



**L**eaders  
**A**ccountable  
**K**ind  
**E**ngaged  
**R**espectful  
**S**uccessful

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# Pymatuning Valley Middle School Student and Family Handbook

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2023-2024 School Year

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**PYMATUNING VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL  
2023-2024 STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK**

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## **Introduction**

Welcome to Pymatuning Valley Middle School! This handbook is a guide to the policies and procedures of Pymatuning Valley Middle School. Please be sure to read through this handbook in its entirety, as changes are made year to year as to stay current with state and federal changes.

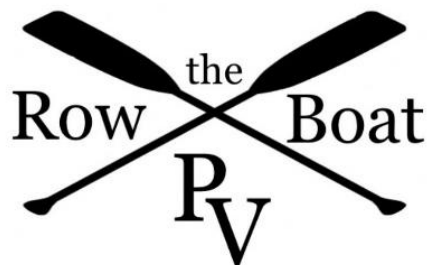
PV Middle School's goal is to educate and foster the development of the whole child with rigorous academic content while simultaneously nurturing the social-emotional development of each and every child. Inside this handbook you will find information on our Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, better known as, PBIS.

Please never hesitate to contact the school with any questions/concerns you may have. It's going to be a great year!

- Mrs. Wendy Tisch  
Principal

**Mission Statement:** The Pymatuning Valley Local Schools prepare students for personal and professional success through scholarship, servant leadership, and community partnerships.

**Vision Statement:** The Pymatuning Valley Local Schools inspire lifelong learning and responsible citizenship to honor the LAKER PRIDE tradition.



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## SCHOOL DAY

The school day takes place from 7:20 am - 2:05 pm.

Doors will open to students at 7:20 and students will report directly to homeroom. Breakfast is no longer free to all students. Jr. High will eat breakfast in the cafeteria once again.

**No students shall arrive earlier than 7:20 as they would be unable to enter the building and would be unsupervised.**

## STUDENT DROP OFF/PARENT PARKING

**For the safety of our students, ALL before school drop-offs and after school pickups will take place in the back of the building.**

Parents and visitors are asked to park in front of the school in the designated parking lot. All parents and visitors must sign in at the front desk upon arrival. If a parent or visitor will be travelling throughout the school, he or she must wear a visitor's badge, which is issued at the front desk.



## VISITATION

Please note that all visitors entering the school building throughout the course of the school day must, by Ohio Revised Code 3313.20 and 2917.211, register in the office where they will be given a visitor's pass. This regulation exists for the protection and safety of each and every child attending school. Parents wishing to meet with a classroom teacher before, during, or after school are asked to contact the teacher first via email or phone to schedule an appointment. This meeting will take place in a designated conference room in the office. Once the appointment is made, the visitor must come directly to the office to sign in to receive a visitor's pass.

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**EMERGENCY PROCEDURE FORM**

An emergency procedure form is to be completed each year for every student. This form provides the information needed to care for your child in the case of illness or injury.

**Please notify the office of changes of address, phone number (including cell numbers), or other emergency procedure changes as they occur.** Please note, only those identified on the emergency form may pick up your child. This notification is critical for the safety of your child.

**ATTENDANCE**

Ohio law requires students to be in attendance each day that school is in session. Therefore, it is the intention of the Pymatuning Valley Local Schools to hold students accountable for their attendance. The Board of Education also believes that good attendance is a vital part of academic success in the high school setting. To this end, it has established a policy whereby any student or parent of a student who is **Habitually Truant** or **Excessively Absent** may:

- Attend a meeting to create an Attendance Intervention Plan
- Be cited to Juvenile Court;
- Be referred to Children's Services;

**Habitually Truant** is defined as:

- 30 or more consecutive school hours absent without legitimate excuse;
- 42 or more school hours absent without legitimate excuse in any calendar month;
- 72 or more school hours absent without legitimate excuse in a school year;

**Excessively Absent** is defined as:

- 38 or more hours in absent with or without legitimate excuse in any calendar month;
- 65 or more hours in absent with or without legitimate excuse in any school year;

The following excused absences would contribute to a student's **Excessively Absent** total. In order to be excused, a note signed by a parent or doctor must be sent to the attendance officer or a phone call from home must be made to the school.

1. Student Illness
2. Illness in the immediate family
3. Death in the immediate family (administrative decision for outside the immediate family)
4. Emergency at home (validity determined by the principal/designee)
5. Seasonal farm work which must be performed for the family
6. Medical appointment
7. Driver's license exam
8. Extended vacation
9. Religious reasons
10. Any other reason for not attending must be approved by the principal or superintendent

Prior to any parent/student being cited to Juvenile Court or referred to Children's Services, a mandatory attendance intervention meeting must be held at the school with the

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parent(s)/guardian(s). The district will make three attempts to contact the parent to attend the meeting. If the parent does not attend, intervention will proceed without parental involvement. If the student fails to comply with the intervention plan, the student/parent may be cited to Juvenile Court or referred to Children's Services.

### **ABSENCES/TARDINESS**

Please notify the school as early as possible the morning your child is not in attendance. When a student returns to school following an absence, a written explanation for the absence must be provided including the dates of the absence along with a parent or healthcare provider signature.

Students arriving late must come to the office to sign in and receive a pass to class. Excessive tardiness to school will result in disciplinary action. Students are counted tardy to school if they are not in their classroom by 7:35 AM. Students are also expected to be in class on time.

### **FAMILY VACATION POLICY**

Daily school attendance is important to the academic success of the student; therefore, vacations and absences should be limited to the shortest number of days possible. Time missed for vacation counts towards the maximum hours allowed within the attendance policy. A student may be excused from school to accompany his/her parents on a vacation during the school year providing the following criteria are met.

