

DeSana Middle School
STUDENT- PARENT HANDBOOK



2020 – 2021

Collaborate . . . Create . . . Innovate . . . Persevere . . . Inspire!



Quality Learning and Superior Performance for All

2020-21 Middle School Student Handbook District Information

Dr. Jeffrey Bearden, Superintendent
Forsyth County Board of Education
Mr. Wesley McCall (District 1)
Ms. Kristin Morrissey (District 2), Vice Chairperson
Mr. Tom Cleveland (District 3)
Ms. Darla Light (District 4)
Ms. Nancy Roche (District 5), Board Chairperson

Main Phone: 770-887-2461
Transportation Phone: 770-888-1234
Website: www.forsyth.k12.ga.us

DeSana Middle School

625 James Rd. Alpharetta, GA 30004

Phone: 770-667-2591 Fax: 770-667-2592

School Hours: 9:00 AM – 4:15 PM Office Hours: 8:15 AM – 5:00 PM

Welcome to a new school year at DeSana Middle School! With a projected enrollment this year of approximately 1070 sixth, seventh and eighth grade students filling our hallways and classrooms and working online, we are truly excited about *Year 5* at DeSana and the countless possibilities and opportunities that it holds! While we know this will be a most extraordinary and unprecedented year in education in so many ways, we look forward to working with the finest group of students around - - - our young Dragons . . . our fantastic, committed and involved parents . . . and an incredibly supportive business community! Whether you decide for your child to start this new school year with us face-to-face, or, perhaps, wait until the second semester in January to join us here, we look forward to seeing our young Dragons back at DeSana!

Our highly talented, caring, and *extremely* enthusiastic teachers and support staff are eager to engage our students in quality, meaningful and rigorous work in our classrooms and on-line, along with providing some fun, enriching and special times through many extracurricular activities, clubs, performing musical groups, and athletic teams and events as they are able to occur. Working together, we are quite confident that we will continue to provide a top-notch education for our young Dragons!

Throughout this year at DeSana, we will build upon the solid foundation we have established thus far . . . one that is built on the cornerstone of ***excellence in education***. Our mission each day? Simply put:

Collaborate . . . Create . . . Innovate . . . Persevere . . . Inspire!

So to that end, our staff of highly qualified professional educators and support personnel is committed to providing our students many opportunities --- both inside and outside of the classroom and on-line --- for high caliber learning, continual growth, leadership skills development, community service, and achievement at a high level of excellence! We pledge that this will be our focus daily, and we invite and encourage our parents to work in partnership with us to optimize the opportunities in all five facets of our DeSana program - - - Academics (first & foremost always!), The Arts, Athletics, Activities, and Altruistic Endeavors.

We look forward to a very positive and productive year together! And we extend a special, yearlong invitation to our parents to join us at any and all school activities and events, virtually, or in person whenever it is feasible. We want . . . we need . . . and we value your involvement and support in your child's education! For it is key to the success of your young Dragon during his/her middle school years.

Please also know that we value highly home/school communication at DeSana. It is vital and always plays an integral role in each student's success. Please do not hesitate to contact us if/when the need arises. We want and encourage our parents to stay *in the know* about their child's studies, assignments, assessments, and school activities, as well as other events and happenings.

To help begin this 2020 - 2021 school year in very fine fashion, we ask that each student and parent sit down together and read through this *DeSana Student-Parent Handbook* in its entirety. It contains a great deal of important information about DeSana procedures and practices, and how we "do school" here. It is definitely a "must read" for all of our parents and students alike.

Again, we welcome you to DeSana Middle School as we continue to grow and broaden the opportunities for our young Dragons! We look forward to working together with every member of our *DeSana Family* in building upon what we have established these past four years . . . creating a most wonderful school where our young Dragons' imaginations, ingenuity and passion for learning continue to grow every single day! For . . .

We are . . .

**Diverse thinkers who
Engage across cultures as we
Seek new learning opportunities that
Apply to real-world experiences. We are
Not afraid to fail
And try again.**

We are DeSana!

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**DeSana Middle School
Student Expectations**

WHAT

Do Your Part to Keep Yourself & Others Safe

Respect Yourself & Others

Ask Permission

Get Engaged!

Own Your Actions

Nurture Kindness

Stop & Think!!

DO!

FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS 2020-2021 STUDENT CALENDAR

Revised Draft

July 2020

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22 End of 1st Semester (82 Days) 23-31 Holiday Break (No School)	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td></tr> <tr><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	S	M	T	W	T	F	S			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td></tr> <tr><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	S	M	T	W	T	F	S			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30										
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	16 Days	TOTAL DAYS: 178 - Students 190 - Staff																																																																																											

GENERAL INFORMATION



ACADEMIC GRADING

A:	B:	C:	F:
90-100	80-89	70-79	69 or below



ACCIDENTS/INJURIES

We pride ourselves in taking the necessary precautions to ensure the safety of all our students at all times. However, despite our best efforts an accident may occasionally occur. Any student who is injured on school grounds must report the injury to the supervising staff member and/or go directly to the main office. All safety precautions will be taken. The student will receive any necessary first aid. Parents will be notified if the injury is considered anything other than minor. The supervising staff member will complete an accident report.

Insurance forms that offer 24-hour or school day accident coverage for students are available in the main office. The Forsyth County School System cannot reimburse parents for costs incurred due to injuries occurring at school or school sponsored events.



ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

Students who are brought to school by car will be dropped off in front of the main entrance to DeSana Middle School. **No student should be dropped off at school before 7:30 AM unless they have been specifically asked by their teacher (and have a note from the teacher) to arrive earlier to work on a school assignment or project or participate in a school activity. Adult supervision is not available until this time.** A structured, adult-supervised time of study will be provided in the DeSana cafeteria for those students who choose to arrive at school before 8:30 AM. There will be a limited number of media center passes that students may request from the supervising teachers in the cafeteria or gym. Any student who does not follow the expectations set forth for this structured study time will not be allowed to arrive at school before 8:30 AM. Car riders who arrive between 8:30 AM and 8:50 AM should report to the cafeteria for supervision. Bus riders typically begin arriving at school around 8:30 AM. They will report to the gym for supervision. Bus riding students who eat breakfast will be permitted to go to the cafeteria to purchase a breakfast when they arrive. Bus riders should remain in the gym, car riders should remain in the cafeteria, and students working in the media center during the structured study time should remain in the media center until they are dismissed by the adult(s) in charge to report to their Dragon Time or first class. Any student who leaves the area they are to report to upon arrival at school without a proper pass from a teacher will be subject to disciplinary consequences for being away from their assigned area of supervision. At no time prior to 8:45 AM will students be permitted to “walk the halls” or go to a teacher’s class without a pass from a teacher. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain a morning pass from his/her teacher at least by the day before. A board will be stationed outside of the cafeteria every morning that will list teachers that are available and when they are available. If a student would like to see a teacher that has indicated they are available, they may get a pass from the teacher that is supervising the cafeteria at that time.



ATHLETIC TEAMS

The following interscholastic team sports are offered for seventh and eighth grade students:

Football Track and Field Basketball Golf Cheerleading (Football, Competition and Basketball)

In order to try out for and participate in interscholastic activities a physical examination and insurance waiver are required of each participant. For a student to be eligible to participate in athletic extracurricular activities for a season, he/she must be enrolled in the school for which he/she will participate, be in the seventh or eighth grade, meet academic requirements, meet the age requirement, and have not exceeded four semesters of participation beginning in the fall of their seventh grade year. To meet the age requirement, a student must be under the age of 15 prior to May 1 of their seventh grade year.

To meet academic requirements, a student must pass a minimum of five (5) out of seven (7) classes during a semester. The grades from the previous semester will determine eligibility for the current semester (Ex. grades from spring 2019 will determine eligibility for fall 2019). To be eligible to participate in athletic extracurricular activities each day, a student must be in school for at least half of the school day. If a student is absent on Friday, he/she may not participate in weekend activities. A student who is in ISS or has OSS is not eligible to participate that day, and will not become eligible until he/she is admitted back into class. Students who are in ISS or have OSS on Friday may not participate in weekend activities. A student who is sent from his/her home school to Gateway Academy may not participate in extracurricular activities.

Gender Equity:

State law prohibits discrimination based on gender in athletic programs of local school systems (Equity in Sports Act, O.C.G.A. Y 20-2-315). Students are hereby notified that Forsyth County Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of gender in its athletic programs. The sports equity coordinator for this school system is Mr. Nathan Turner, Forsyth County Board of Education 1120 Dahlonega Hwy. Cumming, GA 30040, 770-887-2461. Inquiries or complaints concerning sports equity in this school system may be submitted to the sports equity coordinator.



ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is essential to success in school. As permitted under the State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.10, the Georgia Compulsory Education Law O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1, and Forsyth County Board of Education policy, students may be excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness or attendance in school that endangers a student's health or the health of others.
2. A serious illness or death in a student's immediate family necessitating absence from school.
3. A court order or an order by a governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school.
4. The observance of religious holidays, necessitating absence from school.
5. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
6. A scheduled medical, dental, or eye examination of the student.
7. Registering to vote or voting.
8. A visit, up to five school days per year, with a parent or legal guardian who is on leave from or who is being deployed to military service.

Students shall be counted present when they are serving as a page in the Georgia General Assembly. Students who are in foster care are to be counted present at school when attending court proceedings related to their care and placement.

Non-school related activities and vacations are considered unexcused.

1) Absences:

The parent/guardian must submit a note, fax or email to the attendance clerk within five (5) school days for an absence to be considered excused. Attendance Fax Number 770-667-2592 or Attendance email: lgarcia@forsyth.k12.ga.us. The note must include the student's name, the date(s) of absence(s), and the reason for the absence. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to be in communication with the student's teacher(s) and/or office staff when a student is absent, especially when it is for more than one day. The principal may require students to present appropriate medical or other documentation upon return to school for the purpose of validating that absences are excused.

In case of extended illness, hospitalization, or injury, the parent should apply for Hospital Homebound service. Hospital Homebound service should be applied for immediately when absences of ten (10) days or more are anticipated for the student.

