



Hightower Trail Middle School Parent/Student Handbook

2026-2027

www.cobbk12.org/hightowertrail

A Model PLC School

AdvancedED STEM Certified School

**3905 POST OAK TRITT ROAD
MARIETTA, GEORGIA 30062**

MAIN OFFICE: 770-578-7225

FAX: 770-578-7227

COUNSELING OFFICE: 770-578-7228

Principal:

Dr. Hannah Polk

Assistant Principal:

Dr. Angela Greenage

Assistant Principal:

Mr. Richard Tischler

Student Support Administrator:

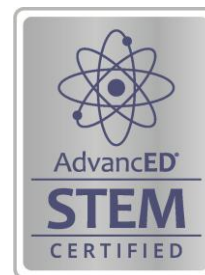
Ms. Charlene Sinquefield

PTSA Co-Presidents:

Lauren Hamilton & Joanna Pinkham

HTMS Foundation President:

Rebecca Reiss



**HIGHTOWER TRAIL
MIDDLE SCHOOL
2026-2027**

COBB COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

One Team One Goal: Student Success

Greetings, Hightower Trail Huskies!

Welcome to a new year at Hightower Trail Middle School! We are thrilled to welcome everyone back to school! Our dedicated, enthusiastic faculty and staff are committed to providing the best learning environment possible for our students. This informational handbook is one way that students and parents can help prepare for a successful school year.

Parents, we look forward to working with you and invite you to visit the school anytime. You can be a strategic link to a successful school year by:

- Utilizing the various forms of on-line communication available, such as, the district and school websites including PTSA and Foundation information, CTLS, and ParentVue.
- Becoming involved in the many volunteer opportunities at Hightower Trail – front office, Husky Hut (store), the learning commons or one of the many committees with the PTSA or Husky Foundation.
- Familiarizing yourself with the information in this handbook.
- Turning off the television during the week and reviewing assignments posted in CTLS and in the agenda planner every night, as well as parent notices that require your signature.
- Promoting reading in your home – strive for 30 minutes a day.
- Getting to know your child's friends and encouraging positive relationships.

With parents, students, teachers and staff working together, this year will be outstanding in every way! Although our focus is academics, Hightower Trail offers unique opportunities to prepare for future careers and to grow socially. Connections classes in Career Connections, Technology including Energy and the Environment and Medical Detectives, Science and Technology, Physical Education and Health, Art, Band, Orchestra, and Chorus classes build valuable life-long skills.

We also encourage your students to join a club at Hightower Trail where they will create lasting memories and friendships. Our expectation is for all our students to be prepared academically and socially for high school. We hope that the years they spend at Hightower Trail will be significant milestones toward their future success.

Warm regards,

Dr. Hannah Polk
Principal

ACADEMIC RESOURCE

District Web-site: www.cobbk12.org

HTMS web-site: www.cobbk12.org/hightowertrail

Teacher Blog access: CTLS via CCSD website

Resources	Websites	User Name	Password
StudentVue	Studentvue.cobbk12.org	(Student Number)	(Office 365 password)
ParentVue	Parentvue.cobbk12.org	Set by parent	Set by parent
HTMS Network & Computer Login		(Student Number)	(Office 365 password)
Office 365	login.microsoftonline.com	firstname.lastname@students.cobbk12.org	(School computer password)
CTLS	ctlslearn.cobbk12.org	Office 365 login	
Clever	Access through CTLS or icon on school computer	Office 365 login	
Cobb Digital Library	Access through CTLS, Clever, or icon school computer	Office 365 login	

Morning Study Hall in the Theater

- Students must check in to the theater. Students must obtain a pass from the study hall supervisor to leave.
- Students must have something to work on in order to be in the theater from 8:00-8:45. Students who are not actively working may lose the privilege of coming to study hall. A severe disruption may result in administration intervention.
- Students wishing to use the Learning Commons during study hall time must obtain a LC pass from the study hall supervisor. There are only 50 LC passes available each morning.

HIGHTOWER TRAIL MIDDLE SCHOOL

VISION STATEMENT

Learning through
ENGAGEMENT, PERFORMANCE, APPLICATION

MISSION STATEMENT

SUCCESS FOR ALL

BELIEFS

ENGAGEMENT:

- We believe that students are engaged when their interests are captivated.
- We believe that student engagement is critical in order to establish a foundation for new information and retention of learning.

