

2008-2009

Student/Parent Handbook

Gypsum Creek Middle School

P.O. Box 5129
401 Grundel Way
Gypsum, CO 81637

Phone: (970) 328-8980 Fax: (970) 524-7393
Report Absences by 8:30 AM @ 328-8980

Web site: gcms.eagleschools.net

Mascot: Wolves

Colors: Maroon & Silver

Grades: 6th, 7th, 8th

Number of Students: 330

Motto: Goal-oriented, Child-focused, Multi-faceted, Safe and secure

District Mission

Educating Every Student for Success

District Vision

To be a premier Colorado school district.

School Vision

Our vision is to create a friendly, welcoming, caring, and rigorous academic environment in which students develop meaningful and productive lives as members of our society.

School Mission

Our mission is to be goal-oriented, child-focused, multi-faceted, safe, and secure.

Goal-Oriented: All students will increase achievement in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies.

Child-Focused: The needs of students will direct all decisions in policies and practices.

Multi-faceted: All students will increase proficiency in technology, international language, physical education, research skills, study skills, and the visual and performing arts.

Safe and Secure: All students will demonstrate respect, courtesy, and compliance.

All students will feel safe and secure at school.

Introduction

The staff of Gypsum Creek Middle School (GCMS) has developed this handbook in order to communicate the process and programs that support us as we strive to provide the outstanding educational environment our students deserve. Home and school cooperation is essential to our mission of providing a dynamic and productive education for our children as they progress through the challenging years of middle school.

This Student/Parent Handbook is part of every student's school planner. (A student planner is available to every student to use for reference information and to keep track of assignments and events). It is our hope that this handbook provides answers to many of the questions that may arise during the school year. You are invited to contact any staff member anytime you have concerns or ideas or need further information.

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Listed by Section Number)

1. Accountability Committee (SAAC)
2. Athletic Program Information and Sports Contract
3. Attendance
4. Counseling and Guidance
5. Crisis Plan
6. Discipline Procedures and Discipline Profile
7. Discrimination and Sexual Harassment
8. Dress Code
9. Drugs/Alcohol/Tobacco Policy
10. Eligibility Policy
11. Emergency School Closing
12. Exams
13. Fees and Fines
14. Field Trips
15. Grade Cards and Progress Updates
16. Grading
17. Gum and Candy
18. Hall Passes
19. Health Services
20. Homework
21. Honor Roll and Awards
22. Library/Media Center
23. Lockers
24. Lost and Found
25. Lunch and Lunch Recess
26. Newsletters
27. Parent Conferences
28. Parent/Teacher Organization
29. Power School
30. Registration
31. Retention Policy
32. Schedule
33. School Resource Officer
34. School Security
35. Section 504 and Equal Opportunity Notices
36. Standards and Tests
37. Student Supply List
38. Student Teacher Assistants
39. Summer School
40. Textbook Return Policy
41. Transportation and Student Conduct on School Buses
42. Valuable Student Possessions at School
43. Visitors to the School
44. Withdrawal from School and Transfer of Records

Other References

45. Crime Stoppers
46. Editing Checklist and Editing Symbols
47. Final Copy Format
48. Homework Tips
49. Life Skills
50. Note Taking Examples
51. Paragraph Format
52. Pledge of Allegiance and America the Beautiful
53. Six Trait Analytical Rating Guide for Writing

1. ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

The School Accountability/Advisory Committee (SAAC) serves as a sounding board and advisory group to the school's administration in matters related to our yearly goals. The SAAC works cooperatively with the school's administration and the building management council to develop, approve, and promote the implementation of the annual School Improvement Plan (SIP). SAAC meetings are held the second school Monday of every month at 5:30 PM and are open to the public.

2. ATHLETIC PROGRAM INFORMATION AND SPORTS CONTRACT

GCMS offers football, volleyball, boys basketball, girls basketball, wrestling, and track for 7th and 8th grade students. Sixth grade students may also participate in volleyball, basketball, wrestling, and track. Participants must have a physical examination completed by a physician before joining a team. Participants also must have insurance and review and sign a Sports Contract with their parents before competing. GCMS is a member of the ECL (Eagle County League of Middle School Athletics), which includes Berry Creek, Eagle Valley, Gypsum Creek, Minturn, St. Claire, The Vail Academy, and Vail Mountain middle schools. GCMS also often schedules non-league contests with Glenwood, New Castle, Carbondale, Rifle, Aspen, Parachute, Basalt, Summit, Lake County, Buena Vista, Salida, and/or East Grand. Participants must review and sign a Sports Contract with their parents/guardians which includes the following:

1. **Citizenship.** Each athlete represents the school and should exhibit the highest standard of morals, integrity, good sportsmanship, and citizenship both as a student in school and as a citizen in the community. Any behavior that violates this principle is not acceptable. While at school, all athletes will abide by school rules as set forth by the school discipline code. They shall demonstrate the utmost respect to administrators, teachers, and maintenance personnel at all times. A student who receives a Behavior Referral will be ineligible to play in any contests for a week (7 days) from the date of the Referral. An athlete who receives two Behavior Referrals during the course of the season will be dismissed from the team.
2. **Clothing.** Others evaluate you as a person by your actions and by your appearance during every school day, students are expected to dress neatly. On days of events, athletes will wear appropriate team dress as determined by the head coach. No earrings, watches, or jewelry are to be worn during practice or athletic events.
3. **Equipment.** Athletes are responsible for all equipment signed out to them. The athlete will pay for any equipment ruined by washing. Any equipment lost will be paid for by the time of the next event or you will not be allowed to participate in the next event. Clothing will be washed and cleaned for the first practice after each sports event. No athletic equipment issued by the school may be worn except during practices or contests unless otherwise directed by the coach.
4. **Lockers.** No one will be allowed in the team locker room without a coach unless directed by the coach. Athletes will be assigned one locker for the season. The locker will be kept clean and organized at all times. Sanitation is very important to prevent infections, etc. An athletic lock will be issued to the athlete for his/her locker.
5. **Attendance.** An athlete who does not attend school by 12:00 noon on the day of practice or an event will not dress out for that practice or event. An athlete who does not dress out for PE will not participate in the contest, if any, that day. Any athlete who is at school but misses practice (without a note from the parent/guardian) will not participate in the next event; if a note is received from the parent/guardian verifying that the missed practice was excusable, the athlete may participate in the next event, but the amount of participation may be less. If you are going to be absent from practice, notify your coach before practice. An athlete will not be permitted to participate in the next contest after their first unexcused absence from practice. An athlete will be dropped from the team on their second unexcused absence from practice.
Cut-Off: There is a two-day cut-off policy from the start of any athletic team practice. If the athlete does not have a physical completed or proof of insurance on file at school or if the athlete does not come out for the sport during the first two practices, he/she will not be permitted to participate.
6. **Grades.** To remain eligible to participate, an athlete must not fail two subjects or get an unsatisfactory grade for behavior in two classes during a week's grading period. Weekly checks will be done to monitor each student's progress. An ineligible athlete remains so until the grading period the following week. If grades and/or behavior are not raised by the second consecutive week, the athlete will be dismissed from the team. An ineligible student is not to ride the team bus to games but will be permitted to sit with the team if they are in attendance at the event.

