

# Walnut Street Middle School

## Student Handbook



Joseph Mersinger, Superintendent/Principal  
Brenda Thomas, School Secretary

411 Walnut Street  
Delanco, New Jersey 08073

Telephone: 856-461-0874  
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EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING NUMBER: 677

### **WALNUT STREET MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT**

***The mission of Walnut Street Middle School is to provide each child with a challenging educational experience serving the unique needs of each student. We provide the optimum learning environment where safety, confidence, and respect are the norm. Our parents and our community work with us to develop independent and self-sufficient contributors to society.***

Dear Parents and Students:

Please review this Student Handbook very carefully. In addition to making you aware of important school rules and procedures, it also highlights valuable information regarding the services that our school provides. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or concerns. We are looking forward to a great year at Walnut Street Middle School!

Sincerely,

Joseph Mersinger – Superintendent/Principal

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Admission of Students into the School Building

Unless they are in Band or are having breakfast, students are to report to school no earlier than 8:15 am. Students will be permitted to enter the building at the sound of the first bell and will report to their lockers, then directly to their homerooms. Attendance will be taken at 8:21 am on full days and early dismissal days. Attendance will be taken at 9:51 am on delayed openings.

### Bell Schedule

<u>Full Day</u>		<u>Early Dismissal</u>		<u>Delayed Opening</u>	
*BAND	7:30 – 8:10 am	*BAND	7:30 – 8:10 am	NO BAND	
Breakfast	8:00 – 8:20 am	Breakfast	8:00 – 8:20 am	NO BREAKFAST	
Lockers	8:15 – 8:20 am	Lockers	8:15 – 8:20 am	Lockers	9:45 – 9:50
Homeroom	8:15 – 8:27 am	Homeroom	8:15 – 8:27 am	Homeroom	9:45 – 9:57 am
Attendance	8:21 am	Attendance	8:21 am	Attendance	9:51 am
1	8:29 – 9:10 am	1	8:29 – 8:59 am	1	9:59 – 10:30 am
2	9:12 – 9:53 am	2	9:01 – 9:31 am	2	10:32 – 11:03 am
3	9:55 – 10:36 am	3	9:33 – 10:03 am	3	11:05 – 11:36 am
4	10:38 – 11:19 am	4	10:05 – 10:35 am	4	11:38 – 12:09 pm
5 - Lunch	11:21 – 12:02 pm	5	No Lunch Period	5 - Lunch	12:11 – 12:42 pm
6	12:04 – 12:45 pm	6	10:37-11:07 am	6	12:44 – 1:15 pm
7	12:47 – 1:28 pm	7	11:09 – 11:39 am	7	1:17 – 1:48 pm
8	1:30 – 2:11 pm	8	11:41 – 12:11 pm	8	1:50 – 2:21 pm
9	2:13 – 2:54 pm	9	12:13 – 12:43 pm	9	2:23 – 2:54 pm
Homeroom	2:54 – 2:59 pm	Homeroom	12:43 – 12:49 pm	Homeroom	2:54 – 2:59 pm
Dismissal	2:59 pm	Dismissal	12:49 pm	Dismissal	2:59 pm

\*Jazz Band = 7:30 am – 8:10 am on Mondays and Wednesdays; Concert Band = 7:30 am – 8:10 am on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

### District Calendar

The district calendar is available on the website – [www.delanco.com](http://www.delanco.com) – and has been provided as part of the first-day packet for students.

### After School Student Arrangements

Parents should see that children come directly home from school before going elsewhere, unless previous arrangements have been made between the parent and the child. If you give your child permission to go anywhere but home after school, please notify the school in writing. There is to be no loitering on school property. The school will notify parents of bus students, a day in advance, of any after school tutoring or detentions, or seek same day permission by phone. If a student regularly attends an after school activity, i.e. music lessons, CCD, karate, dance lessons, etc., parents should inform the homeroom teacher or Main Office by note at the beginning of the school year.

### School Lunch

Lunch menus will be posted each month on our website. Students may buy their lunch in the cafeteria or they may bring bagged lunches from home. All students must eat their lunch in the cafeteria. No one is permitted to leave the school grounds during the lunch period. Should lunch money or lunch be forgotten, students may charge their lunch **two times**. Payment must be received in cash before additional charges are added. Snacks will be available on a daily basis. However, only those students buying/ bringing a lunch will be allowed to purchase snacks.

### **Student Attendance**

New Jersey State Law **requires** all children between the ages of six and sixteen to attend school **all the days and hours that school is in session**. Absences from school disrupt the instructional process, thereby jeopardizing a student's chances for success. If an absence is for five (5) consecutive days or more, a note of explanation from the child's doctor stating that the child is fully recovered and capable of participating in the school program must be brought to the main office.