PERFORMANCE:

- We believe that for learning to have relevance, students must demonstrate their understanding of concepts and skills through meaningful tasks and assessments.
- We believe in providing choices for demonstrating student learning to motivate performance.

APPLICATION:

- We believe that application of learning takes place when a student internalizes a concept or skill and uses it independently in a different context.
- We believe that the ability to apply learning to the solution of real-world problems prepares students for personal and professional success.

PHILOSOPHY

Hightower Trail Middle School is a student-centered institution with an instructional program that reflects understanding of the unique intellectual, physical, social, and emotional characteristics of the middle school student.

Hightower Trail Middle School provides instruction in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. By offering instructional programs in these areas, the school strives to develop skills and values that will aid our students in future decision-making.

We believe staff members should create a learning environment that offers challenge, success, and support. Our staff and students work together to maintain an atmosphere of warmth, respect, and understanding.

Hightower Trail Middle School believes that the school and the home share the responsibility to teach respect for the rights of others and responsibilities of citizenship. We further believe that students achieve best where continuous communication and support exist among the parents, teachers, and community.

ABOUT THE HIGHTOWER TRAIL

The Hightower Trail that passed near this location was an integral link to the Alabama Road going west and to the Upper Creek Path that went east to the important trading center of Augusta. The Cherokees traveled in large parties to the "big town of the white man" to exchange their pelts and handmade items for things they needed.

The Hightower Trail began at the Apalachee River and continued west to Cherokee settlements on the Etowah River. Thus, the name Hightower was derived from the Cherokee pronunciation of Etowah as "E tow ah" with accent on the 2nd syllable and the first syllable silent. Few Indian paths remain extant, but traces of the original Hightower Trail are still in Cobb County.

The rose garden in the front of the school is in the shape of a Cherokee Star. This is in honor of the Cherokee Tribe who dedicated it to Hightower Trail Middle School.

ACADEMICS

Language Arts and Reading

The Language Arts and Reading curriculums contain four strands for instruction: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language. All language arts classes are taught according to the state standards which offer a high level of rigor consistent from school to school.

Students will access at or above grade-level texts during direct instruction including nonfiction, informational, and fiction or literary texts, read closely and interact with the texts, and acquire grade-level vocabulary. Students also engage in rich, rigorous conversations about the texts using evidence from the texts to support opinions or arguments. Finally, students respond in writing to the texts they read and use evidence from these texts to inform, explain, argue or tell real or imagined stories. Students choose topics and compose writing pieces that are appropriate to task, purpose and audience, and demonstrate a command of Standard English grammar.

Explicit teaching in the areas of listening, speaking, observation, and reflection continue across all grade levels. These skills, along with the technology standards, are incorporated in all units to help students understand today's complex society as well as increase their ability to analyze media messages, to prepare students for the world in which they live.

Mathematics

Mathematics 6 – This on-level curriculum concentrates on competency skills of whole numbers, fractions, decimals and per cents and explores factoring, proportions, operations with positive and negative numbers, equations, inequalities areas of geometry, data analysis and probability.

Mathematics 6/7 – This accelerated program includes the 6th grade on-level curriculum and several concepts form the 7th grade. Concepts included are multi-step equation solving, ratio and proportional relationships and areas of geometry.

Mathematics 7 – This on-level curriculum focuses on operations with rational numbers, solving multi-step equations, ration and proportional relationships, probability of simple and compound events, constructing geometrical figures. Students will pose questions, collect analyze and interpret data. Problem solving, mathematical arguments, and communicating mathematics are emphasized.

Mathematics 7/8 – This accelerated program completes the 7th and 8th grade curriculum. Students learn linear functions, rational and irrational numbers, systems, exponents, cube roots and geometrical transformations.

Mathematics 8 – This on-level curriculum focuses on linear functions, rational and irrational numbers,

systems, exponents, cube roots and geometrical transformations. All students are actively engaged in developing mathematical understandings in real and relevant contexts.

Enhanced Math 8/Algebra I – This high school level course focuses on linear, quadratic, and exponential functions in addition to statistics. Students who successfully complete this course will earn high school credit.

Honors Algebra I - This high school level course focuses on linear, quadratic, and exponential functions in addition to statistics, transformations, proofs, and right-triangle trigonometry. Students who successfully complete this course will earn high school credit.



Honors Geometry – This high school level course is a rigorous, fast-paced course that expands on traditional geometry to prepare students for advanced STEM coursework and higher-level mathematics. The curriculum emphasizes geometric proofs, analytical logic, and real-world problem-solving.