3. ATTENDANCE

We believe that attendance is a key factor in student achievement. Thus, any absence from school represents an educational loss to the student. We recognize, however, that some absences are unavoidable. Therefore, this policy is designed to minimize student absenteeism while providing students the opportunity to make up schoolwork missed due to absences that can reasonably be considered unavoidable. Students who miss school 20 or more days in a year may be considered for retention.

Tardies

Students late to school in the morning must bring a note with an acceptable excuse clearly explained and signed by the parent/guardian to be excused and admitted to class. Excused absences are defined as those absences caused by illness, injury, or death in the family, acts of nature, or medical appointments. It is necessary to report to the main office immediately upon arrival. A student will be considered tardy if he/she is not in class when the tardy bell sounds. A warning bell is provided to assist students in meeting this expectation. Students late to class during the course of the day will be subject to classroom consequences as determined by grade level teachers/teams. Consequences for three unexcused tardies in a quarter will include lunch detention for subsequent tardies until timeliness is consistent for 30 school days.

Excused Absences

It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to notify the school office either by telephone or in writing by 8:30 AM when their child will be absent from school. Students may be required to present a written excuse from a parent/guardian on their return to school and will be required to present a written excuse if a telephone or personal contact with the parents/guardians has not been made. Students who are absent from school due to participation in a school-sponsored activity will not be counted as absent. Excused absences are defined as those absences caused by illness, injury, death in the family, or acts of nature. Medical appointments are classified as excused absences and must be verified with a note from the parents/guardians. Parents may request a Homework Sheet before 9:00 AM on the day of the absence, or they can check Power School for the assignments.

Pre-excused Absences/Parent Directed Absences

Parents/guardians may request that their child be excused from school attendance for parent/guardian-directed activities. The following procedures must be implemented to be considered an excused absence. To allow for proper planning, the parent/guardian must make the request a minimum of **five school days in advance of the absence**. This is a district-wide policy. At the discretion of the administration, emergencies may be excluded from this five-day advance request clause. Parents/guardians will then be notified of the student's current status in school and the potential impact of an absence. The parents/guardians will make the final decision as to whether or not to remove the child from school. **Students are expected to complete all make-up work in an appropriate manner.**

Unfortunately it is becoming increasingly common for parents to take students out of school for extended periods of time. Although we realize the value of family activities, we ask that this be avoided whenever possible. The experience of classroom activities cannot be duplicated for students who have missed them and students often fall behind in their work. **Therefore, we ask your cooperation in scheduling family trips during times when school is not in session.** Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences are defined as those absences that are not approved by the parents/guardians in advance and/or those absences that do not meet the definition of an excused absence. Students who have unexcused absences will be expected to make up their work, but will not receive academic credit for that work. Expulsions will be counted as unexcused absences.

Closed Campus

Students will not be allowed to leave the school campus between the time of arrival and the close of school. A parent/guardian may make a written request for waiver of this policy to administration for unusual circumstances that would necessitate the student leaving the campus.

4. COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE

Guidance and counseling services are available to all GCMS students. The guidance program is specifically adapted to the special physical, intellectual, and social needs of early adolescents and is carried out through the cooperative efforts of students, teachers, the counselor, and administration. The guidance program complements and reinforces our quality instruction.

Individual and group meetings are available to students dealing with many serious issues that may come up during the school year. Appointments may be made by calling 328-8980.

5. CRISIS PLAN

A Crisis Plan has been developed through the collaborative efforts of several agencies in the County. The Plan provides information intended to ensure a safe environment during a variety of specific emergency situations including fires, bomb threats, natural disaster, intruders, and civil disturbances among others. Drills will be held periodically for staff and students for evacuation and lock-down procedures. Procedures are planned for communication to parents in the event of an emergency.

6. DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES AND DISCIPLINE PROFILE

The staff and administration of GCMS believe that all students have a right to learn in an educational environment that supports and encourages appropriate behaviors. Consequently, our disciplinary process is developed to preserve rights of students rather than to inhibit them. The vast majority of our students come to

school and display maturity, responsibility, and respect. It is our responsibility to ensure that the inappropriate choices of a few do not infringe upon the learning process.

Our three expectations are:

Use Class Time Productively.

Be in assigned seat ready to work with necessary materials when the teacher begins class. No truancy. Follow directions the first time they are given.

Respect Others' Feelings and Needs.

No cruel teasing, inappropriate language or gestures, intimidation, or sexual harassment. No vandalism. Follow directions the first time they are given.

Contribute to a Safe Environment.

No pushing, hitting, kicking, threatening, or otherwise aggressive physical behavior. Be where you are expected to be doing what you are expected to do. Maintain a drug, tobacco, and alcohol free school.

When inappropriate behavior occurs, the following process will result:

- **Intervention within the Classroom.**

Discipline is typically most successful when handled within the classroom by the teacher. Teacher interventions may include a conference with the student, a warning or reprimand, a reminder of the expectation, detention or work duty, or strategies to modify the behavior.

- **Behavior Concern Report**

If the behavior is such that more significant intervention is warranted, the staff member may choose to write a Behavior Concern report and notify the student's parent. Consequences assigned by the staff member may include detention, work duty, or loss of privileges for a designated time. Parent notice must be through a phone call, email, or a copy of the Behavior Concern form.

- **Behavior Referral Report**

If the misbehaviors persist or if the behavior is such that even more significant intervention is warranted, the staff member should write a Behavior Referral report and submit it to the principal or discipline manager. Consequences assigned by the principal or discipline manager may include all of the above and in-school or out-of-school suspension, a parent meeting, a behavior plan, or a recommendation for expulsion. Parents will be notified by phone, email, or a copy of the Behavior Referral.