Early dismissal is permitted only in the event of an emergency. The child must present a note to the office stating the reason. We encourage all parents to schedule doctor and dental appointments at a time other than during regular school hours.

An accumulation of unexcused absences will be dealt with according to New Jersey State Law regarding truancy. Prolonged or repeated absences, excused or unexcused from school or from class, deprive the student of the classroom experience deemed essential to learning and may result in retention at grade level. A warning notice shall be given to any student who has excessive absences. We encourage you to plan vacations to coincide with school holidays. Thank you for your support and cooperation in this area.

### **Absences**

We expect students to be in school, except in the event of illness. When children will be absent, the parent is to call the school at 856-461-0874 and press #1 to report the absence. Identify yourself, state the name of the child, and the child's teacher, and give the reason for the absence. These calls should be made either the evening before the absence or **before 8:45 am** on the morning of the absence. At the request of the parent, a student who is absent for illness may receive make-up work on the days of the absence. The make-up work can be picked up at the main office. If make-up work is not picked up by the parent, when the student returns to school, it is his or her responsibility to make up any missed assignments. For unexcused absences – including vacations – make-up work will not be provided. A student will be expected to complete missed assignments when he or she returns to school.

### **Lateness**

Students are expected to arrive to school on time. A student will be considered late when he/she is not in his/her assigned homeroom when attendance is taken. If a student is late, he/she must report to the office.

### **School Telephone**

Students will not be permitted to use the office phone to call home for items they have forgotten, including homework. Please encourage your children to come to school prepared for lunch, gym, and other activities that apply. Also, encourage your children to remember their homework.

### **Inclement Weather School Closing Information**

Parents will receive a Blackboard Connect phone call with pertinent information regarding a delayed opening or an emergency closing. Please make sure we have updated contact numbers.

### **Visitors**

Visitors are welcome at the Walnut Street Middle School. When you visit the school for any reason, please stop and sign in at the main office. We will be glad to assist you in any way possible. Our building is locked at all times. Please ring the bell at the main entrance (on Walnut Street) to enter.

### **Affirmative Action Assurance**

The Delanco Township School District, in accordance with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and the New Jersey Administrative Code 6:4 and U.S. Section 504 Rehabilitation Act of 1973, guarantees each student equal education opportunity regardless of race, physical or mental impairment, color, creed, religion, sex, ancestry, national origin, or social or economic status (Board Policies 1510, 1530, & 1550). In

addition, all persons shall have equal access to all categories of employment in the public education system of New Jersey. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Superintendent, who is also the Affirmative Action Officer for the school district.

### **Health Services**

As part of our health services to our students, the district provides vision, auditory, and scoliosis screening. Any questions that parents may have regarding our health services should be directed to our school nurse, Mrs. Thereese Rafanello, or to the Superintendent.

### **Medications**

The dispensing of medication in school is discouraged except when the student's health may be jeopardized without it. The following rules apply:

1. Any medication, prescribed or over the counter, must be accompanied by a doctor's note with dosage—and the medicine must be in the original container.
2. If it is a prescription, the container must include:
  - The patient's name**
  - The name of the medication**
  - Dosage**
  - Time to be administered**
3. If any of the above conditions cannot be met, the medicine will not be administered.
4. All parental notes and related records will be maintained by the nurse or the building administrator.
5. No student is to carry any medication in school or have any medication on school property, such as aspirin, cough drops, etc., with the exception of life threatening illnesses when self-medication has been approved.

### **Injury or Illness at School**

If a student becomes ill or sustains an injury after his or her arrival at school, he/she should report to the school nurse. Under no circumstances is a student to leave the classroom or school premises without proper permission. Parents will be informed by the school nurse whether outside medical attention is needed.

### **Crossing Guards and Safety Patrol**

The safety of your children is the highest priority. Walnut Street students are **only permitted to cross Burlington Avenue at the corner of Walnut Street and Burlington Avenue**. At this corner, we have a crossing guard who can ensure that our students are able to cross the street safely. Crossing guards are provided by the township for those children who must cross Burlington Avenue, Coopertown Road, or Willow Street. All children who cross these streets to get to the school must do so at these intersections and under the direction of the crossing guard. In addition, a school safety patrol, made up of students and directed by a teacher, is on duty daily while school is in session. Since this is a student organization, it needs the full support of all parents if it is to effectively safeguard children. Parents are requested to encourage their children to give the Safeties their full cooperation.