Social Studies

6th Grade - An examination of World History focusing on the regions of Europe, Latin America, Canada, and Australia/Oceania with special emphasis on their origins, history, colonization, cultural contributions, and political and economic structures.

7th Grade - An examination of World History focusing on the regions of the Middle East, Africa, and Asia with special emphasis on their origins, history, colonization, cultural contributions, and political and economic structures.

8th Grade - A chronological examination of Georgia history as it connects with the history of our nation from colonization to modern times, along with a study of state and local government.



Science

6th Grade - A greater scientific understanding of the formation of Earth's surface is uncovered. The function of the earth's water while determining how the position of the earth, moon, and sun affect events on earth is studied.

7th Grade - Students investigate the diversity of living organisms and compare them scientifically. They focus on the function and structure of cells, tissues, organs and organ systems, and how genetics affects them.

8th Grade - Students will receive an overview of common strands in physical science including, but not limited to, the nature of matter, conservation of energy, energy transformations, conservation of matter, kinematics, and dynamics.

HS Physical Science - Students will learn and explore physical science standards along with abstract concepts such as the conceptualization of the structure of atoms

and the role they play in determining the properties of materials, motion of forces, the conservation of energy and matter, wave behavior, electricity, and the relationship between electricity and magnetism. Students successfully completing this course will receive high school credit.

Foreign Language

Hightower Trail offers HS Spanish I as 8th grade academic courses. Upon successful completion, students will earn one high school foreign language credit. Students may go on to take Level II of the same language in high school to satisfy the college preparatory requirement for graduation, or they may choose to start a different language.

ADVANCED CONTENT FOR COBB COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOLS

The curriculum and instructional strategies for advanced content courses are differentiated in pacing, process skills emphasis, and expectation of student outcomes for the typical (grade and subject) course. Curriculum content is designed for mastery and extension of state and district content standards. The courses are appropriate for students who have high achievement and interest in each particular subject. Students are placed in classes according to specified indicators of demonstrated exceptional ability and motivation. Students must meet continuation criteria to remain in any advanced content class.

CONNECTIONS

Art

Art classes connect directly to grade level Social Studies classes. Students engage in art history, art criticism, art aesthetics, and art production throughout each 9-week term.

Project Lead The Way (PLTW)

PLTW is a hands-on, project-based STEAM curriculum emphasizing critical thinking and problem solving. It engages students' natural curiosity and imagination. These courses will provide students with an overview of engineering fields and prepare them for further STEAM learning.



More information is accessible at www.pltw.org

6th grade Energy and the Environment: Students are challenged to think big and look toward the future as they explore sustainable solutions to energy needs and investigate the impact of energy on our lives and the world.

7th grade Medical Detectives: Students develop skills to solve medical mysteries by analyzing bacteria and viruses, genetic disorders, and criminal forensics. Emphasis is given to careers that do this in a real-world setting.

8th grade Science and Technology: Students explore how science impacts the technology of yesterday, today, and the future. Students apply the concepts of physics, chemistry, and nanotechnology to STEM activities and projects.

Computer Science: Available for grades 6,7 and 8.

Music

Chorus - Chorus classes are offered to students in all grade levels. Different content is covered at each grade level.

****Chorus is a YEAR-LONG course. ****

Band and Orchestra

****Band and Orchestra are YEAR-LONG courses. ****

6th Grade - Instrumental classes are designed for the beginning player. Emphasis is on the development of proper playing techniques and music comprehension, which includes a basic understanding of music theory. Several concerts are presented during the year.

7th Grade - Instrumental classes provide more group or ensemble music for performances than in the first year of study. While new skills are introduced, concert arrangements become a more important focus of the class. Classes participate in approved Georgia Music Educators Association Evaluations throughout the year. Additional extra-curricular ensembles such as chamber orchestra and jazz band are available for students. These ensembles allow student to develop their skills outside of the daily class.

8th Grade - Instrumental classes provide even more opportunities for performances with added concerts and possible field trips. The focus of the 8th grade classes becomes more about the refinement of skills introduced in the first two years of study in preparation for high school band or orchestra. More extensive repertoire is performed and satisfactory participation in 8th Grade band or orchestra qualifies the student for membership in their respective high school music organization. 8th grade classes continue to participate in Georgia Music Educators Association Evaluations throughout the year. Extra-curricular ensembles continue to be available and encouraged.

