless it is an emergency, students who are ill or injured should obtain a pass from a teacher and report to the clinic for assessment. The clinic is designed to handle minor medical needs *ONLY* and parents will be notified of a student's illness or injury which may require the student to be sent home or needing a doctor's attention.

COMMUNICATION:

Regular communication between parents, students and staff is an important part of a successful and rewarding educational experience and is encouraged at Sparks Middle School. Parents may phone the school at **353-5770** between 7:30 am and 3:30 pm , after which an answering machine will take messages. A parent newsletter is also sent out periodically to keep parents informed of school issues. Joining the **PTA** is also a vital part of staying abreast of your child's activities, school progress and school issues.

CLASS SCHEDULES:

The student's class schedule is created and assigned for the entire school year based on required classes and electives selected by the student. Schedule changes for elective classes are *NOT ALLOWED*. Other schedule changes will only be considered at the request of a parent and must be approved by an administrator and counselor. Parents may contact their child's counselor at **353-5770** to inquire about schedule changes.

CLUBS:

Various clubs and activities are offered for students at Sparks Middle School. A list of approved clubs and activities is published each fall for interested students. Students are encouraged to listen to the daily announcements for times and dates that clubs and activities will be meeting.

CODE OF CONDUCT:

See separate section relating to conduct, discipline and school rules and regulations.

COUNSELING SERVICES:

Each student is assigned a counselor based on the first letter of the student's **LAST NAME**. The counseling department provides services in the areas of: guidance, testing, study skills, class placement, career planning, conflict mediation, mentoring, individual counseling and parent/teacher conferences. In order to provide quality-counseling services, students and parents are requested to make an appointment when needing to visit with a counselor. Students are to fill out a "**Counselor Request Slip**" available from their teachers or from the office, and return it to their teacher or drop it in the counselor's

box located by the office. The counselor will then set up an appointment. Students are **NOT** allowed to drop by a counselor's office during passing time, or without an appointment unless there is an emergency! Call **353-5770** to contact a counselor.

DELAYED START:

Occasionally foul weather makes it necessary for the beginning of the school day to be delayed one hour. The decision for delayed start is made at the district level and is reported on both **radio stations and television** on the morning of the delayed start. **Buses will run one hour later**, but school will dismiss at the same time in the afternoon. Parents may also call the **"Parent Line" at 334-8373** and press 7 then # for information on weather conditions and school delays/closings.

DISCIPLINE:

Sparks Middle School utilizes various disciplinary actions when students choose to violate school and district rules. Disciplinary actions may include Office Referrals, Detention and Suspension. SEE CODE OF CONDUCT

DRESS CODE:

Administration Regulation 5132 of the Washoe County School District governs the dress code for schools. While the primary responsibility for dress and grooming rests with the student and student's parent or guardian, the school authorities have the professional responsibility and legal sanction to require students to change their dress and/or grooming when it presents a potential health, safety or disruption problem at school. See CODE OF CONDUCT for violations and disciplinary actions regarding dress.

FIELD TRIPS:

Field trips serve a useful educational function by allowing students exposure to opportunities that cannot be brought into the classroom. Students are expected to follow the same standards and rules while on field trips that are expected of them in the classroom. Students must have a *SIGNED* permission slip on file in the office before attending any field trips.

FIRE, EARTHQUAKE, SPECIAL EMERGENCY DRILLS:

Routine drills are held throughout the school year. Fire drill exits are posted in all classrooms and students are expected to familiarize themselves with the exit routes. Students are to leave the class in a quiet, quick, safe and orderly manner upon hearing the fire alarm. During a **"Code Red" or a "Code Yellow"** drill, students will stay in their classrooms and follow the directions of their teacher.

GRADES:

Grades are reported four times each school year at the completion of each academic quarter. Report cards are given to the students to take home, with the exception of the final report card, which is mailed home. Grades may also be transcribed in the student's organizer, "The Tracker".

