



Student Handbook 2020-21

VISION STATEMENT

Hercules Middle School is committed to providing a rigorous academic environment that promotes the educational needs of the whole child.

SCHOOL VALUES

Titans show respect

Titans are kind

Titans take responsibility

Titans collaborate

Titans strive for academic excellence

Titans work harder to get smarter

Basic School Rules, Policies, and Procedures

Students are required to respond appropriately and in a timely manner to any reasonable request given by any adult staff member. It is the staff's responsibility to ensure the safety of every student on campus. Complete adherence to school rules is necessary. Failure to adhere to school and district rules or appropriately respond to a reasonable request may result in disciplinary action.

WCCUSD Code of Conduct

The **Board of Education** states that the behavior of students must reflect the standards of good citizenship demanded of members of a democratic society. Self-discipline and taking responsibility for one's actions are among the ultimate goals of education. The following statements represent policy statements of the West Contra Costa Unified School District Board of Education.

- Students shall obey constituted authority. This shall include conformance to school rules and regulations and to those provisions of civil law that apply to the conduct of juveniles or minors.
- Citizenship in a democracy requires respect for the rights of others. Student conduct shall reflect consideration for rights and privileges of others.
- High personal standards of courtesy, decency, morality, clean language, honesty and wholesome relationships with others shall be maintained. Respect for real and personal property, pride in one's work, and achievement within one's ability is expected of all students.
- Any student who feels intimidated, uncomfortable or threatened in any way should speak with a guidance counselor, a teacher, another staff member, an administrator, or parents. When an incident is reported to us, we will protect the rights and needs of all students by maintaining confidentiality.
- It is important for students to know that the school may take action for any violations of school rules which occur from the time the student leaves home for school and until the student arrives home after school.

It is the mission of West Contra Costa Unified School District, in partnership with staff, parents, students, and the community, to provide a quality educational program for all students. We strive to help students develop the knowledge, skills, abilities, and values they need to flourish and reach their full potential.

We have two purposes in establishing a district discipline plan: (1) to promote learning and growth for students as they develop self-discipline; and (2) to provide a caring and respectful environment for all. Only in such an environment can our children become the responsible young adults of the future.

To achieve these goals, students must understand their rights and adhere to their responsibilities.

Student Rights:

- To be safe. We need to guarantee that students have the best environment conducive to learning.
- To be respected and treated with compassion, courtesy, and dignity regardless of race/ethnic background, gender, age, national origin, religion, physical/mental disability, sexual orientation, family structure, political beliefs, physical appearance, or financial status.
- To hear and be heard; to express opinions, ideas, and feelings without infringing on the rights of others. Communication is essential to support learning, teaching, working, and participating.
- To have their property respected.
- To have privacy
- To be informed about what is expected of them.
- To have fun and enjoy their middle school years.

Student Responsibilities:

- To take advantage of the academic opportunities offered and to strive for high achievement.
- To follow district and school rules and to demonstrate knowledge of all student rights and responsibilities delineated in this and related school documents, and the secondary District Basic Commitment Program.
- To attend school regularly and be in class, in my seat or assigned station with materials out, and ready to work when the tardy bell rings.
- To be considerate, respectful, and non-disruptive in classrooms, hallways, study areas, libraries, cafeteria, and public transportation.
- To respect private, school, and district property, i.e. no littering, no graffiti, no stealing, no extortion, etc.
- To wear safety IDs around the neck, visible at all times, while on campus, and to refrain from altering the safety IDs and lanyards.
- To refrain from using electronic devices including CD players, cell phones, games, etc., at school, except before and after school and to comply with the WCCUSD rule that the use of electronic equipment during class time and passing times is strictly prohibited.
- To dress according to the dress code defined in the school planner and Secondary District Basic Commitment Program. This means no garments exposing the torso; no strapless tube tops; no vests without shirts; no short shorts or short skirts; no garments with obscene or inappropriate words or pictures; no hats or other head coverings; no gang affiliated or related clothing; no see-through blouses or shirts; no low cut dresses; no sunglasses in class unless prescribed, etc.
- To stay off every school campus, other than my own, unless I have explicit written permission from my principal or my principal's designee.
- To understand and accept that the following are not tolerated on campus:
 1. Sexual harassment of any individual.
 2. Bullying of any kind.
 3. Committing an obscene act or engaging in profanity or vulgarity.
 4. Alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
 5. Weapons or other dangerous items.
 6. Fighting, as well as encouraging or instigating a disruption or fight; recording an incident.
 7. Spreading harmful rumors or falsehoods in words, writings or via social media
 8. Disruption; or refusing to respond to requests to leave the scene of a conflict.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:

- To support all students in reaching their full potential by making sure they are in school daily and completing all required homework on time.
- To ensure that students understand their rights and their responsibilities—including students being in class every day and being on time.
- To help the school promote the basic values listed above, and to provide the students with what they need to succeed.
- Be aware of communication and social media interactions between students.
- To protect and nurture all students demonstrating the true meaning of community spirit.

ATTENDANCE

All absences from school must be explained by phone or in writing from the parent/guardian. Call the attendance office at 231-1429 at any time. If no one is available or it is outside of school hours, please leave a message. Please be sure to give your name, your student's name, date of absence, and the reason for absence.

Absences are recorded as Unexcused if not cleared within 5 days. Students who have three or more unexcused absences may be considered truant and will be referred to the SWAT process. Students who continue to have unexcused absences will be referred to the district SARB process.

A student missing more than 20 days of school may be dropped from the school.

Excused Absences:

- Health – absences due to illness, quarantine, medical, dental, optometrist, or chiropractic services rendered
- Observance of religious holiday or ceremony
- Appearance in court
- Employment conference
- Funeral service for member of immediate family
- Special circumstances approved by the principal

Unexcused Absences – Absences that do not qualify under Excused Absence reasons.

Perfect Attendance – In order to have perfect attendance a student must have no absences and no tardies* during grading periods. The grading periods are each quarter. School activities do not count as absences.

***Tardy Policies and Procedures**

If a student is not in their seat when the bell to begin class rings, they are tardy. If a student is tardy, they will report directly to Coach Dave for a tardy pass. The student will present the tardy pass to their classroom teacher. Students with four or more unexcused tardies in any marking period will be referred to the counseling office and assigned an afterschool administrative detention. Students who continue to have tardies after receiving an administrative detention will be referred to Saturday School.

Any student who is 10 or more minutes late will be sent to the main office immediately. The counselor will call home and the student may be assigned an administrative detention.

CLOSED CAMPUS & CAMPUS “sides”

Hercules Middle School is a closed campus. Students caught off campus or in any unauthorized areas of campus without permission are subject to discipline. Middle school students are not to enter the high school side of campus unless for a school event, or when accompanied by school personnel.

DANCES and EXTRA-CURRICULAR EVENTS

Dances are school-sponsored, extra-curricular events. These are a privilege for students to attend. The following requirements will apply:

- No more than 2 days of suspension in the most recent and/or current quarter.
- Dress for all dances must be in accordance with the school dress policy and activities.
- Students who show up for a dance wearing inappropriate clothing will not be allowed entrance.
- Appropriate behavior is expected at dances.
- Students must bring their current school IDs.
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DRESS CODE

Hercules Middle School students should wear clothing that is appropriate for learning as outlined in the district dress code. Students found wearing inappropriate clothing will be asked to change into appropriate clothing.

The following items are not appropriate:

- Garments where the torso is exposed.
- Strapless and spaghetti tops.
- Vests without shirts.
- Short shorts or short skirts. Shorts and skirts must be no shorter than the tips of fingers when arms are held at the person's sides.
- Flip-flops are not allowed.
- Clothing or buttons that have obscene or other inappropriate words or pictures, swear words, sexually suggestive statements or display prohibited substances.
- Headgear and hats should not be worn in the classroom or any building on campus. (Head covering worn for religious, cultural or medical purposes are acceptable. Headbands are acceptable.)
- See-through blouses, low cut shirts or dresses.
- Clothing worn in a manner that exposes the student's underwear.
- Any accessories or clothing that interferes with the classroom academic environment are not allowed. (Blankets, pajamas, balloons, etc.)