Physical Education

The Physical Education program meets the physical, social, and emotional needs of students through activities designed to develop physical skills and coordination, increase fitness levels, and build knowledge of various team and individual sports. All students take physical education unless a letter is received from a medical doctor exempting the student from participation. A parent may request that his/her child be excused from participation on a particular day. A doctor's notice is required if the student must be excused for longer than three days.

Student enrolled in PE will have the **option** to either participate in class activities wearing their regular "school clothes" or "dress out" at the beginning of the period. Locker rooms are available in our



gym area (for changing purposes) and will be monitored during all transitions by our 3 PE/health teachers.

Please note that students can only wear athletic-type clothes in the gym unless the clothes adhere to the school dress code policy.

Health

The Health program teaches students safe habits and to assume responsibility for their health throughout their lives.

Additionally, in health:

6th Grade – Students explore units in safety, nutrition, mental health, disease prevention, environmental health, and substance abuse.

7th Grade – Students explore units in safety, mental health, disease prevention, substance abuse, and CPR.

8th Grade – Students explore units in safety, personal health, substance abuse, disease prevention, and mental health.

Human Growth and Development

Human Growth and Development is an elective portion of health class and offered to each grade level. Parents will receive notification of an opportunity to preview curriculum materials prior to approving their children for the class. Students not participating will receive an alternate health unit.

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

Educational support services are available in the following areas: Other Health-Impaired, Speech and Language, Behavior Disorders, Learning Disabilities, Gifted, and ELL (English Language Learner).

RTI

Simply put, *Response to Intervention* is based upon research indicating that many students respond to high quality instruction/intervention, and therefore may not need special education or other services. In Cobb County, there are four tiers of intervention:

Tier 1 - Quality instruction / differentiation

Tier 2 - Targeted interventions, additional focus intensity

Tier 3 - Intensive, individualized intervention

Tier 4 - Referral to Special Education

THE LEARNING COMMONS

The Hightower Trail Learning Commons is available for students to work, collaborate and create in an environment that contains rearrangeable furniture to meet the needs of all users. There are over 10,000 books and several magazines available for student checkout. The Learning Commons also has a space which contains a green screen available to students to work on video projects. Thirty-six networked computers access the online catalog, networked software, and the Internet. A full-time media specialist and 2 part-time media paraprofessionals are assisted by parent volunteers. The Learning Commons is open every

morning at 8:00 a.m. for students who have passes to come and work. Teachers are able to bring classes for lessons or book check out. Books may be checked out for two weeks and students must pay for lost or damaged items.

It is impossible to evaluate the content of every book in the Learning Commons. We recommend parents be actively involved in their students' reading selections. Reading ability, personal interest, emotional maturity, and family values are all factors that will influence a child's book selections. Please keep in mind that, as a middle school, we must provide choices for a wide variety of reading interests and maturity levels.

The Learning Commons at Hightower Trail seeks to be a positive source of enrichment and pleasure for every student. We hope that students will not hesitate to consult the Media staff if they need any assistance with projects, assignments or technology (including student laptop issues.)

Further information pertaining to resources and programs in the learning commons can be found by accessing the learning commons page via the Hightower Trail website.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

All teachers use CTLS as the platform for housing class resources. Parents and students can visit CTLS to find classroom resources and information regarding classroom activities and assignments.

ParentVUE

ALL PARENTS are expected to register for ParentVUE.

This will allow you to see your students' grades. The link to ParentVUE is located on the county website at:

parentvue.cobbk12.org.

Office 365

Office 365 is a user-based service Hightower Trail students will be required to use throughout the year. Cobb County students may download the full version of Microsoft Office and familiar Microsoft Office applications like Word, Excel, PowerPoint and OneNote. Take advantage of these resources and find out more information on the Cobb County website.

Morning Help Sessions:

We offer free morning help sessions every school day from 8:15am-8:45am. Students may be dropped off via the carpool line at 8:15am in order to attend a teacher-led help session based on the following schedule:

Monday- Science

Tuesday-Math

Wednesday- Social Studies

Thursday- ELA/Reading

Friday-World Language

INTERNET / NETWORK USE BY STUDENTS

Internet use is available from any networked computer in the building. Students must adhere to acceptable use of the Internet, as outlined in Cobb County Board of Education Policy IFBGA. Parents and students should review the entire policy at www.cobbk12.org.