Threats and Fights: Any student who threatens another with physical harm or initiates a fight will be suspended out of school and law enforcement will be notified.

Gang Symbols: Any student who wears, draws, or gestures gang symbols will be suspended out of school and law enforcement will be notified.

Habitually Disruptive Students: Students who are habitually disruptive will be recommended for expulsion. A student is placed on a "Step" for each disruptive incidence that results in a Behavior Referral. At Step 3, the student must have a Behavior Plan developed with input from parents and the principal. At Step 5, the student is suspended out of school pending a pre-expulsion hearing held with the student, parent, principal, and the Superintendent of Schools (or designee), and the student and parent must sign a form stating they are aware that the next step will result in an expulsion hearing. At Step 6, the student will be suspended out-of-school pending an expulsion hearing with the Superintendent. Students who have a Step 3 Behavior Plan will begin the next school year at Step 3.

Searches: When reasonable grounds for a search exist, the principal may search a student or his/her property, including lockers, backpacks, binders, clothing, and coats.

Code of Conduct (Policy JICDA): The principal may suspend or recommend expulsion of a student who engages in one or more of the following specific activities while in school buildings, on school grounds, in school vehicles, or during a school-sponsored activity and in certain cases when the behavior occurs off school property. Suspension or expulsion shall be mandatory for serious violations.

1. Causing or attempting to cause damage to school property or stealing or attempting to steal school property of value.
2. Causing or attempting to cause damage to private property or stealing or attempting to steal private property.
3. Commission of any act which is committed by an adult would be robbery or assault as defined by state law. Expulsion shall be mandatory with state law except for commission of third degree assault.
4. Violation of criminal law which has as immediate effect on the school or on the general safety or welfare of students or staff.
5. Violation of district policy or building regulations.

6. Violation of the district's policy on dangerous weapons in the schools. Expulsion shall be mandatory for carrying, bringing, using, or possessing a dangerous weapon without the authorization of the school or school district, in accordance with state law.
7. Violation of the district's alcohol use/drug abuse policy. Expulsion shall be mandatory for sale of drugs or controlled substances, in accordance with state law.
8. Violation of the district's smoking and use of tobacco policy.
9. Violation of the district's policy on sexual harassment.
10. Throwing objects unless part of a supervised school activity that can cause bodily injury or damage property.
11. Directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward other students, school personnel, or visitors to the school.
12. Engaging in verbal abuse, i.e., name calling, ethnic or racial slurs, or derogatory statements addressed publicly to others that precipitate disruptions of the school program or invite violence.
13. Committing extortion, coercion or blackmail, i.e., obtaining money or other objects of value from an unwilling person or forcing an individual to act through the use of force or treat of force.
14. Lying or giving false information, either verbally or in writing, to a school employee.
15. Scholastic dishonesty which includes but is not limited to cheating on a test, plagiarism, or unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work.
16. Continued willful disobedience or open and persistent defiance of proper authority including deliberate refusal to obey a member of the school staff.
17. Behavior on or off school property which is detrimental to the welfare, safety, or morals of other students or school personnel.
18. Repeated interference with the school's ability to provide educational opportunities to other students.
19. Engaging in "hazing" activities, i.e., forcing prolonged physical activity, forcing excessive consumption of any substance, forcing prolonged deprivation of sleep, food, or drink, or any other behavior which recklessly endangers the health or safety of an individual for purposes of initiation into any student group.
20. Violation of the District's dress code policy
21. Violation of the District's policy of student expression.
22. Making a false accusation of criminal activity against a District employee to law enforcement or to the District.

Credit for Work Completed While Suspended

Suspended students shall be provided an opportunity to make up schoolwork during the period of suspension, so the student is able to reintegrate into the educational program of the school following the period of suspension. Full credit may be obtained for completion of tests and other assignments. Students will be allowed one day to make up tests/assignments for each day that they missed.

7. DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Any GCMS student who feels that they have been discriminated against because of their sex, ethnic origin, sexual identity, or for any reason which makes them feel uncomfortable, different, or "singled out" should report the matter to an administrator, counselor, or other adult at GCMS with whom they feel safe so the issue can be resolved.

8. DRESS CODE

The following guidelines are given for the health and well being of all students:

1. Footwear must be worn at all times.
2. Clothes must be clean and neat and must meet reasonable standards of health and hygiene.
3. Extremes are not permitted (swimwear, bare chests or stomachs, halter tops, spaghetti straps, vulgar or offensive printing, excessively low pants or shirts, excessively short shorts/dresses/skirts, excessively loose arm holes).
4. Nothing that could damage school property may be worn.
5. No hats or scarves (including caps, ski hats, visors, bandanas, or other head coverings) are to be worn inside the building.
6. No clothing advocating controlled substances (e.g., marijuana or alcohol) or promiscuity (e.g. "sexy" or "foxy") or gang affiliation (e.g. "SUR 13, South Side," bandanas) is allowed.
7. Coats and jackets (including zippered sweatshirts) are not to be worn in classes.

Students who wear something inappropriate will be asked to change or given a shirt or pants to wear for the day. Students who disregard this dress code three times will be issued a Behavior Referral and consequences may include wearing a uniform. This dress code also applies on dress-up days; i.e., athletic events, Continuation, performances, and other special occasions. Any student who wears, draws, or gestures gang symbols will be suspended out of school and law enforcement will be notified.

9. DRUGS/ALCOHOL/TOBACCO (Policy JICH)

The Eagle County School District recognizes the importance of early intervention. It is the goal of the school staff to identify student drug and alcohol-related problems at the earliest possible time so that a proactive problem-solving approach can be taken. All decisions will focus on what is best for the long-term development of the student, on adherence to Colorado law, and on the need of Eagle County School District to maintain an orderly program for all students.

The three most common offenses on the part of a student are intoxication with drugs or alcohol, possession of drugs or alcohol on school property, or dealing (selling) drugs or alcohol to others on school property.

Intoxication: If, in the opinion of school officials, there is cause to believe that a student is under the influence of drugs or alcohol at school during school hours or at a school-sponsored event, the student will be confronted by a school official, removed from the setting, and told that the parents/guardians will be informed. A school official will attempt to contact the parents/guardians who will be asked to take the student home. The parents/guardians may be advised that it would be helpful if the student was to receive a complete physical examination to determine if a problem exists and if so, the extent of the problem.