### **Fire Drills and Security Drills**

By law, schools are required to conduct fire drills and security drills. During a fire drill, everyone will hear a continuous pulsating ring of the alarm bell. All students and staff are to walk silently to their designated areas outside the building on Chestnut Street. All staff members are required to bring their roll books with them and report any missing students. Everyone will remain in line awaiting the signal to reenter the building. Students must remain quiet during the drill. During a lockdown drill, an announcement will be made over the PA, and students and staff are expected to follow the appropriate procedures for the drill. During an evacuation drill, an announcement will be made over the PA, and students and staff will follow appropriate procedures to exit the building safely.

### **Student Grades**

Report cards will be issued four times a year, approximately every nine weeks. We use a numerical system in reporting most grades. Students are also marked “O” for outstanding, “S” for satisfactory, “N” for needs improvement and “U” for unsatisfactory, where applicable. Students will be retained in their current grade level if they fail three or more classes in a school year. This applies to students in Grade 8 as well. Students may be retained for failing two or fewer classes as well, depending on the other factors involved in determining the student’s ability to be successful at the next grade level.

### **Grading Scale**

A	93-100	C	75-84	F	0-68
B	85-92	D	69-74		

### **Honor Roll**

To achieve honor roll status at Walnut Street Middle School, students must earn A’s, B’s, O’s, or S’s in all subject areas.

### **Academic Honesty**

All students need to be responsible for completing their own assignments in order to learn the material which is being taught. Copying of homework, cheating on tests, and plagiarizing reports will not be tolerated. Teachers may give a warning the first time a student is caught, but the penalty for cheating will be a zero on the assignment and disciplinary consequences determined by the building administrator.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

Our extra-curricular activities include Field Hockey, Basketball, Baseball, Impact Club, Student Government, Drama Club, and others. The following are the eligibility requirements for extra-curricular activities

1. **Academic Eligibility for Athletics:** In order to be considered for participation, a student must possess a current average of “C” in all subject areas. During the course of activity, the “C” average must be maintained in all major subject areas except that one “D” in any subject will be permitted at the time the activity begins.
2. **Attendance at School:** To participate in any extra-curricular activity, the student must be present in school on the day of the activity.
3. **Suspensions:** Any student suspended for disciplinary reasons will be excluded from participation in any extra-curricular activity during the course of the suspension. A second suspension will result in a two-week ineligibility period for any extra-curricular activity.
4. **Detentions:** Students who serve disciplinary detention on a given day shall be ineligible to participate in extra-curricular activities on that day.

### **Child Study Team**

Special services are provided to children experiencing serious difficulties in school through the Riverside Child Study Team. The team investigates referrals from teachers and makes recommendations for programs for students. The Child Study Team Director of Ms. Patricia Swenson.

### **Intervention & Referral Services (I&RS)**

The Intervention & Referral Services (I&RS) is a school-based group selected to assist staff members with intervention strategies for meeting the learning needs of our students. The committee seeks creative ways to maximize the use of available school/district resources and offers staff members a means of drawing on these resources.

### **Standardized Testing Program**

The PARCC (Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) test will be administered to all Walnut Street Middle School students in the spring. In addition, the NJ ASK (New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge) for Science will be administered to students in Grade 8.

### **Student Planners**

Students are **required** to have their planners with them every day. Students are expected to use their planners to write down assignments, important dates, etc. Students who do not have their planner will be sent to the main office. At this time, students will have an opportunity to purchase a substitute planner or to receive a pass from the office for the day.

### **Lockers**

All lockers made available for student use on the school premises, including lockers in the hallway and locker room are the property of the school. There will be periodic locker checks and general cleaning of lockers to ensure that they are being used appropriately. **Students are required to store their books in their lockers.** Individual combination locks will be issued to each student. All lockers are to be kept locked at all times. Students will not be permitted to go to their lockers during and/or in between class unless they have permission from a staff member or the office. Students may go to their lockers at the beginning of the day, before lunch, after lunch, and at the end of the day. At the end of the year, all locks are to be turned in to the homeroom teacher. The serial number on the lock must match the number that was assigned at the start of the school year, or a fine will be issued.

### **Care of School Property**

Each student is responsible for his/her textbooks and will be required to reimburse the school for damage beyond the normal wear or for loss of books. Book covers must be kept on books at all times. Book covers may not be sticky. They must be removable so that the book is not damaged. Students are expected to take care of Chromebooks, computers in the lab, lockers, etc. as well. Chromebooks need to be kept in lockers, not on the floor or in other high-traffic areas. In addition, students need to report issues with their Chromebooks immediately so that they can be fixed by our technicians. Consequences will be issued for students who are not following the Chromebook Agreement provided prior to the start of the school year. The parents or guardians of any student who damages school property (including books, Chromebooks, etc.) shall be liable for the cost of those damages.