GUESTS:

All guests are to register in the front office before proceeding with business elsewhere in the building. Students are NOT permitted to have non-students or students from other schools accompany them to classes. Non-students will be asked to leave campus and may be subject to arrest for trespassing upon refusal to leave campus.

HARASSMENT:

SEE DISCIPLINE POLICY SECTION AND THE SUPPLEMENTARY SECTION FOR MORE INFORMATION CONCERNING WCSD POLICY.

HATS:

Due to the numerous problems associated with the wearing of hats, including theft, loss, harassment and class disruption, students are requested to leave all hats at home or in their locker during the day. Hats worn to class or during the school day will be confiscated and given to an administrator. Further violations may result in the hat being held until the end of the year or until picked up by a parent.

HEALTH SERVICES:

SEE CLINIC and/or NURSING SERVICES or for more information on **Student Health Services, call 353- 5966. (See Supplementary Information section for immunization policy.)**

HOMEBASE:

All students are assigned a short class called “Homebase”, which they are *REQUIRED* to attend on a daily basis. Homebase provides students with important information regarding school rules and procedures, daily and weekly school events, as well as important information to be brought home to parents. The Homebase teacher also serves as an “Advisor” for the student and helps with the student’s study skills, social and emotional concerns at school.

HOMEWORK:

The administration and faculty at Sparks Middle School believe that homework is an essential part of a student’s academic development and success. Check the Supplementary section for District information concerning homework.

HOMEWORK REQUEST:

Parents may call the office to request that homework for their child be prepared when their child is absent from school for **3 days or more**. Homework will be collected and ready to be picked up from the office by the **next day**.

HONOR ROLL:

A student earns a place on the Honor Roll list by receiving an overall grade of **“B” (3.0)** or better with no academic grades lower than a “C” on the current quarter report card. The student must also have citizenship marks of a “B” or above. A new Honor Roll list is compiled after each grading period.

HONOR SOCIETY:

Membership in the Sparks Middle School Junior Honor Society is based upon a combination of four basic principles: Academic excellence, good citizenship, school leadership and school participation in extracurricular events and activities. Membership is open to both 7th and 8th grade students. The purpose of the Honor Society is to encourage student interest, growth , development and participation in these areas and to award them privileges and special recognition for their accomplishments. To be eligible for membership in the Honor Society, a student must have no academic grade lower than

a “B” and all “A”s in citizenship. Active Honor Society members must meet and maintain these standards throughout the school year. A one-time probationary period is granted if a member’s grades fall below a “B” but not lower than a “C”.

INTERNET USE/ABUSE:

Computers are equipped with Internet access. Inappropriate use of the computer/internet or not following directions during class time may lead to a reduction in student’s citizenship grade, removal from computer class or other disciplinary action. **See forms provided to teachers for student and parent signatures.**

INTRAMURALS:

Intramural activities are held throughout the school year during lunch time. A list of the school year’s intramural activities is published each fall and distributed to interested students. Noon- time intramural sports include: Basketball, football, volleyball, soccer, tennis, etc. Noon-time intramural activities include: Band, computers, drama, memory book, newspaper, student council and various clubs.

LIBRARY:

The library opens daily for student use at the beginning of the first period of the day, and is open during lunch on a first-come-first-serve basis and must be willing to sign the roster and be prepared to stay the remainder of the lunch hour. Students may also use the library after school to check out books. Books may be checked out for a period of two weeks and may be renewed indefinitely unless the book is in extreme demand. Overdue books are assessed a fine of .05 cents per day. Reference books must stay in the library and cannot be checked out.

LOCKERS:

Each student is assigned his or her own locker. Due to the high risk of theft or vandalism students **ARE NOT ALLOWED** to share lockers or put things in someone else’s locker, even for a short period of time. Students **MUST NOT** trade lockers with someone else without first notifying the office and going through the proper procedures. **STUDENTS SHOULD NEVER GIVE OUT THEIR LOCKER COMBINATION** even to friends. The Washoe County School District is NOT responsible for lost or stolen items! Students may bring a pad lock to use on their locker for extra safeguarding against theft. If a locker becomes jammed, students should contact the custodian. **“Jigging”** a locker will result in disciplinary action.