Both the student and the parents/guardians will be informed that the administration of a medical examination by a doctor or mechanical analysis of the student's breath by a doctor, the administration or designee is a possibility in situations where the safety of the student is in question. Options available to the administrator include out-of-school suspension, in-school suspension, and/or counseling. The administrator may contact law enforcement officials.

Possession: If a student is found to be in possession of drugs or alcohol on school property or at a school-sponsored event, the parents/guardians will be notified as soon as possible and efforts made to schedule a parent/guardian/school conference. Law enforcement officials may be notified of the offense as soon as possible and potential evidence turned over to them. The building administrator has the discretion to react to this offense in an appropriate manner, including out-of-school suspensions, in-school suspension, and/or counseling.

Dealing: In all cases where a student is found to be distributing drugs or alcohol to others, law enforcement officials will be notified. Parents/guardians of the student will be notified as soon as possible, and the student will be suspended from school pursuant to the provisions of Colorado Law and Board Policy, which may lead to expulsion of the student from school. School officials will attempt to establish and maintain a positive relationship with local law enforcement officials. When school district officials interact with law enforcement agencies involving the suspected offense of a student, the well being of the student is considered as a high priority.

Tobacco: Student possession and/or use of any tobacco product on school grounds are absolutely forbidden and will result in immediate communication with parents/guardians and out-of-school suspension.

10. ELIGIBILITY POLICY

Student involvement in after school activities is strongly encouraged as it contributes to the development of the overall individual. Students should realize that their behavior and academic performance during the regular school day will affect their participation in after school activities. To remain eligible to participate, a student must not fail two subjects or get a Behavior Referral during the week. In order to promote the ideal of good citizenship and academic achievement the following rules have been established.

1. **Citizenship:** Each student represents the school and should exhibit high standards of citizenship. Behaviors that violate this principle are not acceptable. To remain eligible to participate, a student may not receive a Behavior Referral. An ineligible student will not participate in pepfests, dances, STUCO, or sports.
2. **Grades:** Academic performance is monitored every Monday and the calculation of grades is cumulative for the marking period. An ineligible student remains ineligible until Monday of the following week. **A notice of ineligibility will be mailed to the student's home each week.** Students who are ineligible 2 weeks in a row because of grades will not participate in pepfests, dances, STUCO, or sports.

11. EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

Local radio stations will carry announcements of school closings as soon as they are available.

12. EXAMS

The completion of midyear exams and final exams are required for most courses. It is the students' responsibility to take these exams before they receive credit for the specific course(s) in which they are enrolled. A student who has not taken a required exam will receive a grade of "Incomplete" until this obligation is fulfilled.

13. FEES AND FINES

The District requires students to pay for expendable materials above the basic requirement, athletic/activity fees, and miscellaneous fees for field trips. Please send payment to the office. The fees are as follows for participants: Art fee = \$10. Athletic fee = \$20 per year. Shop fee = \$10. Technology fee = \$5 (all students are required to pay a tech fee). Lunch = \$3.00 per meal. Please note that students will be billed for damaged or missing books, locks, uniforms, and equipment.

14. FIELD TRIPS

Parent/guardian permission forms for all students must be signed and on file in the school office 24 hours prior to leaving on the field trip. No student will be denied a field trip experience because he/she is not able to pay any associated fee(s).

15. GRADE CARDS AND PROGRESS UPDATES

Report cards are issued at the end of each trimester. Report cards are given to parents/guardians at Parent/Teacher Conferences when scheduled or mailed home when there are no conferences scheduled. Grade printouts that specify grades for every assignment, project, test and quiz will be sent home with students for core subjects every second and fourth Tuesday. Parents can also check student grades on Power School.

16. GRADING POLICY

All assignments, projects, tests, quizzes, participation, and effort grades will be based on a percentage system. Grade Sheets are sent home with students every 2nd and 4th Tuesday. Grades are also posted on Power School daily. Grades are posted in each classroom and updated weekly. Grades will not be sent home or faxed weekly unless this is a legal accommodation. Parents are invited to come in as often as they wish to check grades.

Grade Scale

90% -100% = A = 4 points on the grade card.

80% - 89% = B = 3 points on the grade card.

70% - 79% = C = 2 points on the grade card.

60% - 69% = D = 1 point on the grade card.

0% - 59% = F = 0 points on the grade card.

Make Up Work

Students will be allowed one day to make up daily assignments for each day that they have missed. If an assignment is made prior to the absence, it is still due on the due date unless otherwise arranged with the teacher.

The student will be responsible for insuring that make-up work is completed in a timely and quality manner. It will be the responsibility of the student to request make-up work and arrange for completion due dates. It should also be understood that there are things that happen in a classroom that are experiential and cannot be made up. Students and parents/guardians must accept the natural consequences of missing classes.

Late Work

Credit for late work will be as follows. 6th and 7th Grade: One day late equals 10% off, two days late equals 50% off, and three or more days late equals no credit but the student is still expected to complete the work. 8th grade: One day late equals 10% off, two or more days late equals no credit but the student is still expected to complete the work.

Extra Credit and Re-dos

Teachers may allow students to do extra credit work or re-do certain assignments for improved grades. Arrangements for extra credit and re-dos are determined by the teacher.

Writing "Name, Date, Assignment" on Papers

Every student is expected to write their name, the date, and the assignment in the upper right hand corner of every assignment. If they do not they will lose points for their grade. This is very important for grading and record keeping for both the student and the teacher.

17. GUM AND CANDY

Chewing gum is not permitted in any class. In addition to the rudeness and distraction of gum chewing, it poses a trash problem. Even with the rule in place, we have a problem with gum stuck where it shouldn't be (under tables and chairs, on walls, in carpet) and wrappers not thrown in the trash. Please abide by our "no gum" rule. Sometimes teachers allow candy or snacks in the classroom, but candy and snacks should not leave the classroom.

18. HALL PASSES

The use of hall passes is practiced throughout GCMS in order to monitor students who are out of the classroom. Students are responsible for always carrying a hall pass or bathroom pass when in the hallways and not under direct supervision of a teacher.

19. HEALTH SERVICES

First Aid: If a student is injured and first aid of any sort is required, parents/guardians may be telephoned or will be contacted in an appropriate manner. Parents/guardians typically will not be contacted for simple scratches/cuts that require a simple bandage but will be contacted if the severity of the injury warrants. If the injury is severe or if there appears to be severe pain, the administrator or his designee will call for an ambulance or a doctor. An accident report form will be completed for all accidents that occur on the school premises that necessitate an adult's attention.