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students who have electronic devices are permitted to have them while on campus, but they will not be permitted to use them for non-instructional related activities during instructional time including passing periods. Classroom teachers will determine when non-WCCUSD devices may be used in their classrooms.

If an electronic device is used during a passing period or class, the student will be referred to the main office and the device will be confiscated. The school will contact the parent to inform the parent of the confiscation.

Examples, but not limited to, of electronic devices: cell phones, game pads, digital cameras.

To clarify further:

- Any staff member can take an electronic device.
- If a cell phone/electronic device is used to video students, staff, and school activities and/or such-like, the phones will be confiscated. If appropriate, the police may become involved (as cell phone videos can be involved with crimes).
- If an electronic device is lost or stolen, students and parents are encouraged to file a formal report with Hercules PD.
- Cell phones, headphones, earplug headphones and such-like need to be out-of-sight during class and passing periods.
- It is illegal to record (video and audio) a person without consent (CA Penal Code 632)
- A student who refuses to hand-over a cell phone or any electronic device is in violation of the reasonable request rule.
- Cell phones - if confiscated:
 - First Offense:
 - Device is logged into the Student Service Center and stored.
 - A parent will be notified that the device was confiscated.
 - The item can be retrieved by the student on the same day, but after school.
 - Second Offense:
 - Device is logged into the Student Service Center and stored.
 - A parent will be notified that the device was confiscated AND a parent will need to pick up the device.

- The item can be retrieved by a parent on the same day, but after school.
- o Third Offense:
 - Device is logged into the Student Service Center and stored.
 - A parent will be notified that the device was confiscated.
 - The item is kept for 1 week. At the end of the one-week period, a parent may pick up the phone after school.
- o Fourth Offense:
 - Same as the third, however the student will be required to check in the device each day at the start of school in the office and retrieve the device at the end of the day from the office. Students unwilling or unable to follow the check in procedure will be prohibited from bringing devices on campus.

Cell phone as a camera: There may be circumstances where a cell phone is needed for a class project. In such cases, a student needs to carry a note from a teacher expressing the need for the phone. The phone should only be used for the class project.

In case of an emergency (where a student needs to talk with a parent), the student is to come to the Student Services Office and request to be able to make a phone call. Students are not to make calls without permission. Parents, who need to talk with a student, should call the office. We ask parents not to call students directly (to their cell phones), as this disrupts the educational environment and will result in the student’s phone being confiscated.

Note: Hercules Middle School is not responsible for lost/stolen electronic devices, including but not limited to cell phones, and headphones.

FOOD

Students are prohibited from eating or drinking in the classrooms. Selling of food items, including candy, is also prohibited. The only exceptions to this rule are school-sanctioned fundraisers. Students will be given written permission that they must have available for viewing during sales.

HOMEWORK

Teachers have outlined their homework and grading policies, as well as other classroom procedures, in their Course Syllabus. Parents and students should refer to these regarding Homework/Classwork. If a student knows that he/she will be absent, it is advisable to talk with teachers **before** the absence in order to obtain assignments – this can prevent assignments being deemed as “late.”

For long-term absences, parents and students should contact the appropriate counselor to discuss options. In some cases, Independent Study (through the District-run program) may be the appropriate option (for extreme circumstances we will consider Independent Study through our school).

HONOR ROLL

The Honor Roll is determined based on quarter grades, not semester grades. To be on the honor roll a student must earn a 3.0 or greater GPA with NO D’s or F’s. Any D or F will result in the student not making Honor Roll regardless of total GPA. Students earning a 3.5 or greater GPA will be on the Principal’s Honor Roll. There is an honor roll celebration each quarter.