Important guidelines regarding student use are the following:

- Student use of the Internet is for **educational purposes** only.
- Students must have permission before accessing the Internet.
- Students will not initiate access to inappropriate material.
- Inadvertent access to inappropriate material should be reported immediately.
- Students will not place personal information about themselves or others on the Internet, nor will they arrange to meet anyone they correspond with via the Internet.

Policy IFBG-R is strictly enforced. Students found in violation of the policy are referred to school administration for disciplinary consequences and/or restriction of resource use. Hightower Trail policy allows student searching on the Internet. Teachers may also provide specific websites for students to use. The Cobb Digital Library is a set of web-based resources purchased for student use. It includes BrainPOP, Britannica Online encyclopedias, Image Quest, GALILEO databases, Gale in Context databases, and CultureGrams. MackenVIA is made up of web-based virtual libraries provided to every public school in the state and provide access to multiple information resources. These can be accessed at home with usernames and passwords. A password sheet is available in the Learning Commons and on page 4 of the planner.

ACADEMIC RECORD KEEPING

CONDUCT

The student's conduct grade is determined by behavior. Teachers incorporate these standards into behavior management systems that are shared with all students and parents at the beginning of the school year. Conduct grades will affect Honor Roll status. The following standards for determining grades are used school-wide and are linked to the school wide behavior card:

Satisfactory (S) Conduct which generally follows classroom and school rules and does not interfere with the learning of others.

Needs Improvement (N) Conduct which frequently causes class disruptions and/or does not always conform to classroom and school rules. This conduct may lead to an administrative referral.

Unsatisfactory (U) Conduct which consistently causes class disruptions that interfere with the learning of others and which often does not conform to classroom and school rules.

GRADING SCALE

A (90–100)	SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT
B (80–89)	ABOVE AVERAGE ACHIEVEMENT
C (74–79)	AVERAGE ACHIEVEMENT
D (70–73)	MINIMUM ACHIEVEMENT
F (0–69)	FAILURE

GRADE REPORTS

Cobb County Middle Schools operate on a nine-week grading system (with the exception of 8th grade high school level classes). Report cards are available through ParentVue at each quarter. Report cards reflect the total 9-week averages which are recorded on student permanent records.

Parents may access student grades by logging on to ParentVue at any time.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework is given for the purpose of reinforcement of class work or as an extension of class assignments. Homework may also be appropriate for enabling absentee students to catch up, for assisting those who have fallen behind, for preparation of the next day's assignment, for preparation of tests, or for enrichment purposes. Grades received for homework make up a percentage of students' overall grade for each class. There is a late policy for all homework assignments.

Grade level teachers will coordinate efforts to schedule long-term assignments and major tests. Students are given sufficient notice to prepare. Parents should be sure to check teachers' CTLS pages for homework assignments and project due-dates.

PROMOTION

Students are promoted based on specific Cobb County criteria. In order to earn promotion to the next grade level, the student must meet all of the following criteria: (1) Pass math, English/language arts and one additional core subject for the year or demonstrate minimum proficiency on the appropriate state-adopted assessment in math, English/language arts and one additional core subject. (2) Earn a combined overall passing average for all scheduled courses for the year; and (3) Demonstrate an appropriate level of reading comprehension as measured by a Lexile score. Parental alert letters are sent to possible non-promotion candidates following the first quarter grading period. Students who are not promoted may be able to earn promotion by attending summer school. Students are reminded that all four nine week's grades in all classes are used to determine whether or not promotion has been earned. The *Georgia A+ Education Reform Act* contains specific promotion/retention requirements. This act requires eighth graders to "pass" the 8th Grade End of Grade Assessment Test in reading and math in order to be eligible for promotion to 9th grade.

TESTING PROGRAMS

The Cobb County testing program includes both norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests. Sixth and seventh grade students take the End of Grade Assessment Tests (EOG) in ELA and Math. Eighth grade students complete the EOG in the areas of ELA, Science, Social Studies, and Math. Students enrolled in HS Algebra will take the Algebra EOC in May. This test grade will count for 10% of the final grade for semester 2. Seventh grade students take both the Iowa norm-referenced test and the CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test). Eighth grade students take the PSAT. Sixth, seventh, and eighth grade ELL students will also take the Accessing Comprehension and Communication State to State Test (ACCESS). Students will also take the BEACON test (measuring ELA and Math skills) three times each year. These assessments will take place during class and will not impact the student's class grade. This assessment is valuable in measuring reading and mathematical skills.