Medication:

1. If the child is to receive over-the-counter medication the medication **must** be sent to school in a manufacturer's labeled bottle and **must** be accompanied by a letter signed by the parent/guardian authorizing school personnel to dispense the medicine. The letter must include the amount and time it is to be given.
2. If the medication is prescribed, a completed medication form signed by the parents/guardians must accompany the medication. The medication must be in a pharmacy bottle labeled with:
 - a. Current date
 - b. Student's name
 - c. Name of medication
 - d. Directions
 - e. Licensed Colorado prescriber's name
3. Written parent/guardian permission stating dosage and directions should be on file in the school nurse's office. Medications must be securely kept in a locked place in the office. No medication should be in a student's possession at school. With parent/guardian permission and physician's authorization, a student with asthma may carry their inhaler.

Immunizations: It is the policy of the Eagle County School District that all students have the proper immunization records. The immunization record is to be filed with the school nurse upon entry. Per the Colorado Immunization Law, all 7th graders must have had two measles doses, two mumps doses, and two rubella doses before entering school for the year. Also, all students in 7th grade must provide proof of hepatitis series B (3) immunization.

Communicable Disease Procedures: While risk of one student infecting another is very low, the procedures for reducing the potential for transmission of blood borne infectious agents should include the following:

- The bleeding must be stopped, the open wound covered, and if there is excessive amount of blood on the clothes, they must be changed before the student returns to class.
- Gloves or other precautions are to be routinely used to prevent skin and mucous membrane exposure when contact with blood or other body fluids is anticipated.
- Immediately wash hands and other skin surfaces if in contact with blood and other body fluids.
- Clean all contaminated surfaces and equipment with an appropriate disinfectant before use continues.
- Anyone with bleeding or oozing skin conditions should refrain from contact with others' blood and body fluids.

Insurance: Information on student insurance will be distributed to each student during registration.

Parents/guardians wishing to purchase the insurance are to send the form with their check made out to the company designated. The school does not carry insurance on students or student possessions.

20. HOMEWORK

Homework Policy

The purpose of homework is to complete unfinished classroom assignments, to accomplish independent work on research projects, to develop and improve study habits, to provide practice in order to strengthen skills introduced in the classroom, and to extend the enjoyable aspects of learning. Research shows that students who complete homework regularly increase their academic skills and are more likely to be proficient in reading, writing, and math.

Teachers collaborate to assign the following amounts of homework 4 times a week: an **average** of 40-50 minutes for 6th grade; an **average** of 60-90 minutes for 7th grade; and an **average** of 60-90 minutes for 8th grade. The "averages" are estimated based on work done at home in a focused, quiet environment. Special homework assignments may be given over the weekends for students needing to make up work. Reading can be an expectation every day. Frequently, time is given in class to begin homework. Some students use this time differently than others, so the amount of homework may vary from student to student.

Extra Homework Time at School

Some students have difficulty completing homework at home. Many teachers are willing to provide a quiet place at school before and after school hours for students to work on assignments. If you are interested in this, contact your child's teacher or the principal to discuss an arrangement.

Writing "Name, Date, Assignment" on Papers

Every student is expected to write their name, the date, and the assignment in the upper right hand corner of every assignment. If they do not they will lose points for their grade. This is very important for grading and record keeping for both the student and the teacher.

21. HONOR ROLL AND AWARDS

Each trimester, students may qualify to be placed on the Honor Roll. A two-tiered Honor Roll system is established. The first tier is entitled **Honor Roll** and is for students who have achieved a grade point average of 3.5 to 3.99. The second is entitled **4.0 Honor Roll** and is a special standing for those students who have achieved a 4.0 G.P.A. Both Honor Rolls are published in the local newspaper.

During the third trimester, students who have earned a cumulative grade point average of 3.8 or higher are honored at an **Academic Tea**. Also during the third trimester, students who have earned recognition in each subject area in each grade are honored at an **Honors Day** ceremony. Other means of special recognition include **Perfect Attendance** awards, and **Wolf Award** certificates. Honorees are listed in the display case by the gym.

22. LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER POLICIES

The purpose of the Library/Media Center is to help the students become independent, life-long learners and users of the library/media center. Students will be exposed to a variety of media and skills in utilizing the library/media center. Books may be checked out for a two-week loan period and may be renewed for one week. Students will be personally notified of overdue items periodically throughout the school year. Students will be fined for damaged or lost books.

23. LOCKERS

Lockers are assigned to students at the beginning of the year. To safeguard possessions, **students should keep their combinations private.** It is each student's responsibility to keep the locker in good condition, and if any problems come up, to report them to the office. The principal has the right to search lockers, if necessary, to maintain the integrity of the school environment and to protect all students. Students must use the locker assigned to them.

24. LOST AND FOUND

Students are to assume direct responsibility for all personal items and for items issued to them by the school. Please mark items, such as coats, with a nametag. Be aware that textbooks, locks, athletic uniforms, etc. must be paid for if lost or damaged. A lost and found area is located in the hall. Articles not claimed at the end of each trimester will be given to charity.

25. LUNCH AND LUNCH RECESS

Lunch will be served every school day. Each grade level will eat separately. Each lunch period is 33 minutes. Students should bring their lunch checks (for their lunch account) into the office before 8:30AM.

Lunch is a time for "nutrient recharge", socializing, and play. The following rules are designed to maintain an orderly and efficient lunchroom as well as a safe recreation area outside:

Inside Rules

Sit down when you arrive
Line up only when the supervisor says
Line up in a safe and orderly manner
No throwing food
Make sure your table is cleaned up
Students need a pass to enter the hall
Stay at your table until you are dismissed
Follow the requests of the supervisor

Outside Rules

Stay within the school field and blacktop areas
Students need a pass to enter the halls
All people can play in any game
PE equipment is off limits
Keep glass and food inside
No rough play
No snowballs
Follow the requests of the supervisor

Trash is a problem. Therefore, no food or drink will be permitted outside.

26. NEWSLETTERS

Newsletters describing studies and events from teachers will be sent home with students each trimester. A separate monthly newsletter will be mailed home from the GCMS office during the first week of each month, September through May.

27. PARENT CONFERENCES

Teachers have planning time set aside each day and parents/guardians are encouraged to contact teachers by phone or email as deemed appropriate. Parent/Teacher conference times are set each year near the end of October and near the beginning of February so that communication with each teacher can be maintained for each student's maximum growth. Many questions can be answered by checking Power School.