LOST & FOUND:

ALWAYS LABEL (Jackets, coats, backpacks) with the student’s name! **Students should not bring** valuable items to school! If you lose an item, please check with the teacher or the office.

MAKE UP WORK:

All class work missed due to absences is expected to be made up. It is the student’s responsibility to get all missed assignments and return the work to the teacher(s) within the allotted time limit. Students are given ONE make-up day for every day absent. For extended absences (3 days or more) a parent may call in a “Homework Request” to the office. Homework should be ready to pick up from the office the next day.

MEDICATION:

All students requiring medication (prescription and over-the counter) during the school day must provide a **“Consent for Oral Medication” form** signed by both parents and a

Physician. All medication must be contained in a current pharmacy container labeled appropriately. Any changes will require a new consent form. All medication will be kept locked in the clinic. Students are responsible for reporting to the clinic to take their medication at the appropriate time. The school DOES NOT supply any medication, including pain relievers, for student use.

NURSING SERVICES:

Sparks Middle School employs a Registered Nurse, available on a part-time, rotating basis, to provide visual, hearing and scoliosis screenings to students. The nurse is also available for consultation by appointment.

OFF CAMPUS PASS:

Students needing to leave campus during the school day for any reason must first obtain an “Off Campus Pass” from the office prior to departing school grounds. Students must have a note signed by a parent stating the student’s name, date and time of requested leave, or have a parent come into the office to physically sign the student out.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (P.E.):

A comprehensive P.E. program is offered at Sparks Middle School, which all students must take in order to fulfill their academic requirements. Specific course information and clothing requirements will be discussed and given to students to bring home. Students will not be required to dress out the first few days of class. Students unable to take P.E. due to injury or disability must provide a waiver, signed by a physician, excusing the student from participating in P.E. (See **Supplementary Info. for uniform requirements.**)

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS:

The Washoe County School District Board of Trustees has established a procedure for receiving and acting on complaints about an employee. The policy requires that the complainant first attempt to settle the issue with the employee in question. If a satisfactory solution is not reached, you may pick up a “Public Complaint Form” at any school or at the district offices located at 425 East 9th Street in Reno. Complete instructions accompany the form. Questions about the policy may be directed to the **Director of Communication at 348-0371.**

RELEASE OF STUDENT DIRECTORY INFORMATION:

WCSD issues a “Parents’ Newsletter” in the fall to every WCSD parent which includes information concerning FERPA requirements.

REPORT CARDS:

Report cards are issued every nine weeks at the end of a grading period. Students will be issued their report cards following the end of each quarter. The final report card at the end of the school year will be mailed home to parents. See (GRADES).

RETENTION/PROMOTION POLICY:

The Nevada State Board of Education revised the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 389.445 mandating that prior to promotion to 9th grade, students must successfully complete three semesters in Language Arts and three semesters in Math. Also, NRS 392.122 requires 90% attendance for promotion to the next grade or earning credit. See the Supplementary Information section for more information concerning attendance.

STUDENT ID CARDS:

Students may purchase a student ID card for \$1.00. Cards will be available for purchase shortly after school pictures are available. Student body cards entitle the student to attend many school events and activities at a reduced cost. Student ID cards may also be used

for identification purposes at local businesses and activities which require identification.

STUDENT COUNCIL:

Student Council provides the students a “Voice” in school activities and is a valuable experience in the democratic process. Selection of student council members is held once each school year and representatives must maintain an academic grade of “C” or better and no citizenship grade lower than a “C”. Student council officers include a president, vice president, secretary and social director for each grade level.

TARDY TO SCHOOL:

Tardiness to school or any class during the school day is unacceptable. Students who are **tardy to school in the morning** without a written excuse or a phone message from a parent, should **report to the office**. Students with an excused tardy should report to the office for a tardy slip. Chronic tardiness may affect academic grades and may result in detention or other disciplinary action. See also ATTENDANCE and CODE OF CONDUCT.