Consequences:

If a student has excessive absences, early check-outs, and/or late check-ins, the student and/or the parent may be referred to the School Social Worker, Juvenile Court, State Court, and/or Department of Family and Children Services. A parent/guardian who violates the compulsory attendance law shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to a fine not less than \$25.00 and not greater than \$100.00, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction. Each day's absence from school is considered a violation.

Make-up Work:

It is the student's responsibility to turn in make-up work when he/she is absent from school. Parents/guardians and students are encouraged to retrieve missed lessons and work from itslearning. The student has five (5) school days to make up work. The teacher has the discretion to grant a longer period to make up work if there are extenuating circumstances.

Late Check-in or Early Check-out:

An unexcused late check-in or early check-out is defined as any time a student arrives late to school or leaves school early for a reason other than those defined by the State Board of Education as an excused absence. A combination of three unexcused late check-ins and/or early check-outs will be considered one unexcused absence. Students who miss more than half of the time in any class will be considered absent for that class period. When possible, medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school hours. If a student is being checked in or checked out for a doctor's appointment, a parent note, physician's note, or appointment card is required within 5 school days to be considered excused. After the tenth late check-in or early check-out, a physician's note or appointment card is required within 5 school days to be considered excused.

Check-in: Parents do not need to accompany students when checking in late.

Check-out: If it is necessary for a student to check out early due to illness, the student must be assessed by the school nurse and meet assessment criteria for the school to excuse the absence. Parents may submit a note to excuse an early check-out due to illness. Students who are frequently absent, tardy, or check out early from school may be required by the school administration to provide medical documentation to validate any absence, tardy or early check-out as excused.



BUS TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

FCS provides school bus transportation for all eligible FCS students based on the student's residence and school of enrollment, and in compliance with federal, state and/or local laws, rules, regulations and/or procedures. The Transportation Department is authorized to develop a framework and procedures that provide transportation services to eligible FCS students. The Forsyth County Board of Education encourages supervision appropriate to the age and/or maturity level(s) of students at bus stops by parents or guardians. The Code of Conduct applies on the school bus and at the bus stop as each is considered an extension of the school and classroom. As such, behaviors are expected to be safe, orderly and respectful at the stop and on and around the school bus. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to become familiar with transportation practices and procedures specific to our service. You may find those at www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/transportation or you may request clarification and/or assistance from the appropriate staff member found at the "Who Should I Call" link on the department web page.



BYOT

Protocol for the Use of Technology on DeSana Middle School Campus:

As new technologies continue to change the world in which we live, they also provide many new and positive educational benefits for classroom instruction. To encourage this growth, students in classes where teachers explicitly give their permission to do so may bring their own technology (Bring Your Own Technology = B.Y.O.T.). Teachers are allowed to permit, as well as limit, technology usage based upon their classroom environment and instructional goals. Students are NOT permitted to utilize cell phones, tablets, or any other playing devices during the school day unless they have specific permission from their teacher to do so during a class period. Students are not to travel through school hallways with ear buds or earphones in/on their ears as this presents a safety hazard for students.

Definition of "Technology":

For purposes of BYOT, "Technology" means a privately owned wireless and/or portable electronic hand-held equipment that includes, but is not limited to, existing and emerging mobile communication systems and smart technologies, portable internet devices, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), hand-held entertainment systems or portable information technology systems that can be used for word processing, wireless Internet access, image capture/recording, sound recording and information transmitting/receiving/storing, etc.

Internet:

Only the internet gateway provided by the school may be accessed while on campus. Personal internet connective devices such as, but not limited to, cell phones/cell network adapters are not permitted to be used to access outside internet sources at any time.

Computer Use:

DeSana Middle School is very fortunate to have a wonderful technology-enriched facility. We believe that a "technology rich" classroom can significantly enhance both the teaching and learning process. Students have access to computers daily in their classrooms, in the Media Center, and in the school's three computer labs. Every classroom also has 10 Chromebooks located in a charging station attached to the classroom wall.

Appropriate access to BYOT, instructional software, local and wide area networks and the Internet are available on most computers. Due to the complex nature of these systems and the magnitude of information available via the Internet, the Forsyth County Board of Education believes guidelines regarding acceptable use are warranted in order to serve the educational needs of our students.

Please see the Forsyth County Board of Education Policy on "Responsible Use Guidelines for Forsyth County Schools' Community." Violations of the "Responsible Use Guidelines for Forsyth County Schools' Community" may result in a student's access privileges being revoked, disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action taken.

Security and Damages:

Responsibility to keep the device secure rests with the individual owner. **The Forsyth County School System, nor its staff or employees, is not liable for any device stolen or damaged on campus.** If a device is stolen or damaged, it will be handled through the administrative office similar to other personal artifacts that are impacted in similar situations. It is recommended that skins (decals) and other custom touches are used to physically identify your device from others. Additionally, protective cases for technology are encouraged.



CARE OF PERSONAL ITEMS

As a service, a locker will be provided for each student for a fee of \$5.00. Only the locker assigned is to be used. Sharing a combination with one person eliminates any security associated with the use of a locker. Likewise, forcing a locker open without using the combination will eliminate any degree of security for the person utilizing the locker. A locker should not be used to house valuables. All lockers are individually checked at the conclusion of a school year and are in proper working order at the beginning of the following school year. Locker combinations are changed yearly. Problems with a locker should be reported immediately to a teacher on the student's team. Abuse of a locker, using other's lockers, or failing to report problems with a locker can lead to having locker privileges revoked and will require payment for repairs. Student book bags, school lockers, desks, and other school property shall be subject to inspection and search by school authorities at all times without further notice to students or parents. FCS reserves the right to use "walk-through" and "hand-held" metal detectors and "drug -sniffing" dogs at any school function, including activities which occur outside normal school hours off the school campus. Students are notified that these metal detectors will be used at the discretion of school administrators.

P.E. lockers and combination locks are also provided in the locker rooms for a nominal fee as a service for each student. Students must adhere to the same policies as the regular locker. Failure to do so will result in the locker privileges being revoked and/or will require payment for lost combination locks and/or repairs. **The school does not assume responsibility for lost items.** *Valuables and large amounts of money are not to be brought to school. In addition, cameras, games, toys, trading/playing cards, electronic devices, skateboards, etc. should not be brought to school unless specifically approved by a teacher for a special event/purpose.* If any item such as those just listed are an interruption to a student's learning, they will be confiscated and kept in the front office area; however, the school assumes no responsibility for the "safe keeping" of confiscated items. Confiscated items will only be returned to a parent. A parent may come to the school any time during normal operating hours to claim any of his/her child's confiscated item(s).

In the event that a parent is unable to visit the school during the regular school day, the item may be claimed by the student on the last two days of the school year. Items confiscated more than once will be available for retrieval only on the last two days of school. Items not claimed one week after the last day of school will be discarded or donated to a charitable organization. Weapons, tobacco and other drug products and similar items (or items promoting such products) will not be returned to a parent or student.



CHANGE & VENDING MACHINES

Office and food service personnel will not be able to provide change for students. Students should be prepared for the day by bringing correct change to school. Office staff cannot cash checks nor can joint checks for more than one child be accepted due to bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing procedures. The user is responsible for any money lost in a vending/juice/snack machine. Please notify the office if a machine is out of order so that others do not lose change. Specific times that vending machines can be used will be shared with students at the beginning of the school year. Typically, vending machines can only be used after school and during after school events. Drinks may not be taken onto the school bus.



CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS BY PARENTS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

The DeSana Middle School staff values the concept of parents as partners in education and understands that each student's education extends beyond the four walls of the school. If a parent of a DeSana student or a prospective student wishes to set up an individual classroom or school visitation, then he/she will be afforded every opportunity to make that visit. The following guidelines shall be used in setting up parent visitations: Any visitor on the school campus must report to the office, sign in, and state the purpose of the visit; all visitors are expected to leave the school campus promptly after their visit is complete. A staff member must escort any parent entering the building to the class. Individuals that do not follow this procedure may be restricted to future classroom observation access.

Parent/Guardians of either currently enrolled students or prospective students (independent from an IEP-driven observation) may wish to set up an individual classroom or school visitation. Principals should use the following guidelines:

1. Responsibilities of the Parent:
 - A. Make the request to the classroom teacher and principal at least 48 hours prior to the proposed visit.
 - B. Observations by parent and/or outside provider will be limited to two per semester per child.
 - C. State the purpose of the visit.
 - D. Sign in at the office and sign the Confidentiality Agreement prior to the classroom observation.
 - E. Be escorted to the classroom by the principal or designee.
 - F. The observation shall be limited to the length of one class period, not to exceed 45 minutes, as to not disrupt instruction, unless previously agreed upon.
 - G. Refrain from engaging the attention of the teacher or students through conversation or other means.
 - H. Return to the office for a brief conference with the principal or designee at the end of the visit.

2. Responsibilities of the Principal or designee:
 - A. Arrange the time and date of the observation with the teacher.
 - B. Notify your school's special education facilitator if the student is a student with a disability.
 - C. Inform the parents of the arrangements.
 - D. Present the Confidentiality Agreement to the parent/guardian prior to the classroom observation.
 - E. Escort the parent to the classroom.
 - F. Classroom observations shall be limited to the length of one class period, not to exceed 45 minutes unless previously agreed upon by parent/guardian, principal, and special education facilitator if the student receives special education services.
 - G. Confer with the parent at the end of the visit.
 - H. Parent(s) of only one student should be scheduled to observe at a given time.

Private therapists or service providers contracted by parents may observe students on a Forsyth County School Campus under the following guidelines.

1. Responsibilities of the Service Provider:
 - A. Parent must sign and submit "Observation Release" form to allow outside service provider access to student's classroom.
 - B. Make the request to the school principal at least 10 school days prior to the proposed visit.
 - C. State the purpose of the visit.
 - D. Sign in at the office and sign the Confidentiality Agreement prior to the classroom observation or visit.
 - E. Be escorted to the classroom and remain with the principal or designee (e.g. special education facilitator) throughout the observation time.
 - F. Refrain from engaging the attention of the teacher or students through conversation or other means.
 - G. Briefly conference with the principal or designee at the end of the visit.