28. PARENT/TEACHER ORGANIZATION

Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings are held on the second Monday each month at 6:00 p.m. Notice of meetings is included in the monthly newsletters and sent to the local newspapers. Parents can call 328-8980 for the next meeting time. All parents/guardians and teachers are invited to attend without cost or obligation in order to become better informed about programs and activities at GCMS as well as to share ideas and concerns.

29. POWER SCHOOL (ps.eagleschools.net/public)

Parents and students can check grades, assignments, and class information on-line any time from anywhere using a system called Power School. The school district office will mail letters to all GCMS parents with a user name and password and directions to access Power School. The website is ps.eagleschools.net/public. If you do not get a letter, if you misplace your information, or if you need help with the process, give us a call and we can assist you. Our parents who check Power School give many enthusiastic positive comments about this communication and information system.

30. REGISTRATION

Parents/guardians of new students should call the office at 328-8980 to schedule a time to enroll at GCMS. The following information is needed: previous school records, birth certificate and social security card, immunization records, proof of residency, and documentation of special needs. At the time of registration, a release of information form must be signed by parents/guardians so the student's previous school can send us records.

At a minimum, students must be registered one day prior to their first day of attendance. Peer helpers will welcome students on their first day and provide a tour of the building and introduce the new student to their teachers and classmates.

31. RETENTION POLICY

The philosophy of the Eagle County School District is to be sensitive to individual student needs, to identify deficiencies early, to take corrective actions, to enlist parental support, to help students learn to be responsible and accountable, and to retain students only in appropriate instances. Consideration for retention should include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Instances where the student evidences below average maturity in the physical, emotional, and/or cognitive areas of development.
2. Instances where the student is younger than the average age of his/her classmates.
3. Instances where the student evidences below average acquisition of skills, attention span, and/or related time on task; cooperativeness in acceptance of and completion of tasks may also be considered.
4. Instances where the student evidences excessive absences from school (20 or more cumulative days of absence during a school year). State law states the requirement of the minimum hours of school attendance. The general health of the student should be considered in relation to the absenteeism.
5. Instances where there is parental support for the decision to retain the student.

The GCMS Retention Process

1. Soon after the end of the first trimester, the counselor or principal will contact the parents of students who have earned two D's or worse in core classes. The purpose of this contact is to make the parents aware of the student's educational problems and the possible consideration of retention.
2. Near the beginning of the first trimester, the principal will meet with all students who have earned two Ds or worse to describe the GCMS retention process and to encourage them to complete their homework with good quality.
3. During the first half of the second trimester, students who have earned two Ds or worse will be discussed at a team meeting attended by the teachers, the principal, and the counselor. The discussion for each student will include consideration of up to 25 factors about retention.
4. During the second trimester, a letter will be mailed to every student who is being considered for retention. This letter will explain the GCMS retention policy, why the student is being considered, and suggestions for improving the grades.
5. After the second trimester, a letter will be mailed to each student who has been considered. The letter will be an update of the student's status – either their grades improved and they are no longer at risk or their grades continue to put them at risk of retention.
6. A meeting for each student who would be retained if they fail 2 or more core classes will be held during the first half of the third trimester. The parents/ guardians and the student will be invited and should be present. At this meeting, an educational plan will be formulated detailing if and how the student may eliminate the need for retention. The meeting will be held even if the parents/guardians decline to attend.
7. If a student is not successful in meeting the goals of the educational plan and is failing two (2) or more core subjects, a conference (at school or by phone) will be held during the last week of school by the principal with the student regarding the final decision for retention. The final decision regarding the retention of a student will rest with the principal. There will be no conditional retentions or promotions.
8. A letter of retention or social promotion will be mailed to the parents and a copy placed in the student's cumulative file.

32. SCHEDULE

Classes begin at 8:30 and end at 3:50 Monday through Friday. Students are not to enter the building before 8:00 AM or be in the building after 4:00 PM unless they have an appointment to meet with a teacher, are

participating in an organized school activity, or arrangements have been made to do so. The daily schedule includes five core classes (math, language arts, reading, science, and social studies), two specials' classes (such as PE, library, shop, computers, fitness, word processing, music, art, or band), and lunch. See the Student Schedule (earlier page) for more information.

33. SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

The Eagle County Sheriff's Office (ECSO) provides a School Resource Officer to assist the district schools with truancy, violence, suspected abuse, educational presentations for students, mediations between families and students, background reports, the School Crisis Plan, and training for staff. The School Resource Officer for GCMS is Deputy Tad Degen.

34. SCHOOL SECURITY

The only doors that are unlocked during the day are the front doors. All visitors are to sign in at the office, and everyone must pass by the office windows. Strangers who do not report are confronted. Students and staff practice lock-down drills 3 to 5 times and fire drills monthly during the year. A Crisis Response Plan that specifies our response for a variety of crises is on hand in the office and in each classroom. Students are supervised during all times when school is in session.

35. SECTION 504 AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY NOTICES

Section 504. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibit discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving federal financial assistance. Section 504 defines a person with a disability as anyone whom:

1. Has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working;
2. Has a record of such impairment; or
3. Is regarded as having such impairment.

The school district has the responsibility to provide adjustments and services to eligible individuals with disabilities. The Eagle County School District acknowledges its responsibility under Section 504/ADA to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and students. No discrimination against any person with a disability shall knowingly be permitted in any program or practice in the school district.

Equal Opportunity. Eagle County School District Re50J is an equal opportunity educational institution and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its educational programs or activities. Inquiries concerning Title VI, Title XI, section 504, and ADA may be referred to the Assistant Superintendent, Eagle County School District, P.O. Box 740, Eagle, CO 81631, (970) 328-6321 X15.

El Distrito Escolar del Condado de Eagle Re50J es una institucion educacional de oportunidad de igualdad y no discrimina ilcitadamente sobre la base de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo, o desabilidad en admision o acceso a , o trato de empleo en, en sus actividades educacionales. Preguntas pertenecientes al Titulo VI, Titulo XI, Seccion 504 y ADA pueden ser referidas al Asistente del Superintendente, Eagle County School District, P.O. Box 740, Eagle, CO 81631, (970) 328-6321 X15.

36. STANDARDS AND TESTS

State standards can be viewed in detail at the Colorado Department of Education website at www.cde.state.co.us. Eagle County School District curriculum guides are available on the district website at eagleschools.net.

All students in ECSD take three district-wide tests:

- The District Writing Assessment is typically given in the fall for all students K-12.
- The Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) tests are typically given in February and March. All middle school students take CSAP for Reading, Writing, and Math. 8th graders also take CSAP Science.
- The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) tests are typically given in the fall and the spring. All middle school students take the NWEA tests for reading, language usage, and math.