Several screening programs are conducted also throughout the school year. Primary among these are the vision, auditory, and scoliosis screenings.

TRANSCRIPTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Requests for school records and recommendations must be made in writing and received in the counselor's office **at least 10 school days prior to the mailing deadline.**

Parents are also required to complete a request form before the recommendation form can be completed.

Communication requesting recommendations should be sent to the Counseling Department. The Middle School grading system does not compute a student's GPA.

ATTENDANCE & MAKE-UP WORK

ABSENCES

When a student is absent, a note signed by the parent stating the reason is required – **Parents can respond through CTLS when they receive a CTLS email regarding the absence, or they may turn in a note to the front office within three days of being absent.** If you have a question concerning which absences are excused, please contact the pupil personnel clerk

CHECKING OUT EARLY

A note indicating dismissal time AND reason for dismissal (and signed by the parent/guardian) should be brought to the front office in the morning by any student planning to leave school before the end of the school day. The student will give the note to the front office staff & will receive a dismissal pass. The student can report to the front office at the specified time without being called & interrupting class. The student should be signed out at the office by a parent/guardian or approved emergency contact with "release to" rights, which is issued through the ParentVue account. Please be prepared to show your driver's license to check out your student. The Driver's License name should match the name provided in

ParentVue account. **Students will not be called from class after 4:00 p.m.**

AFTERNOON CARPOOL DISMISSAL

For safety and efficiency, parents picking up students should pull forward all the way to the posted signs. Students are not to walk through the parking lot. Staff will be available each afternoon to assist with dismissal.

DROP-OFF AND PARKING

The horseshoe in the front of the school is for active carpool pick-up/ drop-offs only. **Please do not park on the red curb at any time.** If you need to check out or pick up your child, please park in the parking lot. Not only will this practice enable us to meet all Fire Marshall regulations, it will provide direct access to our building in case of an emergency. Please check our website for a detailed description of our parking lot plan.

RIDING A DIFFERENT BUS

Students are not allowed to ride any bus that is not assigned to their home address. Students who have two separate parent households in the school district must provide a written request to administration; HTMS administration will work with the bus supervisor for this type of arrangement.

TARDIES

The school day begins at 9:10 a.m. At this time, students should be in their seats in Homeroom/1st period. If a student is late, he/she should first check in the front office with a signed excuse from a parent or the doctor's office (if applicable). Over-sleeping, missing the bus, etc., are unexcused tardies. If a student is chronically tardy to school, disciplinary action may be taken, such as warning, conference, detention, ISS, or a referral to the school social worker.

WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

If a student needs to withdraw, a parent or guardian must notify the counseling office, and make an arrangement to complete a withdrawal form. The counseling office number is: 770-578-7228. If a student needs basic information in order to register at a new school, please notify the counseling office. A "Request for Records" form should be completed by the receiving "new" school, and that will be submitted to Hightower Trail Middle School. Once this request is received, we will forward the necessary paperwork to the new school. Students who are withdrawing should return any books or school issued devices prior to their last day of attendance.

MAKE-UP WORK

Checking teachers' CLTS pages and recording assignments in the agenda is the best way to remain organized while away from school. If a student is absent more than two days, parents may email the teacher to request school assignments. These assignments will be ready for pick up by 4:30 p.m. the next day. If a student is absent on the day of an assessment or a day when an assignment is

due, the student should come to school with the assignments completed or prepared to take the assessment if no new material has been covered since the absence. For excused absences, new assignments should be made up within the same number of days as the student was absent. It is the student's responsibility to obtain, complete, and turn in work missed due to absence.

A zero (0) will be placed as the grade until the work/assessment is made up. At the end of the grading period, if the work has not been turned in or completed, the zero will remain as the assignment grade.

PAYMENT ENVELOPES

All payments to the school must be placed in a school payment envelope and placed in the safe. CCSD employees may not handle money or envelopes. Only cash or checks (payable to HTMS) are accepted. CCSD prohibits giving change. Please indicate what the money is for on the envelope (field trip, t-shirt, etc.) and make sure you **write the student's name and student ID legibly**. Do not include field trip permission slips or order forms in your envelope.

Lunch money should go directly to the Café, however no money is allowed to be collected in the lunchroom. There is a payment container on the wall in the atrium outside of the 7th grade commons. Students should place either check or cash in a payment envelope and then place into the container on the wall.