- a. The student must be passing all credit-granting courses.
- b. The student must obtain a form from the office or print out the one online to be given to his/her teachers one week prior to the absence and submitted to the administration for approval.

### **ATHLETE ABSENCES**

Unless ill and absent from school, each athlete is responsible for communicating with his/her coach when they will miss a practice or event. If an athlete is not in school by 10:30 on a practice or game day, the athlete will not be able to participate in practice or in the game. Exceptions will be made for an official doctor's visit with signed doctor's excuse or prior-approved excused absence.

### **STUDENT ILLNESS AT SCHOOL/SCHOOL SANCTIONED ACTIVITIES**

If a student becomes ill at school, the child will be attended to in the school clinic. The office will contact the parent, or the designated alternate, if a child needs further care. If a child appears to be ill at a school sanctioned activity, the school designated supervisor will contact the parent/guardian and/or the proper medical authorities.

### **MEDICATION (Prescription AND Over-the-counter)**

Medications can only be given at school with the completion of the appropriate medication paperwork available in the office, which requires both parent AND physician signature. Once the appropriate forms have been filled out, the medicine must be transported to/from the school by a parent/guardian only (NOT the student), and will be kept in the office in a safe place. The medication will be administered to the student in the safety of the office. It should be noted that cough drops, aspirin, Tylenol, cough syrup, antacids, and ointments for poison ivy, etc., are all considered medicine by the Physician's Desk Reference Book and will be treated as such.

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## VACCINATIONS

The Ohio Department of Health requires all students entering the 7th grade must have a **booster dose of Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis (Tdap) and Meningococcal**. A copy of the vaccination must be submitted to the office for placement in the student's file. If a student does not provide a copy of the updated immunizations within the first 10 days of school, that student will not be allowed to attend school until proper immunizations have been documented.

## SCHOOL DELAY/CANCELLATION/EARLY RELEASE

The superintendent has the option of delaying the start of the school day by two hours if there is inclement weather. That two-hour delay, however, may become a cancellation if the weather does not improve. This means that parents may need to make special arrangements for their children until the bus comes or the building opens at 9:20 a.m. Dismissal time will remain the same. It is imperative that children have contingency plans in case it is deemed necessary to send students home early.

School delays/cancellations will be announced on: WREO FM-97.1, WFUN AM-970, WKBN AM-570, WVCC FM-100.3, WZOO FM-102.5, and TV Channel 3, 5 and 8. Households with students will also receive an automated call from a school official announcing the delay or cancellation.

## PERSONAL PROPERTY

Please mark your children's clothing in case it becomes lost. Hundreds of articles of clothing are donated yearly to charitable organizations because students refuse to claim them.

Students are not to bring to school any unnecessary money or articles from home, such as any type of trading cards and toys of any type. We strongly discourage bringing any electronic devices: i.e. iPod's, MP3 players, CD players, and cellphones to school. If brought to school, these items must be turned off and remain in the student's locker during school hours otherwise these items may be confiscated and kept in the office until a parent can claim them. **Electronic devices are common items damaged and stolen during the school year. The school is not responsible for the theft, loss or damage of these items.**

## LOST AND FOUND

Articles found in the building, on the grounds, or on the bus are brought to the lost and found cupboard in the office where the students should claim them. All unclaimed items will be donated to charitable organizations periodically throughout the year.

## TELEPHONES/CELL PHONES

Only office and classroom telephones (not student cell phones) are to be used in case of sickness and emergencies (e.g. cancellation of an extracurricular activity). When calling home for any reason, permission must be granted by a staff member.

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**Absolutely no cell phone use (or similar item) is permitted during school hours.** This includes text messaging as well as any other feature found on a cell phone. Cell phones are to be turned off and remain in the student's locker at all times. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged cell phones.

If a cell phone is used during the school day, it will be confiscated by the teacher or staff member (unless usage has been allowed by the teacher for educational purposes only). The cell phone will be returned at the end of the day. It is the student's responsibility to retrieve their cell phone; the teachers will not seek out the student. If cell phone confiscation becomes habitual, the principal will confiscate the cell phone and it will only be returned when a parent comes to the office to pick it up. Further consequences may arise.

### **LOCKERS**

Each student is assigned his/her own locker. Students should limit their locker usage to the beginning of the school day, middle, and end of the school day. **There is no sharing of lockers. Each locker has a unique combination. Students are not to share this combination with fellow students as their privacy may be compromised.** Lockers are the property of the school district and are subject to random searches per ORC 3313.20.

**BREAKFAST/LUNCH \* 2023-2024: There will no longer be free breakfast and lunch for all students. Lunch Prices are TBD**

During the first week of school, we will send a notice regarding breakfast, lunch and milk costs, free/reduced meals applications and a current month menu. Free/reduced applications will be processed as soon as possible and notification of eligibility will be sent home. If you qualified for free or reduced meals last year, you will qualify for the first two weeks of the new school year. Prepayments are welcomed and will be placed in your child's individual account for use for breakfast, lunch or milk (please note, prepayments are not to be used for snacks). Please make prepayments in the morning in the cafeteria before going to class. Checks are preferred whenever possible. Please keep track of when you send money and how much so you will know when your child needs more money. Charges are for emergencies only and are limited to five. All charges should be paid as soon as possible and **\*MUST\*** be paid by the end of the year. Anytime this privilege is abused your child will no longer be permitted to charge. The **cutoff date** for **charges** in the cafeteria will be **May 1**. After that date no charging is permitted in the cafeteria.