37. STUDENT SUPPLY LIST

The GCMS staff requests that students bring their supplies on the first day of school. Please notice the color-coded binders. We have found that this system of organization works very well for students. Student supplies for all grades are: 1 package of #2 pencils, 4 pens (black or blue), 3 highlighter markers (different colors), 1 package of Post It notes (any size), 2 spiral notebooks (100 sheets, single subject okay), 1 ruler (one side US standard, one side metric), 1 pair of scissors, 1 box of tissues, 3 packages of ruled 3-hole loose leaf paper, 1 set of colored pencils, 1 calculator (basic functions needed only), 1 protractor, 1 supply box (8"x 10" or smaller), 5 one-and-a-half inch 3-ring binders (1 red for Math, 1 green for Science, 1 blue for Social Studies, 1 black for Reading, 1 white for

Language Arts), 5 packages of dividers for the binders, 7 book covers. You can pick up a supply list in the hallway across from the office or view it at the school website.

38. STUDENT TEACHER ASSISTANTS

GCMS offers a Student Teacher Assistant (TA) program for 8th graders who wish to assist teachers, the office, the custodian, or the kitchen. STAs do so during one of their daily Specials class periods. To be eligible to be a Student TA, grades must be A's and B's and he/she must interview with the counselor.

39. SUMMER SCHOOL

Summer School will be:

- Mandatory for students currently in 6th, 7th, or 8th grade who are not proficient in Reading and/or Math (based on NWEA cut-off scores) AND have two Ds or worse for the year
- Invitational for students who are not proficient but earn As, Bs, and Cs.
- Optional for all other students.

Tuition will be \$200 charged to each student.

40. TEXTBOOK RETURN POLICY

State law allows our Board of Education to require the replacement of damaged textbooks and the return of loaned textbooks. We will withhold transcripts and grades of any student who fails to return or replace any textbook at the completion of the school year. We will make a reasonable effort to obtain payment for lost or damaged books. If we determine that a student is unable to pay, we may obtain payment through other methods such as payment plans for service. We may also refuse to allow any student who completes continuation requirements to participate in the Continuation Ceremony if the student has failed to return or replace any textbook prior to the date of the ceremony. Most textbooks cost \$50 or more. We would much rather have the books than the fines, so please try to find the lost books! Please take care of the books we loan to you so others may use them after you.

41. TRANSPORTATION AND STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES

Written requests signed by parents/guardians for a student to ride on a bus other than his/her regular one must be in the office by 12:00 noon in order to be signed by the administration. The Transportation Office can be reached at 328-1939 or 328-2742.

Student Conduct on School Buses

The privilege of riding a school bus is contingent upon a student's good behavior and observance of established regulations for conduct both at bus stops and on board buses. The driver of a school bus shall be responsible for the safety of the students on his/her bus, both during the ride and while students are entering or leaving the vehicle. Therefore, it is the bus driver's duty to notify the Director of Transportation and the administration of the school involved if any student persists in violating the established rules of conduct.

After due warning has been given to the student and to his/her parents/guardians, the driver, the Director of Transportation, or a school administrator may withhold from the student the privilege of riding the school bus. The student also may be denied admission to school or be suspended or expelled, in accordance with established policies, for flagrant violation of school bus rider conduct regulations or conduct detrimental to the safe operation of the bus.

1. The following 13 rules govern the conduct of students as bus passengers and shall serve as the basis for student conduct while riding the bus. Riding the bus to and from school is a privilege extended to students by the Board of Education. This privilege may be rescinded on the recommendation of the bus driver and the administration.
 - a. The driver is in full charge of the bus and the passengers. At the discretion of the driver, the passengers may be assigned a seat and held responsible for that seat.
 - b. Passengers must be absolutely quiet while the bus is stopped at a railroad crossing.
 - c. Passengers will board and leave the bus in an orderly manner and remain seated while the bus is in motion.
 - d. Passengers will not extend arms, legs, or head out of the bus windows at any time.
 - e. Passengers will avoid unnecessary conversation with the driver and will keep conversations with other passengers at a low level.
 - f. Passengers must be on time, as the driver cannot wait for those who are tardy.
 - g. Passengers will not possess or use tobacco or have glass containers on the bus. Passengers will not eat or drink on the bus without permission from the Director of Transportation.
 - h. Passengers will adjust the windows only when instructed to do so by the driver.
 - i. Passengers responsible for damage or littering on the bus will be responsible for the repair and/or clean up.
 - j. Passengers will not sit in the stairwell, on the engine cover, or in the aisle of the bus.
 - k. Passengers will not exit from the windows or emergency doors unless an emergency exists.
 - l. Passengers will not board or leave the bus at a stop other than their own without a written request from the parent(s)/guardian(s), approved by the administration, and presented to the driver.
 - m. Passengers will cross 10 feet or more in front of the bus when unloading and crossing the roadway.

42. VALUABLE STUDENT POSSESSIONS AT SCHOOL

Students should not bring more than a small sum of money or other valuable items to school since protection against loss or theft is impossible to assure. If it becomes necessary for a student to bring money, electronic devices, or other valuables to school, it is strongly recommended that they keep such items locked up in their locker while at school. **The school will not assume responsibility for the loss of money or other valuable articles, including cell phones and iPods.** Electronic games, music players, radios, beepers, cell phones, laser pointers, etc. are not to be seen or used at school. All wheeled transportation (bikes, scooters, in-line skates, skateboards) are to be kept outside the building.

For first offenses the student will be reminded of this policy. For second offenses a Behavior Concern is issued and the item is confiscated for a week. For third offenses a Behavior Referral is issued and the item is confiscated for a month and must be picked up by the parents.

43. VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

Parents are encouraged to visit classrooms. There is no better way to learn what we are doing in school. In order to assure that no unauthorized persons enter buildings, all visitors and volunteers should report to the school office and obtain a Visitor or Volunteer badge before visiting elsewhere in the building.

A student who wishes to bring a visitor to the school and to attend classes with him/her for part of the day must make satisfactory arrangements with the principal at least one day in advance of the visit. Visiting students will not be permitted to attend core classes unless the student is considering enrolling at GCMS.

44. WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL AND TRANSFER OF RECORDS

Parental notification is necessary when a student transfers to another school during the school year. Students obtain a check out sheet from the main office. This sheet is signed by each of the student's teachers and the librarian as books and materials are returned. Student's cumulative records are forwarded to their new school when a parent release is received.