HORSEPLAY

Often students are engaged in fooling-around that can lead to someone being hurt and/or an altercation (physical or verbal) occurring. Horseplay is not allowed on our campus. This includes play fighting, pushing or shoving of

other students, pantsing, running in the passways, evading other students, throwing objects like water and/or water bottles, or engaging in any behavior that generally disrupts the regular school day.

ID/LANYARDS

All students are required to wear school issued identification badges and lanyards around their necks at all times while on campus. Students are responsible for replacing their ID cards if they are lost or damaged. Students will have a loaner ID available. If a student comes to school without a lanyard, they should report to the textbook room by 8:25am to get their loaner without penalty. The cost to replace the loaner ID is \$5.

LOCKS/LOCKERS

Lockers are provided as a convenience. Students are responsible for keeping their lockers clean and orderly. Stickers, graffiti, or any other defacement of lockers is not allowed. No decorations of any kind are allowed on the outside of the locker. Students are advised not to share their locker combinations with others. Locker assignments, repairs and changes will be handled through Coach Quesada.

Students can go to their lockers at their convenience before school, during lunch and after school. Most teachers have class sets of their instructional materials so these books can be secured at home and do not need to be transported back and forth. Please check with the individual teacher to get information on class sets.

NO EXIT POLICY

Students are only excused from class for the following reasons:

- Medical: a student is ill, or has an appointment that is documented in a letter from the parent or excuse note from staff verifying the appointment
- Admin/Counselor/Clerical: Student has been called for by admin, counselor or clerical staff and has a pass/call slip to verify the need
- Parent: Student will be leaving school at the request of their parents. This request has been verified by a phone call, or note of notification from staff
- Behavioral: Student has been given a referral and is reporting to the counselor's/APs office for discipline, escorted by a Campus Security Officer

PLAGIARISM and CHEATING

Plagiarism and cheating are taken very seriously, and disciplinary consequences will occur. This is defined as taking or lending at inappropriate times (e.g. homework, tests, assignments and other) a person's work, information, ideas, research, or documentation, without properly identifying the originator. It includes using unauthorized materials when testing or other acts specified in advance by the teacher. Plagiarism is cheating.

8th GRADE PROMOTION, 8TH GRADE DANCE, CELEBRATION, AND OTHER EVENTS

Inappropriate behavior (e.g. pranks, acts leading to suspensions and/or expulsions, etc.) can jeopardize a student's opportunity to participate. These events are a privilege.

A student who has 2 or more days of suspension in the most-recent grading/progress report period, and with circumstances that warrant, may lose privileges to participate. An appeal to a non-participation decision can be made through the Principal.

The 8th Grade Promotion Ceremony is for students who have successfully completed 8th grade. Tickets are distributed to 8th grade students for the ceremony. All school fees and fines must be paid prior to a student receiving tickets to the event. Any student with 3 or more semester Fs may not be allowed to participate in the ceremony.

SIGN-OUT (Student)

1. If a student needs to leave the campus to attend an appointment (e.g. doctor) or family emergency/commitment the process is as follows:
2. Students will wait for a parent to pick them up at the Main Office.
3. The parent needs to come to the Main Office, and Sign-Out the student (see Secretary on duty).
4. Phone or written verification is needed for students to be excused/leave.
5. Only parent(s) or those on the Emergency Contact Card are able to pick up and Sign-Out students for such appointments.
6. Office staff will ask for an ID of adults at the time of Sign-Out.

SKATEBOARDS, SCOOTERS, ETC.

Students riding bikes, skateboards, scooters, or anything on wheels to school must have a helmet. It is the law. None of the above items are ever allowed to be ridden on campus (before, during or after school). This includes evenings and weekends. If a student rides a bike to school, it must be walked onto campus and chained on a bike rack. If a student skateboards, rides a scooter or anything else with wheels on campus that item must be stored with a site safety member at the beginning of school and retrieved after the end of the school day.