The cafeteria will have water and juice available for purchase during lunch for students who wish to have a healthy alternative to milk. All drinks purchased must be consumed in the lunchroom. **Please note, soda pop is not available for purchase and students are not permitted to bring soda pop from home as part of their lunch.**

### **LUNCHROOM PROCEDURE**

Upon entering the cafeteria students will enter the assigned line, walk to the serving area, receive the tray or extra milk, and exit by the center doorway.

Students are expected to:

1. Stand in line and wait their turn.
2. Keep the table areas clean.
3. Return trays and refuse.
4. Use good table and eating manners.



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5. Aid in cleaning tables as needed.

6. No gum or pop allowed anywhere in the building unless provided by a teacher.

The people in charge give specific rules for each lunch period.

Students are to refrain from talking when the lights are out during cafeteria dismissal.

Stealing items from the cafeteria will result in a Saturday School, ISS or OSS pending the administrative decision

## **BETWEEN CLASS CHANGES**

Hall Traffic: Teachers will supervise the movement of students through the hallway. Traffic should move quickly and quietly without pushing, running, or any other type of horseplay. There are no open food/drink containers allowed in the hallway. Food items will be confiscated and thrown in the garbage can.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT**

### **Positive Behavior Interventions Support**

Pymatuning Valley Middle School is pleased to be using Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS). There are 6 school wide expectations. These expectations are posted throughout the building. Rules have been established for the cafeteria, hallways, restrooms, morning gym, the playground, the bus and the Laker Learning Lounge.

**Leaders**  
**Accountable**  
**Kind**  
**Engaged**  
**Respectful**  
**Successful**

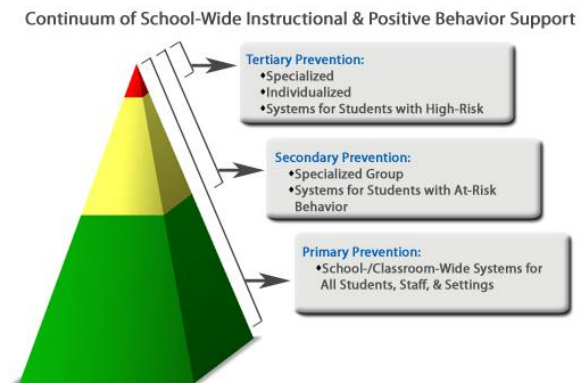
### **What is PBIS?**

PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) is an organized, data-driven system of interventions, strategies, and supports that positively impact school-wide and individualized behavior planning. Using the most current best practices, strategic teams are trained to positively impact behavior at three key behavioral tiers: Universal or primary (whole school); Secondary (individual child or group of at-risk children); and Tertiary or Intensive (children with complex needs and behaviors that severely impact the child, school and/or community functioning).

### **Why is it so important to focus on teaching positive social behaviors?**

Frequently, the question is asked, "Why should I have to teach kids to be good? They already know what they are supposed to do. Why can I not just expect good behavior?" In the infamous words of a TV personality, "How is that working out for you?"

In the past, school-wide discipline has focused mainly on reacting to specific student misbehavior by implementing punishment-based strategies including reprimands, loss of privileges, office referrals, suspensions, and expulsions. Research has shown that the implementation of punishment, especially when it is used inconsistently and in the absence of other positive strategies, is ineffective. Introducing, modeling, and reinforcing positive social behavior is an important step of a student's educational experience. Teaching behavioral expectations and rewarding students for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehavior to occur before responding. The purpose of school-wide PBIS is to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm.



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## Pymatuning Valley Middle School Behavior Matrix

	Hall	Classroom	Bathroom/Locker Room	On the Bus	Cafeteria	Morning Gym	On the Playground	Laker Learning Lounge
<b>Leaders</b>	Walk on the right	Guide and model positive behaviors.	Inform staff of issues or concerns.	Demonstrate safe behavior.	Demonstrate good table manners.	Start with positive conversations.	Are inclusive.	Remind others of the rules.
<b>Accountable</b>	Have a purpose and arrive on time to their destination. Keep hallways clean.	Have materials, completed assignments and be on time.	Flush toilet and wash hands.	On time.	Keep food on table.	Take their belongings with them. Stay in the designated area.	Return equipment to designated area.	Return books and computers to the appropriate places.
<b>Kind</b>	Keep hands/feet to themselves and pick up dropped items.	Help others.	Maintain a clean facility.	Treat students and teachers well.	Use kind words and are inclusive.	Say nice things, help others and are inclusive.	Take turns and share.	Help others to find materials they need.
<b>Engaged</b>	Are aware of surroundings.	Participate.	Focus on the task at hand.	In your seat and using quiet voices.	Eat mindfully while sitting.	Take hats off and put electronic devices.	Lakers exercise.	Work on the task at hand.
<b>Respectful</b>	QUIET when classes are in session.	Listen.	Be courteous others' privacy.	Allow the driver to focus on driving.	Lakers clean up after themselves.	Use conversational voices	Keep equipment and tables clear of graffiti.	Use whisper voices. Respect the equipment.
<b>Successful</b>	Be a LAKER and succeed in the hallway.	Be a LAKER and succeed in the classroom.	Be a LAKER and succeed in the bathroom.	Be a LAKER and succeed on the bus.	Be a Laker and SUCCEED in the cafeteria.	Lakers SUCCEED in the morning gym.	Be a LAKER and SUCCEED on the playground	Be a Laker and SUCCEED in the LLL.

### STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

Violation by a student of any one or more of the following rules, on school grounds, or at school activities and events on or off school grounds may result in disciplinary action, including suspension, emergency removal from class at school, expulsion, and/or court citation. The administration reserves the right to use its discretion in enforcing rules and consequences. Due to a broad range of behaviors, mitigating circumstances, and a sincere desire to modify

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misbehavior rather than simply assign predetermined consequences, the administration will use discretion as it sees fit.

1. **DISRUPTION IN SCHOOL:** A student will not, by the use of violence, force, coercion, threat, harassment, insubordination, or repeated acts of misbehavior cause disruption or obstruction to the educational process, including all curricular and extracurricular activities
2. **DESTRUCTION OF SCHOOL OR PRIVATE PROPERTY:** A student will not cause or attempt to cause willful destruction or defacement of school or private property (including vehicles owned by the BOARD). This would include deletion of computer files as well as knowingly introducing a computer virus to any school program or misuse of the computer and the internet. Students will be asked to pay damages for willful destruction or defacement of school or private property.
3. **FIGHTING, ASSAULT AND/OR THREAT:** A student will not physically attack or threaten to attack any person.
4. **DANGEROUS WEAPONS, INSTRUMENTS AND OBJECTS:** A student will not possess, handle, transmit or conceal any object, which might be considered a dangerous weapon or instrument capable of harming another person.
5. **NARCOTICS, ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AND DRUGS:** A student will not possess, use, transmit, conceal, or be under the influence of any alcoholic beverage, dangerous drug, narcotic or any substance that is classified as a look-alike drug or that causes physical or mental change.
6. **TOBACCO USE:** Students shall not be in possession of tobacco, including tobacco vapor, at school or any school function. Students will not be permitted to smoke, chew or vape in school buildings on school grounds or at any school-related activity.
7. **PROFANITY AND/OR OBSCENITY:** A student will not, by written, verbal, gesture, or other means, annoy or humiliate others or disrupt the educational process by using profanity or obscenity.
8. **INSUBORDINATION:** A student will comply with the directions of authorized school personnel during any period of time the student is properly under the authority of the school.
9. **INAPPROPRIATE DRESS:** A student will not dress or appear in a fashion that:
  - A. Interferes with the student's health or welfare or that of others or
  - B. Causes disruption or directly interferes with the educational process.
10. **EXTORTION:** A student will not obtain or attempt to obtain another person's property, whether by implied or expressed threat.
11. **FORGERY:** A student will not falsify in writing the name of another person, times, dates, grades, addresses or other data on school forms, or correspondence directed to the school. This also includes computer hacking or other unauthorized entry into computers or information databases.

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- 12. TRESPASSING OR LOITERING:** A student will not be present in a school building or on school grounds at unauthorized times when the presence may cause disruption of an activity, function or the educational process.
- 13. FALSE IDENTIFICATION:** A student will not use or attempt to use false identification to mislead school personnel.
- 14. BREAKING AND ENTERING:** A student will not break and enter, or attempt to break and enter, school or private property on school grounds.
- 15. THEFT:** No student while on school property or in attendance at any school-sponsored activity shall steal or attempt to steal either private property or school property.
- 16. MISSED DETENTION OR MISSED SATURDAY SCHOOL:** All students who are assigned detention or Saturday School must report on time and follow all rules and regulations. If a detention is missed, the student will serve the detention following day. If a Saturday School is missed, that student may be suspended for 3 days upon returning to school.
- ~~**17. PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION:**~~ A public display of affection is distasteful to most people and generally unacceptable. Students using poor judgment in this matter will be subject to disciplinary actions.
- 18. HARASSMENT, SEXUAL HARASSMENT, RACIAL SLURS, INTIMIDATION, BULLYING:**  
Any intentional written, verbal, nonverbal or physical act that a student has exhibited toward another particular student more than once and the behavior both (1) causes mental or physical harm to the other student, and (2) is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student. All instances will be documented.
- 19. Improper Use of Personal or District Technology:**  
Any improper use of technology, either personal or district owned is a violation of the acceptable use policy and agreement.

**STUDENT SUSPENSION PROCEDURE**

In all instances of student behavioral problems, school personnel are encouraged to work in a positive manner in bringing about desirable behavior by the student. Recognizing that in some instances the student's behavior exceeds tolerable limits, action by school officials must be taken for the general good of the school operation.

Students not in compliance with the adopted Board Policy of the Students' Conduct Code may be suspended by the principal or superintendent for not more than then (10) school days.

Prior to suspension, the principal or superintendent shall give the pupil written notice of the intention to suspend him/her and the reason for the intended suspension, and provide the pupil an opportunity of appeal at an informal hearing before the principal, assistant principal, superintendent and challenge the reasons for the intended suspension or otherwise to explain his actions.

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On decisions to suspend, the superintendent or principal shall within twenty-four (24) hours after the time of the pupil's suspension, notify in writing the parent, guardian, or custodian of the pupil, and the Clerk of the Board of Education of such suspension. The notice shall include the reasons for the suspensions and shall also include notification of the right of the pupil or his parent, guardian, or custodian to appeal such action to the Board of Education or its designee, to be represented in all such appeal proceedings, to be granted a hearing before the Board or its designee in order to be heard against such suspension, and to request that such hearing be held in executive session.

A pupil or his parent, guardian, or custodian may appeal his/her suspension by a superintendent or principal to the Board of Education or its designee. Such pupil or parent, guardian, or custodian may be represented in all such appeal proceedings and shall be granted a hearing before the Board or its designee in order to be heard against the suspension. At the request of the pupil, or his parent, guardian or custodian, or attorney, the Board or its designee may hold the hearing in executive session but shall act upon such suspension only at a public meeting. The Board may, by a majority vote of its full membership or by the action of the designee, affirm the order of suspension or may reinstate such pupil, or otherwise reverse, vacate, or modify the order of suspension.