REFERENCE SECTION

45. CRIME STOPPERS

If you know of a crime anywhere, you can earn a reward if your information leads to the identification of the culprit. Crimes are any activities that involve illegal drugs, underage drinking, weapons, property damage, sexual or physical harassment, theft, burglary, cheating, or violence. Help keep our school and communities safe. If you know of a crime at school, contact the principal or a teacher. If you know of a crime away from school, call Eagle County Crime Stoppers at 328-7007. Your identity will be kept secret.

46. EDITING CHECKLIST AND EDITING SYMBOLS

C. O. P. S.

Capitals

- √ Capitals on names, places, and beginnings of sentences.

Overall appearance

- √ Name, date, and title
- √ Paragraphs indented
- √ Spelling
- √ Neatness and legibility

Punctuation

- √ Periods, commas, question marks, quotation marks, etc.

Sentence Structure

- √ Complete sentences
- √ Descriptive and interesting words
- √ Variety of complex and simple sentences

Editing Symbols

the	Use a capital letter
the	Insert the word
jump	Incorrect spelling
?	Incorrect punctuation
hopped	Delete the word
To see such sport.	Incomplete sentence
?	Start a new paragraph
?	This is confusing

Example: the cow jump **hopped** **over** **moon?**

47. FINAL COPY FORMAT

The following formats are required for all student work published at GCMS:

Font - Chicago, Courier, Helvetica, Monaco, New York, Palatino, or Times

Size - 12 or 14

Spacing – Double

Margins – 1 inch top, bottom, left, and right

Alignment – Left

Paragraphs – Indented

48. HOMEWORK TIPS

During every class each day, students are expected to write their homework in their planner legibly and correctly so they and their parents can read the assignments. Below are some tips for students and parents about homework.

49. LIFE SKILLS

We at GCMS value the following life-long qualities in all people:

Integrity	To be honest and trustworthy.
Initiative	To do something because it needs to be done.
Flexibility	To change your plans when necessary.
Perseverance	To keep trying even when it is hard.
Motivation	To do something because you want to do it.
Organization	To plan, arrange, and implement something in an orderly way.
Sense of Humor	To laugh and be playful without hurting others.
Effort	To try your hardest.
Common Sense	To use good judgement.
Problem-solving	To seek solutions to problems. To use what you know and do what you can.
Responsibility	To do what is right and be accountable for your actions.
Patience	To wait calmly for someone or something.
Friendship	To make and keep friends through mutual trust and caring.
Curiosity	To work to learn or know about a lot of different things.
Cooperation	To work with others toward a common goal or purpose.
Caring	To feel concern for others.
Courage	To do what you believe is right, even if it is hard.
Confidence	To believe you can do it.

- Developed by Susan Kovalik & Associates

50. NOTE TAKING EXAMPLES

We at GCMS instruct, model, and expect the following note taking strategies:

- **Power Out**
- **Two-Column Notes**
- **Traditional Outline**

51. PARAGRAPH FORMAT

We at GCMS follow the instructional practices from Step Up To Writing by Maureen Auman

Paragraph Plan Example (for an eleven sentence paragraph)

Topic Sentence
Reason/Detail/Fact
Example/Explanation/Evidence
Example/Explanation/Evidence
Reason/Detail/Fact
Example/Explanation/Evidence
Example/Explanation/Evidence
Reason/Detail/Fact
Example/Explanation/Evidence
Example/Explanation/Evidence
Concluding Sentence

52. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

We recite the Pledge of Allegiance daily during announcements.

The Pledge of Allegiance

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America
and to the republic for which it stands,
one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

America the Beautiful

Oh, beautiful! For spacious skies. For amber waves of grain.
For purple mountains majesty, above the fruited plain.
America! America! God shed His grace on thee.
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.

53. SIX TRAIT ANALYTICAL RATING GUIDE FOR WRITING

The following criteria are how student writing is assessed by teachers and for the District Writing Assessment.

Ideas and Content

- 5: The paper is clear focused and interesting. It holds the reader's attention. Relevant anecdotes and details enrich the central theme or story line. Ideas are fresh and original.
- 3: The paper is clear and focused. The topic shows promise, even though development is still limited, sketchy or general.
- 1: As yet, the paper has no clear sense of purpose or central theme. To extract meaning from the text, the reader must make inferences based on sketchy details.

Organization

- 5: The organization showcases the central idea or theme. The order, structure, or presentation is compelling and moves the reader through the text.
- 3: The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader from point to point without undue confusion.
- 1: The writing lacks a clear sense of direction. Ideas, details, or events seem strung together in a random haphazard fashion – or else there is no identifiable internal structure at all.

Voice

- 5: The writer speaks directly to the reader in a way that is individualistic, expressive, and engaging. Clearly, the writer is involved in the text and is writing to be read.
- 3: The writer seems sincere, but not genuinely engaged, committed, or involved. The result is pleasant and sometimes even personable, but short of compelling.
- 1: The writer seems indifferent, uninvolved or distant from the topic and/or the audience. As a result, the writing is flat, lifeless or mechanical; depending on the topic, it may be overly technical or jargonistic.

Word Choice

- 5: Words convey the intended message in an interesting, precise, and natural way. The writing is full and rich, yet concise.
- 3: The language is functional, even if it lacks punch; it does get the message across.
- 1: The writer struggles with a limited vocabulary, searching for words to convey meaning.

Sentence Fluency

- 5: The writing has an easy flow and rhythm when read aloud. Sentences are well built, with consistently strong and varied structure that makes expressive oral reading easy and enjoyable.
- 3: The text hums along efficiently for the most part, though it lacks a certain rhythm or grace. It tends to be more pleasant or businesslike than musical, more mechanical than fluid.
- 1: The paper is difficult to follow or read aloud. Most sentences tend to be choppy, incomplete, rambling, or awkward; they need work.

Conventions

- 5: The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (e.g., grammar, capitalization, punctuation, usage, spelling, paragraphing) and uses them effectively to enhance readability. Errors tend to be so few and minor the reader can easily skim right over them unless specifically searching for them.
- 3: The writer shows reasonable control over a limited range of standard writing conventions. However, the paper would require moderate editing prior to publication. Errors are numerous or serious enough to be somewhat distracting, but the writer also handles some conventions well.
- 1: Errors in spelling, punctuation, usage and grammar, capitalization and/or paragraphing repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read.