2. Responsibility of the Principal or designee:

- A. Contact your school’s special education facilitator if the student receives special education and arrange the time and date of the observation.
- B. Inform the parents/guardian and service provider of the arrangements.
- C. Present the Non-disclosure waiver agreement to the service provider prior to the classroom visit.
- D. Escort and remain with the service provider in the classroom.
- E. Classroom observations shall be limited to the length of one class period, not to exceed 45 minutes unless previously agreed upon by parent/guardian, principal, and special education facilitator.
- F. Confer with the service provider at the end of the visit.
- G. Parents are encouraged to make all outside services provider appointments outside school hours.

CLUBS

Students are encouraged to participate in a variety of clubs that enhance social and emotional development. The General Assembly of Georgia requires that each school provide written information regarding the school’s clubs and organizations, excluding competitive interscholastic activities or events, and provide an area for a parent or guardian to decline permission for his/her student to participate in a club or organization (O.C.G.A. 20-2-705). A *Club Brochure* will be distributed to students and parents during the first week of school and will be available any time after that in the front office and/or on the DeSana web site. It is the student’s responsibility to check with the sponsor for meeting times and locations. Transportation is not provided for club meetings.

Communication

Students and parents/guardians are encouraged to regularly check each of their itslearning courses for information such as lessons, assessments, important dates, etc. Within each course, the teacher maintains a Planner where this information can be found. Student grades, state assessment results, and attendance are available in ParentPortal, <http://www.campus.forsyth.k12.ga.us>, which is also used for school and district newsletters distribution lists. The district invites you to stay connected by visiting its website, www.forsyth.k12.ga.us (which includes language translation options), following on social media (@FCSchoolsGA on Twitter, @FCSchools on Facebook, and @ForsythCoSchoolsGA on Instagram), subscribing on YouTube (@ForsythCountySchools) and to download the updated mobile app, Forsyth County Schools GA.

CONNECTIONS CLASSES

Connections classes are designed to reinforce critical reading, writing, mathematics and thinking skills taught within the academic block time, as well as help students develop interpersonal skills and investigate career options. Students take two (2) Connections classes every nine weeks and are rotated through the various Connections classes each year. Band and Chorus are full year courses. Areas of study may include, but are not limited to:

Art	Band	Business and Computer Science	Chorus
Engineering/Technology	Entrepreneurship	General Music	Health
Marketing	Personal Finance	Physical Education	STEM (6th Grade Only)
Video Production Class (7th and 8th Grade Only)			

COUNSELING

Counselors assist students in their social, emotional, and academic growth through individual, group, and classroom activities. The guidance curriculum is a planned effort to provide each student with a set of skills and experiences to promote self-understanding, decision-making, problem solving, communication improvement, and career planning. Counselors also coordinate transition activities to ensure a smooth transition for entering sixth graders and rising ninth graders.

Counselors offer small-group counseling on topics such as divorce, grief, self-esteem and friendship. Students may be given a needs assessment which provides an opportunity to express an interest in a particular support group. Parents and teachers may also refer students for small-group counseling. If parents do not wish for their child to participate in group or individual counseling, the school counselor must be notified.

COURSE OF STUDY

The Georgia Department of Education sets the curriculum standards for courses taught in the state and the *Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE)* for all middle school courses describe the learning expectations for students K-12. To find out more information about the GSE go to www.georgiastandards.org.

Forsyth County middle schools are dedicated to providing structured middle school programs that embrace current research findings on the middle school child. At DeSana, each grade level is divided into teams of teachers and students who work together to achieve academic and personal goals. Teachers collaborate to plan instruction and problem solve all kinds of situations. This enables students to sense consistent expectations and to strive to meet clearly understood standards of achievement.

The daily schedule followed by all sixth and seventh grade students is composed of four Academic core classes (Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies), one period for a Literacy class, and two periods for Connections Classes (such as Art, Band, Chorus, Physical Education, Health, Engineering/Technology, General Music, Video Class-8th grade only, Spanish-7th grade only, and Computer Applications. Band and Chorus are full year courses. Eighth grade students have a schedule that includes four Academic core classes (Mathematics, Language Arts, Physical Science, and Social Studies) plus one class of Spanish I or a Literacy class, and two periods for Connections classes. All classes are approximately 54 minutes on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday and 50 minutes on Thursdays.

Each teacher, grade level and/or team will provide students and parents with information regarding subject area standards and other pertinent information for each course taught, via a course syllabus at the beginning of the year. Students and parents are encouraged to use this information to better understand academic requirements.

DELIVERIES AT SCHOOL

In an effort to maintain academic focus, parents and other individuals are not allowed to have flowers, balloons, etc. delivered to the students during school. Such items create a disruption in the school day and the learning process. Items will be held in the school office until the end of the school day when the student comes to claim it. Students **will not** be called to the office for deliveries, nor will delivery persons be permitted to deliver items to the classroom. It is against school procedures for parents to bring “fast food” to the cafeteria for the students to eat. This creates a situation where the cafeteria is in competition with an outside food provider. Students will not be allowed to eat these foods in the DMS cafeteria.

In an effort to help students develop responsibility and to enable the school office personnel to accomplish their assigned duties, any item (such as money, instruments, P.E. clothes, shoes, projects, homework, phone, etc.) delivered by parents will be held in the office until the student comes to claim it. Students will not be called to the office for these items. Parent cooperation is greatly appreciated in this matter.

DISCIPLINE

Parents and students are expected to read and know **The Forsyth County 2020-2021 Code of Conduct and Discipline Procedures, and the DeSana Student-Parent Handbook**, which are given to every student upon their enrollment at DeSana Middle School. Parents and students will be asked to sign a paper saying that they have read the Code of Conduct and understand the policies, regulations, and rules set forth in the Code of Conduct and Discipline Procedures. Students and parents are expected to adhere to the Forsyth County Code of Conduct on the way to and from school, including in vehicles provided for student transportation by the school system; at school or on school property any time; and off school grounds at any school activity, function or event and while traveling to and from such events. Any specific questions about this Code of Conduct should be addressed with the school's administration.

Forsyth County Code of Conduct policies and procedures developed during the course of this school year supersede the applicable portions of this student handbook. Such information will be given to each child as it is available.

Progressive Discipline Procedures:

To the extent appropriate to the situation, school administrators and teachers will follow a progressive discipline process. The degree of discipline to be imposed by each school official should be in proportion to the severity of the behavior, while taking into account the totality of the situation, including the student's age, discipline history, and other relevant factors. Schools are not required to start at step one of progressive discipline if the behavior warrants a more severe punishment.

Student Searches

Student cars brought on campus, student book bags, and school lockers, desks and other school property shall be subject to inspection and search by school authorities at all times without further notice to students or parents. FCS reserves the right to use "walk-through" and "hand-held" metal detectors and "drug or weapon sniffing" dogs at school and during any school function, including activities which occur outside normal school hours or off the school campus. Students are notified that these metal detectors will be used at the discretion of administrators.

Students' Use of Cell Phones

- **Between the hours of 9:00 – 4:15 students should have their cell phone in their locker, unless a teacher gives a student permission to have his/her cell phone in class and in use for educational purposes.**
- **Students may not look at their phone OR use it to call or text someone OR use their phone to listen to music through their ear buds *as they travel through the hallways*. It is a safety hazard.**
- **Students may not have their cell phone in use during lunchtime. They should be left in their classroom or their locker. *"This is a time to disconnect to connect"***
- **Students also may not carry their cell phone with them into the bathroom. It should stay where they sign out if they have it with them.**
- **Students may have their phones in use in the gym or cafeteria in the morning, before school begins. And they may listen to music through ear buds, but not speakers.**



DISCIPLINE RECORDS

Forsyth County Schools will facilitate the transfer of discipline records to any public or private school in which a student is enrolled or seeks, intends, or is instructed to enroll on a full or part-time basis in the school.



DISCRIMINATION/HARASSMENT REPORTING

FCS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability or gender in employment decisions or educational programs and activities, including its athletic programs. Any student, employee, applicant for employment, parent or other individual who believes he or she has been subjected to harassment or discrimination by other students or employees of the school district based upon any of the factors listed above should promptly report the same to the principal of the school or the appropriate coordinator as listed below, who will implement the board's discriminatory complaints or harassment procedures. Students may also report harassment or discrimination to their school counselor. Equity coordinators for the school system are:

Title VI

Nathan Turner (Students)
Cindy Salloum (Personnel)

Title IX

Nathan Turner (Students)
Cindy Salloum (Personnel)

ADA and 504

Sarah Taylor (Students)
Cindy Salloum (Personnel)

Gender Equity

Cindy Salloum (Students)

Community Based Work Programs

Valery Lowe

Equity coordinators may be contacted at the Forsyth County Board of Education and Professional Development Center, 1120 Dahlonega Highway, Cumming, Georgia 30040, 770.887.2461. Students and employees will not be subjected to retaliation for reporting such harassment or discrimination. A copy of the discriminatory complaints procedure under Forsyth County School District Policy GAAA/JAA (Equal Opportunity/Discriminatory Complaints) or under Policy IDFA (Gender Equity in Sports) is located in the school district policy manual that is available at www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/boe > policies and procedures.



DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Students who ride home in vehicles other than a school bus are dismissed at the same time as bus riders. Parents who transport students home are to pick up their children in the car rider area which is located in the front of the building. Please follow the directions of school staff who manage the drop-off/pick-up area each day. Also, do not drive in the car line while using cellular phones. Your child's safety is our #1 priority at DeSana Middle School.

DeSana has an electronic system to check in and out your child(ren). The name of the system is *Checkmate*. Parents will have to update the system via Parent Portal with people that may check out their child and/or restricted pick up at the start of the school year and throughout the year if this information needs to be revised .

Only persons listed on *Checkmate*, along with a photo I.D., are allowed to check out students unless advance arrangements have been made to do otherwise. Students must be checked out through the front office.

If a student needs to check out during the day for a doctor's or dentist's appointment, the following steps should be followed:

- Parent comes in office **with photo I.D.** to check out student.
- If someone other than parent is going to check out a student, then that person's name must be listed on *Checkmate* and **must present a photo ID.**

Students who come in late or leave early jeopardize their learning in the missed class(es). Accurate record-keeping also becomes more difficult when numerous requests for early dismissal are made. Lastly, instruction is interrupted when students enter or exit classes late or early. It is strongly recommended that medical appointments be scheduled outside of the regular school day. If it is necessary to schedule these during the school day, parents are encouraged to stagger the appointments so that the same class is not missed repeatedly. Frequent requests for early dismissal may result in administrative action.