The Board of Education or its designee shall make a verbatim record of the hearings held. The decision of the Board or its designee may be appealed under Chapter 2506 of the Ohio Revised Code.

In the rare occurrence that school is cancelled on a day that a student is suspended, the student's return date remains unaffected, and the day counts as being suspended.

### **STUDENTS' RIGHTS PHILOSOPHY**

The Board of Education of the Pymatuning Valley Local School District believes that it is the Board's responsibility to encourage the student body of all its schools to take full advantage of the educational programs, the school facilities and talents of the school personnel, to develop the individual's full mental and physical abilities.

It is essential that in accomplishing this goal, every student is protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution within certain limitations; the right of free speech, symbolic speech, freedom of assembly, right of privacy and person appearance. The development of a STUDENT CONDUCT CODE provides the necessary restraints so as to not frustrate the good intentions of the majority of the student body. NOTE: All students are required to have due process before penalties are imposed.

### **STUDENT EXPULSION PROCEDURE**

Students not in compliance with the adopted Board policy of the Student Conduct Code may be expelled by the superintendent for a period of time as determined by the superintendent within the guidelines of the law. No pupil shall be expelled unless prior to his/her expulsion the superintendent:

1. Gives the pupil and his parent, guardian, or custodian written notice of the intention to expel the pupil and

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2. Provides the pupil and his parent, guardian, custodian, or representative an opportunity to appear in person before the superintendent to challenge the reasons for the intended expulsion or otherwise to explain the pupil's actions.

The notice in (1) above shall include the reasons for the intended expulsion, notification of the opportunity of the pupil and his parent, guardian, custodian, or representative to appear before the superintendent to challenge the reasons for the intended expulsion or otherwise to explain the pupil's actions and notification of the time and place to appear. The time to appear shall not be earlier than three (3) nor later than five (5) days after the notice is given, unless the superintendent grants an extension of time at the request of the pupil, his parent, guardian, custodian, or representative. If an extension is granted, the pupil and parent/guardian /custodian will be notified of the new time and place to appear.

The superintendent shall, within twenty-four hours after the decision to expel a student, notify in writing the parent, guardian, or custodian of the pupil, and the clerk of the Board of Education of such expulsion. The notice shall include the reason for the expulsion and shall also include notification of the right of the pupil or his parent (et al), to appeal such action to the Board of Education to be represented in all such appeal proceedings, to be granted a hearing before the Board in order to be heard against such expulsion, and to request that such hearing be held in executive session.

### **DRESS CODE**

We know that grooming effects the learning environment and overall school climate. Students should present themselves in a positive manner. No one can wear clothing with profanity, violent images, any illegal item or hate speech.

Hats/hoodies may no longer be worn inside the school building.

Students must wear:

- A shirt (with minimum of a 1-inch strap and fabric in the front, back and sides immediately under the armpit and without baring the midriff. AND
- Pants/jeans or the equivalent (for example: sweatpants, opaque leggings or shorts) OR
- A dress, shorts or skirt, AND
- Shoes (appropriate for the environment and activity)
- No clothing that would be considered too revealing or an indecent exposure of private body parts. No see-through material, appropriate coverage of body when standing, sitting or bending over.

The administration reserves the right to intercede in cases where the health, mental health, welfare and safety of students and others are affected. Students will be asked to change clothing that deems a violation of the dress code policy.

### **ASSEMBLIES/FIELD TRIPS/ATHLETIC EVENTS**

These are times when our students are "on view." The impression others have of us depends largely on how we conduct ourselves. Students are expected to display good conduct and adhere to school regulations at all times. Assemblies, field trips, and athletic events are a privilege not a right. Students may lose the opportunity throughout the year to participate in these types of activities based on their behavior and school performance.

# **PYMATUNING VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL**

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### **GUIDANCE SERVICES**

The guidance counselor is available to discuss with parents their concerns about each child's academic and social growth. Conferences must be arranged by calling the office and scheduling an appointment directly with the guidance department.

### **CURRICULUM**

Students in the elementary grades (5-6) study language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The homeroom teacher or another teacher on that grade level will teach these classes.

Seventh grade students have language arts, math (& math lab), social studies, science, computer, physical education, art, humanities, and keyboarding.

Students in eighth grade have classes in language arts, social studies, science (science 8 or physical science 9), math (math 8 or Algebra I), physical education, independent living and a S.T.E.M. related elective.

Algebra in 8<sup>th</sup> grade is an accelerated pathway that is based on their math performance throughout middle school. Criteria to be considered for Algebra includes, Accomplished/Advanced on Math OST and STAR Assessments, Classroom Performance, Algebra Readiness Data and Teacher Recommendation. Students who meet the criteria for Algebra in 8<sup>th</sup> grade will receive written notification in May and be placed on a Written Acceleration Plan for 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

In addition, every eighth grade student must complete a job shadowing activity. We believe that this has been one of the most valuable academic experiences our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students have over the course of the year. This assignment is generated through our independent living/career exploration course. It is a semester course and the final grade will be an incomplete until the activity is done. If a student does not complete the activity, the final grade for the course will be an F.

### **INDIVIDUALS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students with disabilities are served through 2 federal programs: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004. Section 504 assures that no individual will be discriminated against on the basis of a disability. This protection applies to all individuals who have access to the district's programs and facilities.

Special education services can be accessed through the formal evaluation and eligibility determination procedures. Active parent participation is required and encouraged. To inquire about the procedures and/or services, please contact the district's Director of Pupil Services at 440-293-6488.