### **Backpacks and Gym Bags**

Along the main hall, wall hooks are provided for the students to hang backpacks and gym bags. Backpacks and gym bags will not be permitted to be placed on top of one's lockers and/or carried into the classrooms. All books and materials needed for morning classes are to be hand-carried to each class. The same procedure will be followed during the afternoon session. We believe that the above procedure will help eliminate the increasing problem of students and teachers tripping and will help maintain order in the classroom and hallways.

### **Internet Usage**

Internet access is available to students and teachers. Our goal in providing this service is to promote educational excellence in the district by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. Students are responsible for good behavior on the school computer networks, just as they are in a classroom, or school hallway. Access is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use will result in disciplinary action. Users are expected to abide by generally accepted rules of network etiquette and conduct themselves in a responsible, ethical, and polite manner while online.

### **Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices (iPods, MP3 players, electronic games, etc.)**

Cell phones must be **turned off** between the hours of 8:15 am and 2:59 pm. Students may use their cell phones prior to the start of the school day and after dismissal. During the school day, students are required

to keep their cell phones in their lockers, which should be locked. Any students using a cell phone or any other electronic device will have it taken away for the duration of the school day, a detention will be issued, and parents will be required to pick up the cell phone at the main office after the school day has ended.

**Bikes, Scooters, Skateboards**

WSMS students may ride bikes to school as long as the school receives a permission form from the parent. Students are **not permitted** to ride skateboards and scooters to or from school. NJ State Law requires students to wear helmets while riding bikes.

**STUDENT BEHAVIORS**

**Authority of School Officials**

Students in the public schools shall comply with the rules established in pursuance of law for the government of such schools, pursue the prescribed course of study and submit to the authority of the teachers and others in authority over them (Reference: N.J.S.A. 18A: 37-1).

The school district certainly acknowledges that parents have authority over their children. However, it is important to note that, with regard to school rules, district policies, procedures, etc., the parent must yield to the needs of the school district. When the child violates the rules of the district, the investigation and imposition of sanctions is not subject to parental veto. School officials’ source of authority is the constitutional mandate to educate the child, which carries with it the authority to do all reasonable things to maintain safety, order, and discipline in school.

**Behaviors and Possible Consequences**

<b>BEHAVIOR</b>	<b>POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent latenesses</li> <li>• Violation of a teacher’s classroom rules</li> <li>• Bus misconduct; walking to school misconduct</li> <li>• Repeatedly chewing gum in school</li> <li>• Using locker at unscheduled times w/o permission</li> <li>• Carelessness with district-provided materials, including books, Chromebooks, etc.</li> </ul>	Lunch/Recess Detention; or Office Detention (depending on the behavior)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using non-district electronic devices (cell phones, iPods, etc.) at any time during the school day</li> </ul>	Office Detention and Parent must pick up the device
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeated misbehaviors without improvement</li> <li>• Removal from classroom for misbehavior</li> <li>• Removal from classroom for refusal to do work</li> <li>• Loitering on school grounds before or after school</li> <li>• Refusing to follow directions from staff or crossing guards</li> <li>• Refusing to follow directions from safeties</li> <li>• Use and/or possession of items that distract others</li> <li>• Misuse of district-provided technology</li> <li>• Profane or obscene language</li> <li>• Hallway misbehavior - yelling, running, etc.</li> <li>• Misbehavior for substitutes</li> <li>• Violation of cafeteria rules</li> </ul>	Office Detention; or Suspension (depending on the behavior)

BEHAVIOR	POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bullying, harassing, or threatening another student, including physical, emotional, cyberbullying, etc.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliberately causing physical harm to another student</li> <li>Deliberately causing physical harm to a staff member</li> <li>Stealing or deliberately damaging another student's property</li> <li>Stealing or deliberately damaging property belonging to a staff member or to the district</li> </ul>	Suspension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possession of drugs, alcohol, or weapons</li> <li>Making terroristic threats – verbal, written hardcopy, online</li> </ul>	Suspension and Police Involvement

**NOTE:** This list is meant to serve as an example. It is not intended to be all-inclusive. All other violations not listed will be handled on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with New Jersey State Law.

### **Behavior Point System**

We have a Behavior Point System at the Walnut Street Middle School. Students can earn or lose points based upon their behavior. This system is in place to make it clear to our students that positive behavior results in achievable rewards.