PTSA/Foundation payments should be placed in their collection box in the lobby.

LOST & MISSING ITEMS

LOST / DAMAGED TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are furnished to students and then become their responsibility. If a book is lost or damaged, the student will be required to pay for it. **Please note that until payment is made, students will not be issued another textbook.** Textbook questions can be sent to Amy Pease, Media Specialist, at amy.pease@cobbk12.org.

LOST AND FOUND

A lost and found area is maintained at the bus entrance. All items unclaimed by the end of each nine weeks are donated to the clothing recycle bins located in the Hightower Trail parking lot. Please write student's name on all belongings so they may be returned if lost.

CLINIC & OTHER HEALTH ISSUES

CLINIC

A registered nurse is available to distribute medications to your student and to provide minor first aid. If a student is sick or running a fever the parent must pick up the student. The school cannot be responsible for diagnosing any illnesses. You can reach the nurse directly by calling 770-578-7235.



MEDICATION

Under no circumstance will medication be provided by school personnel.

GUIDELINES FOR PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION AT SCHOOL:

- Parents must complete an "Authorization to Give Medication at School" form for each medication given. The form is available both at school and on the school website.
- All medication must be in the original, labeled container. Medications sent in baggies or unlabeled containers will not be given. Please send an extra empty pharmacy bottle to be used for field trips. Pharmacists may provide two labeled bottles for this purpose.
- Medications must be brought to the school office/clinic by parents.
- Parents must inform the school of any medication changes. New medication or different doses will not be given unless the parent completes a new medication form. The information on the prescription bottle label must match the new consent form.

GUIDELINES FOR OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATIONS

Middle and high school students (grades 6-12) may carry certain over-the-counter medications: Tylenol, acetaminophen, Motrin, Advil, ibuprofen, Midol, aspirin, and antacids. Students at all levels may carry cough and throat lozenges. All prescription medication, cough and cold medication (except lozenges), antihistamines, and over-the-counter medication not listed above shall be kept in the clinic. The student and parent will be responsible for the following:

- Obtaining, reading, and signing the written permission form before the student is allowed to carry the medication.
- The medication must be in its original container and legibly labeled with the student's full name.
- Students are not permitted to give their medication to other students.
- The licensed school nurse has a copy of this signed permission form on file in the clinic and the student carries a copy of the signed form with the medication.

COMMUNICATION

BY PHONE

The front office can be reached at 770-578-7225 and the counseling department can be reached at 770-578-7228. Parent volunteers are usually available to help direct your call.

Students will be allowed to use the telephone in the front office **only** in case of an emergency. If you need to contact your student in an emergency, please contact the counseling office. Students may only call home about forgotten items before school begins. You may bring items to the front office and leave them for the student to pick up between classes.

Please help us in interrupting instructional time as little as possible. **Students should never use their personal devices to contact parents during school hours. All communication should come through the office or clinic. All students who wish to go home because they are not feeling well must first go to the clinic, and the nurse will call home.**

CONFERENCES

Parents are invited to become an active part of Hightower Trail. Parents who desire a conference during the year should contact their child's grade-level counselor at (770) 578-7228.

PARENT/STUDENT COMMUNICATIONS

Class, school, and central office information is distributed through homerooms, CTLS, and CTLS Parent. CTLS Parent will send "Husky Headlines" to you via emails & texts. Email addresses & cell phone numbers in ParentVue are used. Please make sure they are up to date. "Husky Headlines" will include information from the school, PTSA, and Husky Foundation. Please watch for this information every Thursday at 6:00pm.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

If the school is closed due to inclement weather, an announcement will be made through the district website & local television/radio stations. This information will also be distributed via CTLS Parent.

FOOD & NUTRITION

LUNCH PROGRAM

CCSD offers lunch to students in the cafeteria. We encourage parents to supply student lunch accounts with money in order to purchase lunches, snack items, bottled water, a la carte items, etc.

In support of our school lunch program, we ask that students do not bring in meals from fast food restaurants.

Parents, please be aware that we do not deliver forgotten lunches directly to students. Forgotten lunches will remain in the front office until the student comes to pick up the lunch. (Email sent to the teachers.)

Free and reduced lunches will be provided for those families who qualify and complete the proper Federal application form. The easiest way to apply is through the food and nutrition section of the Cobb County School District website. It is fast and user friendly. Paper applications may be obtained from the Café manager. Students need to take a fruit, juice, or vegetable with their lunch entree to qualify for lunch pricing. If not, they will be charged at ala carte rates.