DRESS CODE

See the **2020-2021 Code of Conduct and Discipline Procedures for Forsyth County's dress code policy.** The school administration is authorized to determine what constitutes inappropriate dress for the school setting. Questions about the dress code should be addressed with the administration.

EQUITY

FCS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or sex in any of its employment practices, educational programs, child feeding program or any other service or activity. It is the policy of the Forsyth County Board of Education to comply fully with the requirements of Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act and all accompanying regulations. Any student, employee, applicant for employment or other person alleging a violation shall promptly notify the principal or the designated school system coordinator.

EVACUATION, LOCKDOWN, AND TORNADO DRILLS

Plans are in place and practiced regularly throughout the school year to ensure the safety of all students and other building occupants should a fire, severe storm warning, or other weather-related or emergency situation arise.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Extracurricular activities are defined as any school-sponsored program for which some or all of the activities are outside the regular school day. Examples include all individual and team sports, cheerleading, clubs, academic bowls, and fund-raising activities. This definition does not include field trips, homework or work required outside the school day for a scheduled class. The Athletic Program includes all individual and team sports such as cheerleading, football, basketball, golf, and track. These sports and all intramurals require a physical in order to participate.

Students who have ISS or OSS for the day, or who are not in school for at least half of the school day, may not participate in extracurricular activities for that day. If a student receives ISS or OSS on a Friday, they may not participate in any extracurricular activities that happen on the weekend.

FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Forsyth County Schools Complaint Procedures:

Parents, students, staff, private schools, and the general public have the right to file a complaint regarding the following Federal Programs: Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies; Title I,

Part B, Subpart 3: Even Start Family Literacy; Title I, Part C: Education of Migrant Children; Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention; Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk; Title II, Part A: Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund; Title II, Part D: Enhancing Education Through Technology; Title III, Part A: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement; Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers; Title VI, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 6111: State Assessment Program; Title VI, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 6112: Enhanced Assessment Instruments Competitive Grant Program; Title VI, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income Schools; Title IX, Part E, Subpart 1, Section 9503: Complaint Process for Participation of Private School Children; Title X, Part C – McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Any and all complaints should be addressed with local school staff and/or administrators. If no resolution is determined, a complaint may be made in writing and signed by the complainant. Therefore, for complaints originating at the local level, a complaint should not be filed with the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) until every effort has been made to resolve the issue through local written complaint procedures.

The complaint must include the following:

- (1) A statement that Forsyth County Schools has violated a requirement of a federal statute or regulation that applies to an applicable program.
- (2) The date on which the violation occurred.
- (3) The facts on which the statement is based and the specific requirement allegedly violated (include citation to the federal statute or regulation).
- (4) A list of the names and telephone numbers of individuals who can provide additional information.
- (5) Whether a complaint has been filed with any other government agency, and if so, which agency.
- (6) Copies of all applicable documents supporting the complainant's position.
- (7) The address of the complainant.

The complaint must be addressed to:

Federal Program Director (for program the complaint is filed against)
Forsyth County Schools
1120 Dahlonega Hwy.
Cumming, GA 30040

NOTICE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND ELIGIBLE STUDENT OF RIGHTS UNDER THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS PRIVACY ACT (FERPA) AND THE PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA):

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) (the "Act"), parents/guardians have a right to:

1. Inspect and review, within 45 days of a request, the education records of a student who is their child, or in the case of a student who is eighteen (18) years of age or older, or those who are emancipated, their own education records. Parents/guardians or eligible students should submit to their principal a written request identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and provide notice of such arrangements.
2. Request the amendment of the student's education records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. To request the school district to amend a record, parent/guardian or eligible students should write the school principal, specify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. If the district decides not to amend the record, it will notify the parent/guardian or eligible students of the decision and inform them of their right to a hearing. Additional information regarding the hearing procedure will be provided with the notification of the right to a hearing.
3. Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that the Act and the regulations promulgated pursuant to the Act authorize disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is to school officials with legitimate educational interest. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member; a member of the school board; a person or company with

whom the district has contracted to perform a specific task (such as attorney, auditor, therapist, online curriculum vendor, picture company, or yearbook company); or a parent or student serving on an official committee (such as a disciplinary or grievance committee). A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility. Upon request, the school district forwards educational records without prior consent to another school in which the student seeks or intends to enroll.

4. If you feel a violation of FERPA rights has occurred, visit www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/ferpa to submit a parent complaint form.

FERPA Directory Information Notice:

FCS has designated the following information as directory information:

- Name,
- Address,
- Photograph,
- Phone Number,
- Gender,
- Homeroom Teacher,
- Grade level,
- Date of birth,
- Mailing address,
- Parent email addresses specifically to school approved yearbook companies, photography companies, graduation service companies, and the Forsyth County Public Library,
- Enrollment status,
- Dates of attendance,
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports,
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams,
- Degrees, honors and awards received,
- Major field of study, and
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended.
- Local Student Identification Number

In addition, two federal laws require school systems receiving federal financial assistance to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the name, address, and telephone numbers. Parents/guardians have the right to refuse to allow the above information to be designated as directory information and to refuse to allow it to be disclosed to the public upon request without your prior written consent. If parents/guardians wish to opt-out, they must notify the principal of the school, in writing, within 10 days of the first day of school or of their enrollment date.

Parents/guardians are also notified that students may be photographed, videotaped, or interviewed by the news media at school or some school activity or event unless a parent/guardian notifies the principal of the school, in writing, to opt-out within 10 days of the first day of school or of their enrollment date. The principal will take reasonable steps to control the media's access to students. However, parent/guardian submission of a written objection does not constitute a guarantee that their student will not be interviewed in circumstances which are not within the knowledge or control of the principal.

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) Notice:

No student shall be required to submit to a survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
- Sex behavior or attitudes;
- Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;

- Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student’s parent; or
- Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program), without prior written consent of the parent or eligible student.

A parent/guardian of a student may, upon request, inspect any survey created by a third party containing one or more of the items listed as (1) through (8) above before the survey is administered or distributed by a school to a student and may choose to opt the student out of participation in the survey. The Superintendent shall develop procedures for: (1) granting a request by a parent/guardian for reasonable access to such survey within a reasonable period of time after the request is received, and (2) making arrangements to protect student privacy in the event of the administration or distribution of a survey to a student containing one or more of the items listed as (1) through (8). The requirements of PPRA do not apply to a survey administered to a student in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

A parent/guardian of a student may, upon request, inspect any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for the student. The Superintendent shall develop procedures for granting a request by a parent/guardian parent for reasonable access to instructional material within a reasonable period of time after the request is received.

Parents/guardians shall be notified prior to the administration of physical examinations or screenings that the school may administer to students. This notice shall offer the parent/guardian the opportunity to opt the student out of any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is (1) required as a condition of attendance; (2) administered by the school and scheduled by the school in advance; and (3) not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student, or of other students.

At the discretion of the principal or the school system, schools may disclose student name, grade, and parent email addresses for purposes of school photography, yearbook, graduation-related services, and the Forsyth County Public Library. Parents/guardians may opt-out by notifying the principal of the school, in writing, within 10 days of the first day of school or of their enrollment date.

FIELD TRIPS

DeSana’s students are sometimes provided with opportunities to attend interesting, educational events and functions. When field trips are planned, students will receive information regarding the cost for each of these trips and tentative dates. Field trip money may not be refunded if disciplinary action prevents a student from attending. When possible, refunds will be given to students with excused absences. Conduct requirements will also be shared with everyone. Activities occurring away from school require exemplary behavior. Student safety and maximum educational benefit cannot be ensured unless every student attending a field trip has demonstrated a commitment to proper behavior. The school system’s Code of Conduct and any pertinent school rules are in effect for field trips.

No student will be denied an opportunity to participate in a field trip because of financial hardship. Work scholarship programs are available for students who indicate a need. Priority is given to students in the free/reduced lunch program. Parents must notify their child’s team teachers of the necessity for financial aid.

GRADING AND REPORTING

Students in grades 6-8 receive grade reports on a quarterly basis throughout the school year. The interim reports are issued at the 9 and 27 week points and the report cards are issued at 18 and 36 weeks. The reports include a numerical average for the grading period as well as a formative and summative grade breakdown. To formulate the average, the grades are weighted 80% summative and 20% formative. If a student is taking an EOC course in middle school (i.e.

Physical Science, Algebra I), the EOC assessment grade conversion score, per state rule, has a weight of 20% on the final course grade. In addition, the reports include a three-point rubric defining Work Habits that impact student achievement.

HARASSMENT

The school district forbids sexual, racial and other harassment of all employees and students while at school or impacts school, in the workplace or at any school event or activity. Any student, employee, applicant for employment or other person alleging a violation shall promptly notify the principal or the designated coordinator for the school system.

HEALTH SCREENINGS

Vision, hearing and dental screening will be conducted in grade 8. Scoliosis screening will be conducted in grades 7 & 8.

HOSPITAL-HOMEBOUND

If a student should need to be absent from school for more than 10 consecutive school days because of serious illness or an accident, arrangements may be made to provide instruction at home or in an alternative setting. In accordance with state rule 160-4-2.31 Hospital/Homebound Services, students with absences due to psychiatric/emotional disorders, as defined in the latest edition of the Diagnostic, and Statistical Manual (DSM), may be eligible for hospital-homebound instruction. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to request homebound instruction as soon as possible. An application for services supported by a doctor's recommendation will be required. The application and supporting documentation are submitted to the Principal of the school. Information and guidelines for Hospital Homebound Services can be found at the Georgia Department of Education webpage – gadoe.org.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE

A child is not to return to school until fever, diarrhea and/or vomiting has stopped **for a full 24 hours**, without the aid of medication.

INTERSCHOLASTIC ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Forsyth County middle school students are encouraged to participate in numerous interscholastic extra-curricular activities which challenge them academically and allow them to display their talents. These activities may include, but are not limited to the following:

Band Competitions	Geography Bee	Spelling Bee	Math Competitions
Oratorical Contest	Choral Competitions	Essay Contests	VEX Robotics Competitions
Science Fair	Duke TIP Program	Science Olympiad	Social Science Fair
FCS and Georgia Technology Fairs			

Students who have ISS or OSS for the day or who are not in school for at least half of the school day may not participate in interscholastic academic activities for the day. If a student receives ISS or OSS on a Friday, they may not participate in any extracurricular activities that happen on the weekend.