### **EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

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At the Middle School, students may select a variety of activities/sports. Elementary students may participate in band, chorus, drama, and intramural athletics. Junior high students may join band and/or choir, become a library or office aide, be a cafeteria helper, and participate in basketball, volleyball, wrestling, football, track, and cross country.

### **ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY**

To be eligible to participate in athletics in junior high, a student must have received passing grades in 75% of his/her classes during the preceding nine weeks grading period. **All 7<sup>th</sup> grade students entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade for the first time are eligible to participate in fall sports.**

### **TEXTBOOKS**

During the first week of school, textbooks will be given to students, free of charge, for use during the school year. A student is responsible for the books issued. If books are damaged, lost, or stolen, the student will be required to pay for them. **All textbooks should be covered.**

### **HOMEWORK**

Homework is an integral part of the learning process. Teachers assign homework to reinforce, supplement, and enrich skills taught in class. Points may be taken off for any assignment not completed on time.

### **MAKE-UP CLASS WORK**

All students may make up work missed because of an excused absence. Full credit for make-up work will be given if the work is done in the designated time allowed. The time limit for make-up work shall be one day for each day of absence.

Student assignment sheets will not be provided for less than TWO DAYS of absence. Students are encouraged to call a friend for assignments. Parents are asked to call for assignments by 10:00 A.M.

### **LAKER LEARNING LOUNGE**

All students are encouraged to use the learning lounge for both research and recreational reading. Materials may be checked out for two weeks and they may be renewed. No reference book, encyclopedia, or magazine may leave the Learning Center at any time. Any lost or damaged material must be replaced at the expense of the borrower.

### **COMPUTER NETWORK AND INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY AND AGREEMENT**



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Computers are an integral learning tool. The appropriate use of computers, the internet, and the school's computer network is critical to the overall educational process. To that end, each student and parent must sign and return the computer network and internet acceptable use policy and agreement. Students knowingly violating the acceptable use policy will face disciplinary action ranging from the loss of computer privileges, to detention, Saturday School, ISS or OSS.

### **R.S.V.P. Program**

Each spring, Catholic Charities presents their Responsible Social Values Program or "R.S.V.P." to our 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. This is a one-week program which is scheduled this year school in March. R.S.V.P. is a program that promotes healthy relationships focusing on sexual risk avoidance and other adolescent behaviors including alcohol and other drug use, dating violence, and the perils of human trafficking. This program has been presented to PVMS students for the past sixteen years by Catholic Charities (Catholic Charities does not promote religion in any way before, during, or after the presentations). We feel that this program addresses very important health issues for developing adolescents. Due to the sensitive nature of the issues addressed, we ask that you sign and return the permission slip for your child to attend these sessions which is enclosed with our first day information packet. Please contact the school with any questions.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

All students are required to participate in physical education classes. Students should wear jogging pants or shorts, a tee shirt, socks and gym shoes.

A student may, when necessary, be excused from gym class when a parent requests it in writing. If, however, the child needs to be excused for a period of time, a note from a physician will be necessary.

### **STUDENT PLANNERS**

Every student will be issued a student planner to document all assignments.

### **BUS REGULATION FOR PUPILS BY ORDER OF PYMATUNING VALLEY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

1. Immediately upon entering the bus, pupils shall take their assigned places.
2. Pupils shall not be loud or use improper language at any time.
3. Windows and vents shall not be adjusted without the permission of the driver.
4. No pupil shall attempt to get on or off the bus until it comes to a full stop.
5. Pupils should be ready when the school bus approaches.
6. Pupils should not stand in the middle of the road while waiting for the school bus.
7. Pupils should not talk to the driver unnecessarily while on the route.
8. Pupils shall conduct themselves on the bus approximately as they would in the classroom, except that reasonable visiting and conversation are permissible.
9. The driver has the same authority over passengers on the school bus as the teacher has over students in the classroom.
10. Waste paper and rubbish should never be dropped on the floor of the bus.
11. Never throw anything within or out of the bus.

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**PUPIL AND PARENT BUS RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Parents and pupils must assume that school bus transportation is a privilege to the student, not a right.
2. Pupils will ride on assigned buses. Parents must request in writing to permit deviation from this rule. Request shall be made to the principal and/or transportation supervisor.
3. Pupils will ride their assigned bus both to and from home to school unless a written request asking permission to be let off the bus at some other stop is represented to the bus driver and signed by parents and countersigned by the building principal.
4. Parents are responsible for the safety of pupils while going to and from pick-up points and for their meeting the bus on schedule.
5. Buses operate on a time schedule as outlined by the transportation supervisor.
6. Parents will be responsible for any damage to a bus by their children.
7. Eating and littering are not permitted on buses.
8. Noise on a bus shall be kept to a minimum at all times to assure safety of operation.
9. Absolute quiet must be maintained at railroad crossings or other danger areas.
10. Nothing shall be thrown out of the bus, nor anything held so it extends out the window.
11. All parts of the pupil's bodies shall be kept inside the bus at all times.
12. Pupils shall be waiting at the curb side of the road to board the bus for morning pick up.
13. Pupils shall sit three to a seat and no standing shall be allowed as long as seats are available. Seats are assigned by the driver to maintain order and for evacuation purposes.
14. Band instruments or special equipment which blocks the aisle of the bus are not permitted on a bus.
15. Knives, animals, dangerous articles, etc. are not permitted to be on the bus.
16. The driver has the authority to enforce the above regulations. The pupils shall conduct themselves on the school bus as they would in the classroom except that reasonable visiting and conversation are permissible. Continued disorderly conduct or refusal to submit to the authority of the driver shall be sufficient reason for refusing transportation service to any student. When it becomes necessary to refuse transportation to a pupil due to misconduct the school administration (transportation supervisor) shall notify the parents of such refusal in writing with a full explanation for this action. The bus driver then shall not permit the pupil to board the bus at his or her home until the parent gives assurance future good conduct on the part of the pupil.