- Each student starts with 25 points in September.
- Points are subtracted for:
  - Suspension – In-School or Out-of-School [per offense] 5 points
  - After-School Office Detention [per day] 3 points
  - Unexcused lateness to school x 5\* = Lunch/Recess Detention 3 points
  - Other Lunch/Recess detention [per day] 1 point
  - Sent out of classroom by substitute 3 points
  - Sent out of classroom by teacher 2 points
- Activity Restriction** – Students are expected to maintain a MINIMUM of 15 points in order to participate in activities such as Fun Friday, school trips, dances, etc. If students do not have the minimum amount of points, they will not be allowed to participate in the activity.
- Improvement Incentive** – A student can earn back one (1) point for going five (5) school days without getting points deducted.
- Other Considerations**
  - If a teacher sends a student to the office and designates that it is for a “time out,” no points will be deducted.
  - Records of deducted points will be maintained by the dean of students.
  - If two or more penalties could be applied to the same act of misbehavior, the higher point deduction will be applied. [Ex. A student is sent out of a class and is then suspended.]
- Activities to be missed by students on point restriction include (but are not limited to);
  - Field trips [students must have required points **one week** before any trip]
  - Grade 8 End-of-Year Trip [students must have required points **one week** before any trip]
  - School Dances
  - Grade 8 Dinner-Dance



- School Assemblies
- Athletic Activities – as determined by the administration and the coach
- Monthly Fun Activities
- Green and White Week Activities, including Green and White Day
- Grade 8 Graduation Ceremony

### **HIB – Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying**

The Board of Education prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student’s ability to learn and a school’s ability to educate its students in a safe environment. NOTE: A copy of Delanco Schools Board Policy 5512.01, Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying is available on the district website.

Ms. Lindsey Jarzyk is the School Counselor and Anti-Bullying Specialist for Walnut. In addition, the School Safety Team works to develop, foster, and maintain a positive school climate. All of our teachers and staff members have been trained in preventing HIB.

### **Behavior Outside of School**

School officials’ authority to discipline clearly extends to field trips and to school-sponsored activities both on and off-site. School officials do not generally have authority over, or responsibility for, student misbehavior off school grounds when not attending school-sponsored events or after hours. However, under New Jersey State Law, school officials do have the authority to impose school-based consequences (e.g. detention, suspension, or expulsion) for such conduct when they find it to be detrimental to the safety of students and staff and/or district property. This includes behavior that is determined to fall under New Jersey’s HIB (Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying) Laws. If behavior is beyond the authority of the school, the district will contact the police to ensure that the matter is addressed in accordance with New Jersey State Law.

## **STUDENT DRESS CODE**

The Student Dress Code is designed to establish guidelines that assist students in making responsible decisions as they select attire that is appropriate for school. It is important for both parents/guardians and students to understand that the attire one selects has a direct effect on their attitude and behavior. Although the school recognizes the prerogative of students and parents in determining appropriate dress, certain styles of dress are not considered appropriate for the public school. In making the determination of appropriate school attire, the administration has considered three important areas of **modesty, cleanliness, and safety**.

Examples of inappropriate school attire include, but are not limited to the following:

- Clothing with phrases, drawings, photos, etc. which either directly or indirectly promote or condone the use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.
- Clothing with phrases, drawings, photos, etc. which may be considered lewd (i.e. crude and offensive in a sexual manner), vulgar, or profane.
- Clothing that promotes violence, gang behavior, lawlessness, and/or includes hate speech.
- Shirts, blouses, dresses, pants, etc. that display underwear, bare-back, or midriffs
- Exposed undergarments of any kind.
- Inappropriately short dresses, skirts, or shorts
- Tube tops, halter tops, thin strapped or strapless tops, or tank tops.
- Excessively tight, excessively short, or excessively baggy clothing.
- Underwear worn as outerwear and/or baggy pants exposing underwear.

- Hats, bandanas, headscarves, or sunglasses.
- Outdoor jackets are not to be worn in the school building.
- Chain, link, or metal belts.
- Pajamas, slippers, or lounging pants.
- Flip flops, slides, and high heels.
- Any clothing that has been identified as gang-related attire.

Purses, Handbags, Pocket Books – In order to maintain safety for all students, purses, handbags, and pocketbooks must be no larger than the length and width of a textbook. Students are not permitted to carry large bags around the building during the school day.

**Final determination regarding whether attire is acceptable and unacceptable will be made by administration.** Students dressed inappropriately for school will be asked to call their parents for other clothing. If students are inappropriately dressed more than once, they may face disciplinary action.

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**Students** – If you have questions about the Student Handbook, please ask your homeroom teacher or the building principal. We are here to help you be successful!

**Parents** - If you have any questions about this Student Handbook, please contact Brenda Thomas at the Walnut Street Middle School main office— 856-461-0874—and she will be happy to help you.