INTRAMURALS

An intramural program is in place at the middle school level with activities being offered either before or after the school day. This program is an extension of the physical education program and may involve competition among classmates for both boys and girls. This program is designed to increase participation of all students in recreational games and sports activities. Activities may include, but are not limited to: Basketball, Cross Country, Soccer and Volleyball. All students are eligible for participation. Transportation is not provided by the school and all participants must have a physical on file.



ITEMS SOLD AT SCHOOL

No items can be bought, sold or traded at school unless the sale is sponsored and approved by DeSana Middle School Administration and/or the Forsyth County Board of Education. This includes candy, food and drink. **Administrative approval must be given for any such activity.** All school fundraising activities must have prior administrative approval.



ITSLEARNING

DeSana students and teachers will utilize *itslearning*, a powerful learning management system, throughout the school year. As the first school system in Georgia to make a commitment to a learning management system for all secondary teachers, we are striving to make sure that access to learning never stops for our students. The features of *itslearning* include the posting of in-class assignments, homework, class syllabus, calendar info, lesson folders with links to flip charts, PowerPoint presentations or other resources, as well as communication features such as email, drop boxes and podcasting. Students will be given a user name and password so *itslearning* can be used from any computer with Internet access. Parents are highly encouraged to regularly access *itslearning* with their child to foster better home-school communication.



LOST AND FOUND

Students who find lost or misplaced personal articles are asked to take them to the counselors' office where they can be claimed by the owner. Library books should be turned in at the Media Center and found textbooks should be given to the appropriate teacher or taken to the counselors' office. Items left and not claimed in "lost and found" will be donated to a charitable organization at the end of each quarter. Again, it is stressed that students not bring valuables to school and that each child accept the responsibility for the safekeeping of his/her possessions.



LUNCH

STUDENT MEALS:

Our breakfast meal offers a choice of a breakfast entrée, a milk and up to two choices of fruit.

At lunch we offer an entrée, a milk and up to three fruit or vegetable choices at the elementary and middle school. Students may decline the milk but must include at least one serving of fruit or vegetable on their tray. Students may request a cup of water as an alternate beverage choice. Additional beverage selections, including bottled water, are available for purchase.

The meal prices at each school level are listed below. Students may purchase additional portions of the meal at an extra cost. We also provide Smart Snack compliant snacks and treats that can be purchased at an additional cost.

	Breakfast	Lunch
Elementary		
Reduced-priced meal	\$0.30	\$0.40
Full-paid meal	\$1.60	\$2.70
Middle School		
Reduced-priced meal	\$0.30	\$0.40
Full-price meal	\$1.70	\$2.80
High School		
Reduced-priced meal	\$0.30	\$0.40
Full-price meal	\$1.70	\$2.80

Cash payments at register:

Cash is gladly accepted at the cafeteria register for meal and a la carte item purchases, and to add funds on the student's account; however, cashiers do not have adequate funds to make change for customers with bills larger than \$20. Bills larger than \$20.00 will only be accepted for meal payment if the entire amount is deposited into their meal account.

Automated Meal Account:

Each school has an automated system that can track the payment and purchasing activity of each individual student's account. Meals may be pre-paid for the week, month, or even the year by cash, check, or by using the on-line payment system (see below for details). Prepayment is encouraged because it eliminates the daily handling of money for the child. It reduces the time the student must stand in line waiting, providing them more time to enjoy their meal.

Students may purchase meals and extra foods sold through the School Nutrition Program with funds debited from their meal account. **If parents/guardians wish to limit the use of their child's account to meals only, each school year parents/guardians must send a written note to the school's cafeteria manager stating that their child will not be allowed to purchase extra items from their meal account. If this restriction is applied to the account, all extra items selected will require cash at the time of purchase.**

Parents/guardians or siblings having lunch with an elementary student may use the funds on the student meal account to pay for guest meals. Guests may cover their purchases with a check or cash.

Pre-payment by Debit or Credit Card via the Internet:

Parents/guardians may prepay online for a child's meals using a valid credit/check card. Parents/guardians will need to know their child's student ID and school name to register for an account and to deposit funds on the account. If the child's ID is unknown, contact the school's front office. To learn more about paying on-line, visit www.mypaymentsplus.com.

Meal Charge Policy:

Students in elementary will be allowed to charge up to the equivalent of five (5) meals. Middle and high school students are allowed one meal charge. No ala carte purchases may be charged to the student's meal account, except milk or carton juice when a meal is brought from home. A charge notice will be completed and sent home to the parent/guardian through the student. To assist parents, student account balances can be monitored any time via www.mypaymentsplus.com regardless of the payment method you use. If you notice that your child's account is low on funds, please consider sending cash or check for the day as an on-line payment may not post to your child's account in time for meal service. After the fifth unpaid charge, the manager may offer the student a snack or partial meal such as a sandwich or crackers and milk. Parents/guardians should be aware of their child's school policy for unpaid charges. This policy may be found on the School Nutrition page of the school's website. Students who have unpaid meal charges will not be allowed to purchase any extra sale food items until the charges have been satisfied.

NOTE: To ensure that students in elementary schools do not carry over a negative account balance into the new school year, meal charges will not be accepted beginning the first school day in May.

Returned Check Policy:

The Food and Nutrition Services Program will accept checks for exact payment of meals or prepayments to the student's debit account. The program will not cash personal checks or give change back when a check is received for payment.

FCS uses a check company to collect checks that are returned unpaid. Without further notice, they will attempt to collect on the check electronically if it is returned unpaid by your bank for any reason. If a check is returned unpaid, the face amount and a state-authorized fee will be collected electronically from the parent's account when the money is available. If a parent writes a check to the district, they are consenting to allow the check recovery company to electronically collect the face amount and the fee if the check is returned unpaid by the banking institution to the recovery company. After the Board of Education, or any entity thereof, has received two (2) checks returned by a financial institution due to insufficient funds or closed accounts, all financial transactions thereafter will be on a cash only basis.

Free and Reduced Priced Meals Availability:

The Free and Reduced Priced Meal Program is available to assist families during times of financial hardship. **The School Nutrition Program accepts free and reduced meal applications throughout the school year.** Students approved for free or reduced priced meals may eat both **breakfast and lunch** free or at a reduced cost. Parents can rest assured the information supplied on the form is strictly confidential and student identification is protected with the computer software used at the cashier's station.

- Eligibility for Free or Reduced price meals is **not retroactive**, therefore the parent or guardian is responsible for payment of school meals until the F&R application is approved.
- A current year 2020-2021 application must be submitted. Prior year application forms cannot be accepted. The current school year application is available at each school, in the Registration Office at the Hill Center and on the system's website, www.forsyth.k12.ga.us.
- On-line applications make it faster and easier for families to apply for free or reduced priced meals. Visit the food and nutrition website at www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/nutrition for further information.
- **OR** you may complete and sign an application and submit it via one of the following methods:
 - scanned and emailed to smckinzie@forsyth.k12.ga.us
 - faxed to 770-888-3464
 - sent via US mail to: Food & Nutrition Services, 1140 Dahlonga Hwy, Cumming GA 30040
 - submitted to any school cafeteria.
- Applications will be processed within 10 school days of receipt at the central office. Written notification of eligibility/denial will be sent to the household address via US mail.



MEDIA CENTER

The Media Center is open and accessible throughout the school day. The Media Center houses books, magazines, several newspapers, audiovisual materials and equipment, computers, Chromebooks, laptops, makerspace items and reference materials. The Media Center can distribute video and "live" programs throughout the school. Students are encouraged to explore the diverse materials available to help them in their academic studies in the media center.



MEDICATIONS AND FEVERS

All medications (prescription and nonprescription) must be brought to school by the parent/ guardian. No student will be allowed to bring medications to school. Students may not have medication in their possession, except with a physician's order for emergency situations only. Medications brought in bags or other unmarked containers will not be given. Prescription medication must be in the pharmacy container labeled with the child's name, date, name of medication, name of prescribing physician, time(s) the medication is to be given and name of pharmacy filling the prescription. Please ask the pharmacist to provide two labeled prescription bottles so that parents/guardians have one

bottle at home and one at school. Do not send medication to the school that needs to be given only once daily or two/three times a day unless the physician specifically states a time during the school day for the medication to be given. If medication can be given at home, please do so.

Parents/guardians must provide specific instructions (including drugs and related equipment) to the nurse. It will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the school of any changes in pertinent data. A "Request for Administration of Medication" form must be completed by the parent/guardian. **New medications will not be given unless a new form is completed.** The bottom portion of the form is to be completed by the physician for **ANY** long-term medication (more than two weeks.) The term "physician" is used as defined in Article 2 of the Medical Practice Act of Georgia. The form may be brought to the school by the parent or faxed by the parent or physician. Due to the risk of Reye's Syndrome in children under the age of 18, the school will require a physician's signature in order to give any aspirin-containing medications including Aspirin, Pepto-Bismol, and Excedrin. Due to the risk of choking, students may not bring cough drops. All medications, herbals, and supplements must be approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and appear in the U.S. Pharmacopeia.

OUT-OF-DISTRICT STUDENTS

Students are expected to attend school in the district in which they live. Parents who wish to request a transfer may complete an out-of-district school form on-line on the school system's website. If a request for transfer is approved, it shall be the responsibility of the parents/guardians to provide transportation for their child both to and from school and to ensure that the student arrives on time and is picked up on time each afternoon. Students enjoying out-of-district status must demonstrate academic and behavioral success, as well as good attendance, in order to continue attending DeSana.

PARENT NOTICE OF TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

In compliance with the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act, parents may request the following information:

1. Whether the student's teacher-
 - Has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
 - Is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and,
 - Is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.
2. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

PARENT-TEACHER-STUDENT CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher-Student conferences are highly encouraged. Consistent, positive contact between the home and school helps to create a climate of trust and enhances student opportunities for academic and personal success. Fall and spring early-release days facilitate the opportunity for large numbers of conferences. If a parent desires a conference prior to being notified by a teacher, they are to call or email their child's teacher(s) to request a conference.