**PTO-PARENT/TEACHER ORGANIZATION**

The PTO is very helpful and supports the growth of the middle school. Our school profits in many ways because of the leadership and activities of this great organization. We encourage all parents to become active members of the PTO. To find out more information about PTO or meeting dates, please contact the office.

**NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

A newsletter and calendar of events is published at the end of each month to notify the parents of current activities and programs occurring at the Middle School during the month. The newsletter will also be posted on the website and Pymatuning Valley Middle School Facebook Page

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## **DISTRICT/SCHOOL WEBSITE**

Please visit our district/school website and explore the links for additional resources and up to date information. [www.pvschools.org](http://www.pvschools.org). The middle school link is on the left hand portion of the page under the "schools" tab.

## **FIRE, TORNADO, AND LOCKDOWN DRILLS**

We have at least one safety drill per month. The teacher gives specific instructions to each class regarding procedures and/or exit routes. These drills are crucial for the safety of all our students and staff. Students who do not following directions or disrupt during these drills will receive school consequences.

## **PARENT ACCESS SYSTEM**

The Parent Access system allows parents the opportunity to track their children's progress throughout the school year. From attendance to grades, specific assignments and homework, the Parent Access system also allows communication with teachers and more. This system also lets you create your own username and password. Pymatuning Valley Local Schools is pleased to provide the links below to take advantage of the Parent Access system:  
<https://progressbook.neomin.org/ParentAccess/>

Please contact the school if you need a registration key at 440-293-6981.

## **TITLE IX**

Title IX Compliance Officers

Mrs. Wendy Tisch, Pymatuning Valley Middle School Principal

Email: [wendy.tisch@pvschools.org](mailto:wendy.tisch@pvschools.org)

Phone: 440-293-6981

Mr. Benjamin Schade, Director of Pupil Services

Email: [benjamin.schade@pvschools.org](mailto:benjamin.schade@pvschools.org)

Phone: 440-293-6488

Title IX complaints and reports can be submitted in writing, through email, or via telephone call 24/7 to the compliance officers. Training for Compliance Officers was conducted by Ennis Britton Attorneys at Law.

## **TITLE I SCHOOLWIDE PROGRAM**

### **Schoolwide Program**

Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is a federal initiative that provides additional financial assistance to students who attend low-income schools to reach rigorous learning standards. All students in grades K-4 at Pymatuning Valley Primary School and in grades 5-8 at Pymatuning Valley Middle School who demonstrate need are eligible to receive additional support based on academic need without consideration of income due to its schoolwide program status.

# **PYMATUNING VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL 2023-2024 STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK**

## **How We Serve Students**

Students in grades K-8 participate in universal screening three times per year to determine the level of support and intervention needed to reach grade-level benchmarks. Students scoring below benchmark in reading are given diagnostic assessments to pinpoint skill-based needs for instruction and intervention. Title I-funded intervention tutors provide a combination of push-in classroom support and small-group intervention outside of the classroom depending on the group's needs.

## **How We Gather Input To Guide The Title I Program**

The district gathers input from all stakeholders through the school improvement process (Building and District Leadership Team meetings), back-to-school open house, twice annual parent-teacher conferences, and annual surveys. This feedback along with student data inform the district's Comprehensive Needs Assessment. In addition, parents of K-8 students should receive an annual Parent-School Compact that explains the shared responsibility of teachers, parents, and students to help our students achieve Ohio's Learning Standards. The district also evaluates the effectiveness of its instructional program through an examination of student performance data, which includes state test results for ELA and math in grades 3-8, science in grades 5 and 8, and high school end-of-course exams, among others.

## **Notice of Parents Right to Know**

As a Title I recipient, we are required to annually notify parents that they may at any time request from the Superintendent information regarding the professional qualifications of their student's teachers. In addition, we are required to provide you with timely notice if your child has been assigned, or has been taught for 4 or more consecutive weeks, by a teacher who does not meet applicable State licensure requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned.

For more information regarding the District's Title I compliance efforts, please contact Mr. Benjamin Schade, Director of Pupil Services at [benjamin.schade@pvschools.org](mailto:benjamin.schade@pvschools.org) or (440) 293-6488.

## **SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACT**

The Pymatuning Valley Local Schools and parents/families of students participating in activities, services, and programs funded by Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) agree that this compact outlines how school staff, parents/families, and students share responsibility for improving student achievement and the means by which the school and home will fulfill a partnership to help children achieve Ohio's Learning Standards. This School-Parent Compact is in effect during the 2023-2024 school year.

## **School/Teacher Responsibilities**

We, as educators of the Pymatuning Valley Local Schools, will:

- Utilize high-quality curriculum and instructional practices in a safe, supportive, and effective learning environment that enables students to achieve Ohio's Learning Standards.
- Respect and support students' various learning and behavioral needs at school.
- Provide parents with reports on their children's progress every 9 weeks. Grades and progress will be entered online and updated regularly in ParentAccess. Please note that

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students who are at-risk for school failure will have interim progress reports sent home every 4.5 weeks.