TELEPHONE USE:

A pay telephone is located in the main hallway across from the office for student use. Students are allowed to use the pay phone during lunch or before/after school **only**. Students are *NOT ALLOWED* to use the office phone unless it is an emergency and the student receives permission from an administrator or office staff member.

TELEPHONE MESSAGES FOR STUDENTS:

Phone messages will be taken for students. During passing times student names will be broadcast over the speaker system. Students can then come to the office to look for their messages in the message window, our version of a Message Board.

If this call is an **EMERGENCY**, the procedure is as follows:

First - the call will be referred to a Counselor

Second - the counselor will contact the student

Third - the counselor and parent will determine best course of action.

TEXTBOOKS:

Textbooks are very expensive and should be treated with care by students at all times! Textbooks are to be covered at all times, and students should write his/her name and teacher (in INK) in the front cover the day the book is issued to the student. Students are responsible for their assigned textbook and may be required to pay the cost of a new textbook should their book become lost or damaged.

“THE TRACKER”:

“The Tracker” is a student organizer that will be available to all students, free of charge, at the beginning of each nine week grading periods. “The Tracker” offers a wonderful tool for organization and maintenance of assignments and progress. Parents should review and sign “The Tracker” each week to keep current on their child’s assignments and progress. Your child’s teacher will provide lesson objectives, daily activities and homework assignments, which should be transcribed into “The Tracker”. Hall passes, extra credit and special teacher designed sections are also contained in “The Tracker”. Students should have their “tracker” with them every day. If a student loses or needs to replace his/her Tracker”, they may be purchased in the office for \$1.00. Students are

limited to a maximum of two replacement “Trackers”.

TRANSFER POLICY: Parent – Initiated, Student Transfer – If a **parent/ guardian requests** a student be transferred to another class, the following procedures should be followed:

1. Parents should contact their child’s teacher and discuss any questions or concerns.
2. If the parent still desires a class change, then the parent should contact their child’s counselor and request a transfer
3. The counselor will contact an administrator concerning the parent’s request
4. If necessary, a conference will be held which may include the following participants: parent, student, teacher, “new” teacher, counselor, administrator
5. An administrator/counselor will make the final decision concerning the transfer
6. If a transfer does result, then the administrator/counselor will make contact with the “new” teacher and provide information concerning the transfer.

Student Initiated Transfer - If a **student requests** a class transfer, then the following procedures should be followed:

1. Fill out a counselor request form in the office.
2. The counselor will review the request based upon needs. Schedule errors will be given top priority. The counselor will either approve or disapprove the transfer request after possible consultation with the student, teacher and parent.
3. If necessary, the counselor will contact an administrator for approval/disapproval.

VOLUNTEERS:

Volunteers are a welcome and much needed part of a successful program at Sparks Middle School. Parents or Guardians wishing to volunteer should pick up a “Volunteer Application” from the front office. Volunteers will need to sign in with the office upon arrival at the school. (See the supplementary information sheets).

WITHDRAWALS:

If a student will be moving to another school within or outside the district, a parent must inform the school prior to the students departure. The student will need to pick up from the office, a school “Withdrawal” form which he/she will take around to each class for a teacher’s signature, grades to date and check off of returned textbooks. *ALL BOOKS MUST BE RETURNED AND FINES (if any) PAID* before student officially withdraws.

WRITING, READING, MATH, and SCIENCE PROFICIENCY EXAMS:

Check the Supplementary section for District information concerning the proficiency exams.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

SPARKS MIDDLE SCHOOL *The Golden Bears*

2275 18th Street, Sparks, Nevada 89431
Telephone (775) 353 – 5770; FAX (775) 353-5585

MISSION STATEMENT

The staff at Sparks Middle School, working with our students and parents, will provide

educational opportunities so that

ALL WILL LEARN...

...to become responsible citizens
in a nurturing environment where

- *Diversity* means strength
- *Knowledge* means freedom
- *Commitment* means success.