PARTIES

Parties (birthday, holiday, etc.) are not allowed at DeSana Middle School. Soft drinks, cakes, etc. should not be brought to school.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH

Emphasizing the importance of total fitness, this course gives each student the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of recreational activities such as track and field, softball, soccer, basketball, dance, recreational games and volleyball, as well as fitness training. The American Alliance of Health, Physical Education and Recreation (AAHPER) FITNESSGRAM is used as a measure of each student's level of fitness and gives guidelines for individual fitness goals.

PE Uniforms - All students are required to dress out in a PE uniform on a daily basis.

- The P.E. uniform will consist of athletic shorts and a Grey T-Shirt. "DeSana Middle School" PE t-shirts and shorts of good quality may be purchased through the PE Department. Students are highly encouraged to purchase a PE shirt through the DeSana PE Department as it is a must for identifying our students when they are outside for PE (for our students' safety). Should a student/parent need financial assistance in purchasing a DeSana PE uniform, we encourage our parents/students to speak to one of our PE coaches about such help.
- Tennis shoes and socks are also a required part of the P.E. uniform.
- Cut-off jeans may **not** be worn and T-shirts must be plain (advertising of any kind is **not** permitted).
- A warm-up suit may be worn over the P.E. uniform on cold days.
- No other clothing may be worn as part of the P.E. uniform, and undergarments may not hang out below the shorts.

Students will be given a minimum of three assessments each nine weeks (written assessments and/or skills assessments). More detailed information about grading procedures will be included in the Health and Physical Education Course Syllabus given to students at the start of each nine week course. In order for consideration to be given for a student to be excused from participation in PE, a note must be brought from home and given to the P.E. instructor. Students may still be required to dress out for P.E. Notes must include a parent/guardian phone number for verification purposes. Frequent excuses or excuses for extended periods of time must be written by a physician. An excused student will be given an alternative assignment to earn his/her daily grade and/or skills assessment grade.

Fitness Assessment:

As a component of Physical Education, a variety of fitness assessment activities and techniques will be used to measure different areas of health-related fitness. These may include but are not limited to 1. The PACER run or one mile run for cardiovascular fitness; 2. Push-Ups for upper body strength; 3. Curl-Ups for abdominal strength; 4. Back-Saver Sit and Reach for flexibility. Lifelong fitness and wellness may be promoted through exposure to modern technology tools such as fitness trackers and apps.



PROMOTION / RETENTION

State Board Rule 160-4-2-.11, Promotion, Placement, Retention, requires that students demonstrate mastery of grade level content and skills in Reading in grades 3, 5 and 8, and in Mathematics in grades 5 and 8 on the *Georgia Milestones End of Grade (EOG)* assessments. Students who are not on grade-level are considered candidates for retention. For eighth grade students who do not show mastery of the grade level content and skills in Reading and Mathematics on the *Georgia Milestones EOG* administered in April, they will be recommended for remediation and must retake the *EOG* section(s) on which they did not demonstrate mastery of the content and skills in order to be considered for promotion. In FCS, schools must consider the state assessment (*EOG*) as part of the totality of evidence when considering promotion, placement and retention of a student. The school principal or designee and a committee consisting of teacher(s) and parents, will meet to review all assessment data and other relevant information, to make a final decision whether to place the student in the next grade level, or to retain the student. This decision will be based on the totality of evidence.

For students in 6th and 7th grade, retention may be recommended if the student's academic achievement shows that the student is not performing at grade level and/or if the student does not demonstrate mastery of grade level content and skills on the *Georgia Milestones End of Grade (EOG)* assessments. Placement or retention of sixth and seventh grade students will be determined by a team consisting of teacher(s) and parents, who will meet to review all assessment data and other relevant information (i.e. student work samples, progress reports and report cards, and other relevant

information), to make a final decision whether to place the student in the next grade level, or to retain the student. This decision will be based on the totality of evidence.



RECOGNITION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

There will be a variety of student recognition celebrations throughout the year. These *may* include, but are not limited to:

PRIDE Award Celebration
Academic Achievement Celebration
Club Celebrations
Art and Photography Exhibitions

Honors Day Celebrations
Athletic Awards Nights
Music Performances
Kindness Matters Award Recognition



REGISTRATION

Registration for all new students will be conducted at the Hill Center at 136 Elm Street in Cumming. To make an appointment to register your child call (678) 947-0863, or you may schedule an appointment through the school district's website at www.forsyth.k12.ga.us.

In order to register, a student must have the following:

1. A current Georgia immunization certificate and an eye, ear, and dental certificate
2. Documentation of withdrawal from the previous school (if applicable)
3. Proof of residency in school district
4. Copy of the student's birth certificate
5. Student's social security number



RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS AND ADDRESS CHANGES

Proof of residence is required when a student initially enrolls in a school and whenever indication of a change of residence occurs. Change of Address forms are available at the school or at <http://www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/Page/48193>

In the event of an address change, the Registration Center staff, principal or principal's designee shall accept the following records as proof of residency:

A current utility bill (gas, electric, water, telephone, or cable) and a current and valid lease or rental agreement signed by the owner of the residence. Records must include the name and service address of the parent/guardian.

OR

A current utility bill (gas, electric, water, telephone, or cable) and one of the following documents establishing home ownership – deed, closing statement, mortgage statement, or property tax statement. Records must include the name and service address of the parent/guardian.

OR

A Forsyth County Schools Affidavit of Residency, if a parent/guardian is unable to provide the records listed above. The notarized affidavit shall be completed and signed by the parent/guardian, as well as the legal owner or landlord of the property where the student and parent/guardian reside. The affidavit will be in effect until the parent/guardian provides proof of residence as required by the Forsyth County Board of Education. The owner of the property must also provide a current utility bill (gas, electric, water, telephone, or cable) and one of the following documents establishing home ownership – deed, closing statement, mortgage statement, or property tax statement. Records must include the name and service address of the parent/guardian.

A school system representative may visit the address given by any parent/guardian to verify residency.

A family that rents a home in Forsyth County, while owning a home in another county or in a different school attendance zone within Forsyth County solely for the purpose of proving residence for their children to attend school in Forsyth County

will be considered in violation of this policy. Students who are illegally enrolled shall be immediately withdrawn. Violations of this policy may be pursued in court.

In cases of separation or divorce, the student will be deemed a resident of the parent/guardian who is indicated in legal agreement or the court's final decree to have physical custody. In cases of joint physical custody by parents, the student will be deemed to be a resident with the parent/guardian with whom the student resides overnight during the majority of the school week.



RESPONSIBLE USE GUIDELINES For FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS' COMMUNITY

The mission of Forsyth County Schools (FCS) is to prepare and inspire all students to contribute and excel. The district provides ongoing student instruction that develops graduated digital citizenship for using technology as a tool to achieve this mission. Information and Communication Technology is an integral part of FCS' curriculum across subjects and grades in developmentally appropriate ways, and it is aligned to the competencies listed in the district's Learner Profile which include: seek knowledge and understanding; think critically and solve problems; listen, communicate and interact effectively; exhibit strong personal qualities; and engage and compete in a global environment.

I understand that using digital devices (whether personal or school owned) and the FCS network is a privilege, and when I use them according to the Responsible Use Guidelines I will keep that privilege. I also acknowledge that use of the FCS network with any device may be monitored for compliance with federal, state and local laws and policies.

All members of Forsyth County Schools' community agree to follow the Forsyth County Schools Code of Conduct, school rules and commit to the following responsible use guidelines.

I will:

- Use digital devices, networks and software in school for educational purposes and activities.
- Keep my personal information (including home/mobile phone number, mailing address, and user password) and that of others private.
- Show respect for myself and others when using technology including social media.
- Give acknowledgement to others for their ideas and work.
- Report inappropriate use of technology immediately.

The Responsible Use Procedure will be reviewed each school year together with students and teachers as part of Digital Citizenship training and will provide a springboard for teaching and learning around topics such as Internet safety, online privacy, digital footprint, and fair use of technology.

** Developed based on Responsible Use Procedures of Canyon County Schools and the Holy Spirit Roman Catholic Separate Regional Division.*



SAFETY

P3 Campus Anonymous Reporting: Students are encouraged to report information about weapons, drugs, threats of violence or other dangerous or harmful situations to the principal, an assistant principal, a teacher or another trusted adult. Anonymous TIPS can also be reported to FCS' Crime Stoppers by one of two ways.

2. ANONYMOUS Web tip at <https://www.p3campus.com/campus/index.htm>
3. Call the ANONYMOUS tip line at 770-888-3466 ext. 1 or 3.

CTAE Student Safety Guidelines

Career, technical, and agricultural education courses (CTAE) offered in Forsyth County middle and high schools are hands-on, project based, career pathways where students will be developing projects that may require the use of equipment, machinery, chemicals, and other items which, if used incorrectly, can be considered hazardous. Because of that, safety in the classroom is priority for students, teachers, parents, and anyone else involved in CTAE. Although every attempt is made to ensure a safe learning environment for our students, accidents do occur. Parents and guardians should be aware that in the event your child is injured at school, the district does not carry medical insurance on individual students and will not cover the medical expenses from an accident. Teachers will review the guidelines below with students as part of their safety orientation to the lab setting. Students will not be allowed to participate in the lab setting until these guidelines have been covered, demonstrated, and assessed for understanding. By acknowledging these guidelines, students must obey these rules to ensure their own safety and that of their fellow students and teachers. Students should fully cooperate with their teacher and fellow students to maintain a safe lab environment. They should also closely follow the oral and written instructions provided by the teacher. Any violation of this safety agreement that results in unsafe conduct in the laboratory or misbehavior would necessitate students being removed from the classroom, detention, receiving a failing grade, and/or further disciplinary action.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Students must always conduct themselves in a responsible manner in the classroom and lab setting.
2. Students must follow all written and verbal instructions carefully. If he/she does not understand a direction or piece of equipment, ask the teacher before proceeding with task.
3. Students should never work alone in a lab setting. No student may work in the classroom or lab setting without the presence of the teacher.
4. When first entering the classroom and lab, students should not touch any equipment or materials until they are instructed to do so.
5. Students should perform only those tasks authorized by the teacher and carefully follow all instructions, both written and oral. Unauthorized experiments/activities/equipment use is not allowed.
6. Students must be prepared for their work in the career pathway, read all directions thoroughly, or never fool around in the shop. Horseplay, practical jokes, and pranks are dangerous and prohibited.
7. Students must observe good housekeeping practices. Work areas should be kept clean and tidy at all times.
8. Students must be alert and proceed with caution at all times in the classroom and lab area and notify the teacher immediately of any unsafe conditions observed.
9. Labels and equipment instructions must be read carefully before use. Setup and use the equipment as directed by the teacher.
10. Students must keep hands away from face, eyes, mouth, and body while using equipment and wash their hands with soap and water after performing all activities.
11. Experiments and equipment must always be teacher monitored. Students should not wander around the room, distract other students, startle other students, or interfere with the procedures of others.