- Provide parents with reasonable access to communicate with staff. Teachers can be contacted by email ([firstname.lastname@pvschools.org](mailto:firstname.lastname@pvschools.org)), by telephone message, by letter/note in the planners, or by a pre-scheduled appointment with the teacher(s) during their planning time.
- Provide parents with opportunities to volunteer and/or observe in their child's class. Parents are required to pre-schedule appointments with the teacher(s) and sign-in with the office to obtain a visitor's pass. This ensures student/staff safety and secure testing situations.
- Host parent-teacher conferences twice per year during which the child's classroom performance and this compact will be discussed as it relates to the child's achievement.
  - Fall conferences are scheduled for Thursday, October 20 from 4:00-7:00 PM and Friday, October 21 from 8:00 AM-12:00 PM.
  - Spring conferences are scheduled for Thursday, February 16 from 4:00-7:00 PM and Friday, February 17 from 8:00 AM-12:00 PM.

### **Parent/Family Responsibilities**

We, as parents and families of Lakers, will support my/our children's learning in the following ways:

- Review my child's quarterly progress reports or monitor their progress and grades online via ParentAccess (<https://studentparentportal.neomin.org/district>)
- Attend parent/teacher conferences to discuss my/our child's achievement
- Establish a time and place for study and becoming involved with my/our child's assignments
- Ensure that my/our child is punctual and attends school regularly
- Praise my/our child for progress and setting goals for improvement
- Monitor and promote my/our child's work ethic, such as completing and submitting work on time
- Read with or to my/our child and practice basic math concepts/facts daily
- Monitor and limit use of technology, such as television, video games, and social media
- Volunteer in the classroom and/or attend special assemblies or field trips
- Communicate with the teacher(s) any questions or concerns I/we may have

### **Student Responsibilities**

We, as students of the Pymatuning Valley Local Schools, will be Lakers (Leaders, Accountable, Kind, Engaged, and Respectful). This means doing my/our best to do the following:

- Complete and submit classwork on time
- Ask my/our teacher(s) for help when I/we need help
- Listen to my/our teacher(s) and participate in lessons
- Be kind and respectful to my/our teacher and classmates
- Read at least 15 minutes every day outside of school time, such as on the bus or drive home
- Give my parents (or a trusted adult at home) notices and information that school sends home

# PYMATUNING VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

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### **2023-2024 School Year Acknowledgements TO BE COMPLETED ON FINAL FORMS**

- I have read and agree to my responsibilities for fulfilling the Title I School-Parent Compact.
- I have been informed of the Title I Schoolwide Program designation of my child's school, how students are served by Title I, how the school gathers input, and Notice of the Parent's Right to Know regarding the qualifications of my child's teacher(s).

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Academic honesty is integral to the development of learners and to the development of their character. During this time of technological growth, it is more important than ever that both students and teachers understand the importance of academic honesty and their role in preserving academic honesty at Pymatuning Valley Middle School.

**Cheating** is defined as: obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for work that is not yours.

**Collusion** is defined as: helping another person cheat, such as allowing another student to copy work.

**Plagiarism** is defined as the use of the ideas or work of another person without properly citing or giving credit to the original author.

**AI (Artificial Intelligence)** programs are not to be used for any assignments at Pymatuning Valley Middle School. Turning in the work of an AI program constitutes plagiarism as it is not your original work. Using AI for school assignments is unethical and will result in a zero on the assignment and the possibility of technological restrictions (for example: handwriting all assignments in a monitored class.)

#### **Teachers have the responsibility to:**

- Clearly define academic honesty for students in their classroom
- Clearly define classroom consequences for academic dishonesty
- Make all instructions clear in regard to partner or group work and academic honesty
- Teach students how to appropriately use resources and cite work for assignments in their classroom
- Address any incidents of cheating, plagiarism or collusion with students and parents when appropriate (repeated offenses with administration).

#### **Students have the responsibility to:**

- Follow all classroom instructions and parameters given by a teacher around academic honesty for specific classroom assignments. (For example: you may work with a partner does not mean you may copy their work)
- Take responsibility for correctly citing any work or ideas that are not their own used in any assignment.
- Maintain academic honesty by refusing to share their work with others (unless instructed to do so by a teacher) and reporting any attempts of academic dishonesty to the teacher.
- Ask appropriate questions to the teacher during times of uncertainty in regards to academic honesty.

#### **Consequences:**

First Offense:

- If a student is guilty of cheating, collusion or plagiarism, they will be given a zero on the assignment. Parent will be contacted by teacher. \*\* Teacher discretion

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will be used to decide if a student may retake or redo the assignment for partial credit

Repeated Offenses:

- In all cases of repeated cheating, collusion, and/or plagiarism, zeros will be given, guardians and administration will be notified and a conference will be held to discuss the details to determine further disciplinary action.

**PROGRESS REPORTS**

Report cards are a way of keeping parents informed about each child's progress. The Pymatuning Valley school year is divided into four-nine week grading periods.

The grading scale is:

93 – 100 A  
85 - 92 B  
74 - 84 C  
65 - 73 D  
0 - 64 F

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# **TO BE COMPLETED ON FINAL FORMS**

**PVMS HANDBOOK**

**STUDENT AGREEMENT**

**2023-2024**

I have received the PVMS Student/Parent Handbook and understand that it is my responsibility to read and follow the rules that are explained within the handbook. It is also my responsibility to give the handbook to my parent or guardian.

If I fail to follow any of the rules/regulations in the Pymatuning Valley Student Handbook then I understand the penalties that will be enforced by the administration of the school district.

Please sign in Final Forms by Friday, September 1st, 2023.

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Student Name (Print)

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Student Name (Signature)

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Parent/Guardian (Signature)