TRAFFIC

There is major traffic congestion before and after school. After school the turnaround is especially congested. Parents when picking up your students remember that all traffic and parking laws are in effect. U-Turns are not permissible on Refugio Valley Road at the light by the turnaround. School busses need access, and room, to maneuver in the turnaround after school. Designated handicapped and red zones should be respected at all times. The congestion usually alleviates 15 minutes after the end of school, please plan accordingly.

VISITORS

Visitors to our campus during the school day, including parents and volunteers, are to go directly to Student Services (2nd floor of the Administrative Building).

All Visitors wishing to go to a meeting on-site or attend other events during the school day will need to sign-in at the Main Office. Administrative approval may be granted to visitors, and a Visitor's sticker provided. The sticker is to remain on and visible at all times.

Parents who wish to visit a classroom to observe their child need to give 24-hour (prior) notification to the school.

POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS

The West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) is committed to providing a positive school climate that is supportive, and conducive to learning for all members of the school environment. To this end, the WCCUSD utilizes data-based decision making, and multi-tiered systems of support. The WCCUSD believes in creating a District-wide, positive relationship based culture that supports all members of the school district community. This support is grounded in restorative practices, positive behavior, interventions and support (PBIS), and trauma informed practices. This multi-tiered system of support is characterized by active parent engagement and the consistent use of effective school and classroom management strategies. A school climate that sets the tone for learning and teaching will minimize the need for disciplinary measures that exclude students from the classrooms and campus that disrupt instruction.

The West Contra Costa Unified School District's goal is to maximize the learning potential of each student by creating school climates that are emotionally safe, trusting, and nurture mutually respectful relationships among students, between students and staff and between parents and staff. Every student has the right to receive an education in a safe, respectful, and welcoming school environment. Every educator has the right to teach in a school environment in which barriers to learning and teaching are effectively addressed and effective interventions and support are readily available.

Hercules Middle School utilizes Titan tickets to incentivize students to follow our behavior expectations of being kind, responsible and safe. The behavior expectations are outlined for the different areas on campus on the Hercules Middle School PBIS matrix (see next page).



**Hercules Middle School
PBIS Matrix**

	Be Kind	Be Responsible	Be Safe
School Wide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support everyone's opportunity to learn Use school appropriate language and voice level Respect personal space and property Be polite- please, thank you, excuse me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be on time Be prepared with ID and materials Keep your area clean Accept responsibility for actions and work Keep belongings with you and safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep hands and feet to one's self Follow the rules and expectations of the school Follow directions the first time Stay in designated areas
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use school appropriate language and voice level Offer help when needed Give speakers your full attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be prepared with your materials Be an active participant and learner Follow reasonable requests Complete assigned task Use technology responsibly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the classroom rules and policies Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself
Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use school appropriate language and voice level Encourage and help others Respect personal space and property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take care of books and library materials Leave things the way you found them Follow reasonable requests Eat your food and drink outside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep materials under your seat Use technology and maker/crafting tools responsibly to avoid harming others Be a responsible Digital Citizen (visit only appropriate websites) Keep hands and feet to yourself
Lockers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect personal space and property Be considerate, wait for your turn Use school appropriate language and voice level - Keep it low 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check that your belongings are secured in your locker and it is locked Clean up after yourself; throw away trash Listen to and follow directions from all teachers and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter and exit in an orderly way; walk Keep hands, feet, and all objects to yourself Stay in your class' designated area Phones off
Restrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect other people's privacy Keep the area clean Use school appropriate language and voice level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take care of business and then get out Know when to use the restroom Close doors gently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk Use soap and water to wash hands Report issues to staff
Cafeteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean up after yourself Include others in conversations Use school appropriate language and voice level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wait your turn in line, no cuts Eat lunch then play Use the bathroom during lunch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow directions of staff Walk Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself
Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use school appropriate language and voice level Be polite- please, thank you, excuse me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be patient Follow directions Accept responsibility for actions and work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wait in designated area until directed Keep personal space Keep doorway clear