12. Students must know the locations, operating procedures, and identifications of all safety equipment, including first aid kit(s) and fire extinguisher(s). They should know where the fire alarm and the emergency exits are located.

13. Students must know what to do and execute the fire safety plan if there is a fire drill during a class period; containers must be closed, and any electrical equipment in use turned off.

CLOTHING

14. Anytime equipment is used which has the potential to cause damage to the eyes, students will wear safety goggles.

15. Students must dress properly during all lab activities. Long hair, dangling jewelry, and loose or baggy clothing are a hazard in all lab settings. Long hair must be tied back, and dangling jewelry and baggy clothing must be secured. At times, sleeves, long pants, and solid shoes may be required.

ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

16. Students must report any accident (spill, breakage, etc.) or injury (cut, burn, etc.) to the teacher immediately, no matter how minor it may seem.

HANDLING GLASSWARE AND EQUIPMENT

17. Students should never handle broken glass with bare hands but use a brush and dustpan to clean up broken glass. They should place broken glass in the designated glass disposal container.

18. If students do not understand how to use a piece of equipment, ask the teacher for help.

Note: If you disagree with the CTAE Student Safety Guidelines, please contact your school's principal within ten days of enrollment.

Emergency Evacuation of Campus:

In the event of a crisis situation that requires the evacuation of the school campus, students and staff will be transported to a safe, secured site. As soon as the safety and security of students is assured, traffic control is established and checkout preparations are made, parents/guardians will be notified regarding family reunification procedures.

2) Emergency Notification to Parents:

3) Parents/guardians are requested to make arrangements in advance for taking care of their children when schools are closed for emergency reasons. The plans should include arrangements for school closings, delayed openings and early dismissals.

FCS closings will be announced on the local and metro media outlets, the school system website, www.forsyth.k12.ga.us, social media (www.facebook.com/FCSchools and www.twitter.com/FCSchoolsGA), and on the automated voice service at (770) 887-2461. Subscribers to Parent Portal and FCS newsletters will also receive an email notifying them on closings or delays. Please note that you should verify the information by checking two sources, especially when relying on social media for information. Fake social media accounts with school and/or the district names and logos violate copyright laws but unfortunately are common. FCS' official social media accounts have been in existence for many years and therefore have a long list of tweets and followers, while fake accounts have significantly less.

- **School Closing and Delayed Opening Information:** School closings or delays will be announced as described above before 5:30 a.m. If school opening is delayed, please follow the same routine/schedule as normal, but push back the start time by two hours. On delayed days, breakfast is not served, lunch will be served and school will dismiss at the regular time.
- **Early Dismissal Information:** Early dismissals will be announced as described above. In the event of inclement weather, notification will be as soon as the decision is made. In the event of a school crisis, parents/guardians will be notified after the safety and security of students is assured.
- **Online Learning for School Closures:** In the event of a school closure, Forsyth County Schools will recover instructional time lost by utilizing asynchronous (not at the same time) online learning using itslearning. Each teacher will instruct students on where to find school closure activities in their itslearning course, and teachers will have lessons posted in itslearning no later than 9:00 a.m. on the day school is closed. Students should begin working on their lessons on the day school is closed when possible. If students have questions about their lessons, they may contact teachers during their posted office hours. Student work is due three school days upon returning to school.

Emergency Response to Life Threatening Asthma or Allergic Reactions:

FCS partners with District II Public Health to implement a program for the emergency response to life threatening asthma or systemic allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) opioid overdose. School staff members are trained to assess the clinical signs, call 911 and administer the medications (Benadryl, epinephrine injection, nebulized bronchodilator, or Naloxone). The student must be transported to the nearest emergency room for evaluation and treatment.

False Public Alarms:

Bomb and other terroristic threats, fire alarms and prank 911 calls will not be tolerated. Consequences may include a parent/guardian conference, immediate suspension, referral to law enforcement, and referral to a disciplinary tribunal hearing. If found guilty by a tribunal, the student is also subject to expulsion, long term suspension and restitution. The tribunal will impose restitution for all expenses incurred for lost instructional time and the restoration of the instructional process. Restitution may include but will not be limited to costs for: salaries, transportation, food and water, care for the handicapped, phone and other communication, laboratory work and any other legitimate expense incurred in the restoration of the normal educational operation of the school and the school system.

Gang Related Activity:

Gang related activity will not be tolerated in FCS. Students engaging in gang related activities will be subject to disciplinary action as defined in the Forsyth County Board of Education Code of Conduct and Discipline Procedures. See the definitions of *Gang Member* and *Gang Related Activity* below.

In addition to those definitions, from time to time new types of gang communication methods or activities may be invented. In that event, the Principal is authorized to further define and prohibit those newly developed activities. Gang Member is defined as: A person who is part of an association of three or more people who form an allegiance for a common purpose and engage, individually or collectively in illegal behavior. Gang Related Activity is defined as: Any act or exhibition, individual or collective, which (1) communicates gang allegiance or affiliation; and / or (2) would be a criminal act if committed by an adult; and (3) is deemed to be gang related by the Principal. Gang related activity includes but is not limited to: communication of gang affiliation through hand sign flashing, wearing of clothing articles in a certain way or color scheme; jewelry, tattoos, gang symbols or graffiti on personal items; vandalism of public or private property, and acts of intimidation, threat, fighting and other forms of violence.

Possession of Weapon:

It shall be unlawful for any person to carry or possess or have under such person's control while within a school safety zone or at a school building, school function, or school property or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the school any weapon or explosive compound, other than fireworks. Board policy and state law require that any student determined to have brought a weapon to school will be expelled from school for a minimum of one calendar year, subject to modification on a case-by-case basis as required or authorized by state and federal law.

Progressive Discipline Procedures:

To the extent appropriate to the situation, school administrators and teachers will follow a progressive discipline process. The degree of discipline to be imposed by each school official should be in proportion to the severity of the behavior, while taking into account the totality of the situation, including the student's age, discipline history, and other relevant factors. Schools are not required to start at step one of progressive discipline if the behavior warrants a more severe punishment.

Student Searches:

Student cars brought on campus, student book bags, and school lockers, desks and other school property shall be subject to inspection and search by school authorities at all times without further notice to students or parents. FCS reserves the right to use "walk-through" and "hand-held" metal detectors and "drug or weapon sniffing" dogs at school and during any school function, including activities which occur outside normal school hours or off the school campus. Students are notified that these metal detectors will be used at the discretion of administrators.



SCHOOL SOCIALS

School socials may be held for a particular grade level periodically throughout the school year. These events are usually held after school with the time to be determined. Students are required to have a signed parent permission slip to attend each event. An area for dancing and an area for other activities may be designated depending upon the type of event. A nominal admission is charged. High expectations are held for appropriate student behavior and dress. Administrators, teachers, and parents will chaperone these events and they are for DeSana students only. Any student in ISS or OSS for the day or who misses at least half of the school day may not participate in a school social for that day.



SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Suggested school supplies for each grade level are listed on our DMS website. Other specific supplies may be suggested as optional by individual teachers, however, no student will be denied learning opportunities if he/she is financially unable to secure requested materials.



SCHOOL CLOSING, EARLY DISMISSAL, DELAYED OPENING, AND EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION

FCS closings will be announced on the local and metro media outlets, the school system website, www.forsyth.k12.ga.us, social media (www.facebook.com/FCSchools and www.twitter.com/FCSchoolsGA), and on the automated voice service at (770) 887-2461. Subscribers to Parent Portal and FCS newsletters will also receive an email notifying them on closings or delays.

- **School Closing and Delayed Opening Information:** School closings or delays will be announced as described above before 5:30 a.m. If school opening is delayed, please follow the same routine/schedule as normal, but push back the start time by two hours. On delayed days, breakfast is not served, lunch will be served and school will dismiss at the regular time.
- **Early Dismissal Information:** Early dismissals will be announced as described above. In the event of inclement weather, notification will be as soon as the decision is made. In the event of a school crisis, parents/guardians will be notified after the safety and security of students is assured.



SEX/AIDS EDUCATION

Sex/AIDS education lessons are included as part of the health curriculum for grades 6-8. FCS uses the *Choosing the Best* program for sex/AIDS education lessons. *Choosing the Best* is an abstinence centered program that is correlated with the Georgia Performance Standards. The units of study include: the risks of STDs and HIV/AIDS; teen pregnancy; pressures to be sexually active; sex, love and healthy choices; avoiding unhealthy relationships; and setting boundaries. Health teachers may include human growth and development content within the sex/AIDS education lessons.

Parents/guardians may schedule an appointment to review the sex/AIDS education curriculum resources used at their child's school by contacting the lead health teacher of the school. If a parent/guardian does not wish for his/her child to participate in this portion of the course, notification must be made in writing to the health teacher prior to the beginning of the unit. Alternative assignments will be given and assessed for those students opting out of sex/AIDS education lessons.



SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES & SECTION 504

A teacher, principal, counselor, or parent/guardian may recommend students for referral for student support team interventions, 504 plan accommodations, and/or for special education eligibility. If the student support team determines that an evaluation needs to be completed to consider additional services, an initial evaluation for special education services is administered only with written parental consent. After an evaluation is completed, a meeting (including parent/guardians, teachers, administrator and school psychologist) will determine the student's special education eligibility; and if appropriate, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for special education services will be developed. The Special Education Parent Rights document is located on the school system's special education website.

Section 504:

A teacher, educator, or parent/guardian may refer a student for consideration of a Section 504 Accommodation Plan based on a medical or physical impairment by contacting the school's Section 504 Plan chairperson. The Procedural Safeguards for Section 504 and Parent Right's documents are located on the school system's Section 504 Resources website.

Georgia Special Needs Scholarship:

Parents/guardians of students who receive special education services in FCS have the option to exercise public and private school choice. Under a State law passed by the Georgia State Legislature in 2007, parents/guardians of students who receive special education may choose to transfer their child to another public school or private school in Georgia. Parents/guardians must be current residents of Georgia and have been residents for one year.

Special Needs Public School Choice Options:

A parent/guardian can request a transfer to another public school within their school system as long as there is available space at that school and the school has a program with the services agreed to in the student's existing individualized education program (IEP). If the parent/guardian chooses this option, then the parent/guardian shall be responsible for transportation to the school. All requests for transfers to another in-system public school must be submitted by February 1st for approval for the upcoming school year.

The parent/guardian may request a transfer to a school in another school system if there is available space and the system and school have a program with the services agreed to in the student's existing individualized education program. **Note:** It is allowable for a school system to have a policy not to accept students that reside out of the school system. If a school system accepts the child, then the parent/guardian shall be responsible for transportation to the school in that system. If a school system approves an out of system transfer request, it can charge a parent/guardian for the costs of educating a student; also known as out of district tuition. **Note:** Funds received through the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program cannot be used to offset the costs of out of district tuition.

The parent/guardian may also request a transfer to one of the State schools for the deaf and /or blind operated by the State Board of Education. Acceptance into a State school will depend on whether or not that setting is appropriate for the student's needs. If the parent/guardian chooses this option, then the parent/guardian shall be responsible for transportation to the State school. Please contact the Georgia Department of Education for more information about transferring to a State school.

Special Needs Private School Choice Option:

Parents/guardians interested in transferring their child to a private school in Georgia may be able to take advantage of a Georgia Special Needs Scholarship. These scholarships provide funding that can be used to offset tuition costs at participating private schools in the State of Georgia. For more information on the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship and the parent application process, visit the Georgia Department of Education's website at <http://www.gadoe.org/External-Affairs-and-Policy/Policy/Pages/Special-Needs-Scholarship-Program.aspx>

TRANSPORTATION (BOARD POLICY EDC):

FCS provides school bus transportation for all eligible FCS students based on the student's residence and school of enrollment, and in compliance with federal, state and/or local laws, rules, regulations and/or procedures. The Transportation Department is authorized to develop a framework and procedures that provide transportation services to eligible FCS students.

The Forsyth County Board of Education encourages supervision appropriate to the age and/or maturity level(s) of students at bus stops by parents or guardians.

The Code of Conduct applies on the school bus and at the bus stop as each is considered an extension of the school and classroom. As such, behaviors are expected to be safe, orderly and respectful at the stop and on and around the school bus.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to become familiar with transportation practices and procedures specific to our service. You may find those at www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/transportation or you may request clarification and/or assistance from the appropriate staff member found at the "Who Should I Call" link on the department web page.



STAYING AFTER SCHOOL

Students are not allowed to stay on campus after school hours unless they have permission from a DeSana teacher, coach, or administrator, or are staying for a school-sponsored event. The school cannot assume responsibility for any student who violates this policy. For safety reasons, students are not permitted to walk off campus and then return to school for their activity. Students remaining at school are the direct responsibility of the teacher, coach, or administrator granting permission to stay after school.

To retain social and other after-school privileges, students must be picked up promptly. This holds true for school-sponsored activities such as athletic and scholastic competitive events and practices, club activities, school socials, etc. Students should make arrangements to be picked up at the scheduled time. Failure to do so will result in notification indicating that future infractions will lead to having attendance privileges revoked for the remainder of the semester. Similar action will be taken for students who choose to remain on campus but are not attending a specific event. If necessary, law enforcement officials will be contacted to transfer students to a safe location while waiting for their parents. If this occurs, a note will be posted on the front entrance doors of the school so that parents can be notified that this has occurred. These procedures are in place to ensure the safety of our students and to keep parents informed regarding the whereabouts of their children. Students should also be aware that proper behavior is expected in order to retain the privilege of attending after-school events. If student behavior warrants removal from the event, no refund (if applicable) will be provided.

If a student is absent from school, (s)he is NOT allowed to attend after school events for that day. This includes practice sessions, games, performances, dances, club meetings, etc. The same restrictions are in effect for students who have

served in-school or out-of-school suspension for the day.



STUDENT AGENDA

Every DeSana student is required to have some sort of an Agenda (*Dragon Planner*) for the entire year to help with organization of school assignments, projects and activities. We encourage students to purchase a *Dragon Planner* which will be available in the DeSana School Store for a nominal charge. Students may also use electronic devices as their Agenda.

Students are expected to have their Agenda with them daily, in all classes. Each class will have a designated time where students will be expected to write down in their Agenda the learning goal for that class that day and any class work and homework assignments given. Parents are encouraged to review their child's Agenda nightly and to reiterate its importance to their child staying organized and on top of things.



STUDENT DROP-OFF AND PICK UP LOCATION

A.M. Drop-off and P.M. Pick-up

Parents will drop-off and pick up their child at the main entrance to DeSana Middle School. In order to have a more expedient and effective procedure, parents must encircle the drive and parking lot and drop off/pick up their child on the way out. Students will not be allowed to cross out-going traffic to reach their ride coming in the drive. We ask parents' full support and cooperation with these procedures to ensure the safe-keeping of all of our students. No CELL PHONES should be used by anyone driving in the car drop-off/pick-up area.

Students should not be dropped off at school before 7:30 AM. Adult supervision is not available until that time.



TEENAGE DRIVER CURFEW

Georgia law (O.C.G.A. §40-5-24) prohibits Class D licensed drivers from driving on public roads, streets or highways between the hours of 12:00 midnight and 6:00 a.m. It is the responsibility of individual students, to be informed as to the terms and conditions which currently exist or may be imposed upon driver's licenses issued by the State of Georgia, and to comply with such terms and conditions. It is not the responsibility of the Forsyth County Board of Education, its board members, employees or agents to either inform students of such terms or conditions, or insure compliance with the laws of this State.



TELEPHONE USE

In order to protect the instructional time of our students, phone calls from the office will only be made in the case of an emergency. Likewise, phone calls from a child's parent to make special arrangements will not be accepted in the office.

Parents may not change their child's mode of transportation through the school office unless in the case of an extreme emergency. Administrative approval must first be given. Students will not be called to the office or the phone during class time without administrative approval. This approval will only be given in an emergency situation. These procedures are in place in order to safeguard all of our students and to minimize the interruptions to students' instructional time. Failure to make arrangements to stay after school or bring necessary materials to school does not constitute an emergency. If a student is ill and needs to call home, he or she is to use the designated phone in the clinic. **Cell phones and other electronic devices must be in OFF mode and kept out of sight during the school day unless it is being used for instructional purposes.**

TEXTBOOKS

All textbooks are on loan to students for use during the school year. Each student is responsible for the textbooks issued to him/her. Payment for lost or damaged books is the responsibility of the student and his/her parent or guardian.

TRANSPORTATION

FCS provides school bus transportation for all eligible FCS students based on the student's residence and school of enrollment, and in compliance with federal, state and/or local laws, rules, regulations and/or procedures. The Transportation Department is authorized to develop a framework and procedures that provide transportation services to eligible FCS students.

The Forsyth County Board of Education encourages supervision appropriate to the age and/or maturity level(s) of students at bus stops by parents or guardians.

The Code of Conduct applies on the school bus and at the bus stop as each is considered an extension of the school and classroom. As such, behaviors are expected to be safe, orderly and respectful at the stop and on and around the school bus.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to become familiar with transportation practices and procedures specific to our service. You may find those at www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/transportation or you may request clarification and/or assistance from the appropriate staff member found at the "Who Should I Call" link on the department web page.

VISITORS

For students' and staff's safety, all visitors must report to the school office and sign in upon arrival to campus. Visitor badges will be issued to visitors and must be worn while on campus. Students are not allowed to bring visiting friends or relatives to school with them during a regular school day. Please see pages 12 and 13 in this handbook for more information about classroom observations by parents or service providers.

WITHDRAWAL REQUIREMENTS

The parent/guardian who enrolled the student is expected to accompany the student to withdraw. Any fees owed are expected to be paid at this time. Copies of any requested grading or testing information that is needed for registration at the new school will be provided at this time.



7 Stepping Stones to *SUCCESS* at DeSana

S - Studios . . . Always!

U - Understanding of oneself and others

C - Connect with others and collaborate

C - Choose wisely (The choices, after all, are yours!)

E - Excellence always!

S - Set personal goals (Begin with the end in mind!)

S - Seize each moment!

SOME THINGS PARENTS CAN DO TO HELP YOUR CHILD BE SUCCESSFUL IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Sign-up for *Parent Portal* in the DMS office and obtain your child's *itslearning* password. Many questions about assignments and grades can be answered by accessing this information in *Parent Portal* and *itslearning*
- Review your child's student agenda (*Dragon Planner*) daily with your child. Carefully go over long-range and short-range assignments.
- Check in at the office and secure a visitors sticker prior to visiting or working in the building.
- Support the people and events/activities at school.
- Maintain a positive attitude about your child, the school, and members of the school staff.
- If a problem occurs at school, get the facts, and then work together with the faculty and staff at school to solve the problem.
- Work as a volunteer.
- Attend all parent meetings.
- Come to school for parent/teacher conferences and be on time.
- Tell staff members when they have done something good for or with your child. Likewise, if your child is struggling, contact his/her teachers and set up a time to meet to problem solve a plan of action.
- Play with your child.
- Know where your child is and what he/she is doing at all times.
- Check your child's text messages and social media pages (if he/she has one) on a regular basis.
- Help your child learn perseverance. Help him/her to know that frustration and difficult situations and tasks are a natural part of life, and that one must learn perseverance to work through them.
- Help your child understand that learning is not always fun.
- Help your child build resiliency.
- Provide many opportunities for your child to develop and show personal responsibility.
- Provide many opportunities for your child to be creative.
- Be reasonable in your expectations for your child and his/her teacher.
- Appreciate what your child is getting in the way of an education.
- Talk with your child.
- Help your child with his/her homework, but do not *do* it for him/her.
- Help your child schedule time daily to be involved in some physical activity.
- Help ensure your child gets enough sleep each night.