Meals can be prepaid in the kitchen office, the lunch line, or www.cobb.k12.ga.us/ under quick links. You can prepay any amount of money. Checks should be made out to HTMS Café and delivered to the lunchroom manager or a cashier. Please write student's Cobb ID# on your check. Your child can ask the cashier how much credit they have on account, or you can call our Café manager at 770-578-7226, to check the balance.

Please visit the Food and Nutrition Services website for current meal prices, menus, nutrient analysis, and staff contacts. Go to: www.cobbk12.org and click lunch menus. This will take you directly to the Food and Nutrition Services website. Meal prices are located at the bottom of the page. The link to our menus is at the top of the page.

PLEASE DO NOT BRING CANDY OR SOFT DRINKS FOR SNACKS OR LUNCH.

PARENT & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Principal's Advisory Council

The *A+ Education Reform Act of 2000* (HB1187) established school councils to "bring communities and schools closer together in a spirit

of cooperation to solve difficult education problems, improve academic achievement, provide support for teachers and administrators, and bring parents into the school-based decision-making process."

The Principal's Advisory Council is defined as an advisory body made up of at least the school principal, two elected certified teacher members, two parents elected by the other parents, and two members of the business community, who must also be parents. Council members may study a wide range of issues including student achievement, the school improvement plan, curriculum and instruction, school and community communications, and local school board policies. Service on the council involves a two-year term, which starts July 1 and runs through June 30. Regularly scheduled meetings are held at the school. The council chair (a parent) sets the agenda for the meetings with input from council members. It is our hope that through the school council a greater understanding of the needs of the community and work force will be formed, and we can do a better job of educating our students for their entry into that world.

VISITORS

All visitors must enter through the front doors and check in with the front office upon arrival at the school to get a visitor's badge for identification purposes.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

CLUBS

Student clubs and organizations are recognized as excellent learning opportunities and a great way to be involved in the "middle school experience." Meeting dates and times are presented daily on the scrolling announcements that play on TVs throughout the school. Each club is sponsored by a HTMS faculty staff member. Please check our school website for an updated list of clubs.

INTRAMURALS

The Intramural Program is an extension of the Physical Education program. It provides additional time not only for games and sports, but also for individual practice and instruction. Intramurals are offered from 8:00 until 8:45 a.m. most mornings of the school year. The latest that a student may join the day's program is 8:15 a.m.

FIELD TRIPS

In the event of a curriculum related field trip, parents are informed of the event, the cost per student, and the date the trip is planned. This information is in writing and is brought home by students. Field trips are funded through parent/guardian donations that are requested and collected to enable every student to participate. Full participation of students in all classroom activities is provided free of charge, and no student is denied these opportunities because of the inability or unwillingness of his/her parents/guardians to financially donate in support of those activities. All school rules apply on field trips and a student's behavior may affect their ability to participate.

School Counselors

The school counseling team is an integral part of Hightower Trail's instructional program. Our counselors follow a standards-based curriculum to assist students with their academic, personal/social, and career development. The counselors provide school-wide initiatives that include a comprehensive bully prevention program and academic success initiatives. Bullying is not a major problem for the students at HTMS, but, unfortunately, it does exist. To support our various kindness initiatives, the counseling department

incorporates classroom lessons, small groups, individual counseling, yearly activities, the PAL program and constant vigilance supported by the HTMS administration to help bullies rethink their actions, bystanders come forward and assist, and victims to feel that they are heard and protected. Academic success is supported by study skills groups, classroom lessons, guest speakers, and career and college awareness. In addition, the counselors provide resources for students who seek help with the plethora of other issues that may arise throughout their middle school years. Please note that counselors do their best to call and email parents about concerns, but they are required by law to uphold the confidentiality of the students. However, confidentiality is always breached when issues provoke harm to the student or other students. The safety of the students at HTMS is the counselors' main concern. Please notify your grade level counselor about questions or concerns.

6th Grade:

Lara Salzman, RTI Coordinator

7th Grade:

Lara Salzman: last names A-K

Sydney Brooks: last names L-Z

8th Grade:

Sydney Brooks

504s:

Suzanne Barber

Counseling Clerk: Ms. Erika Berger-Kern

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

EXPECTATIONS

Reinforcing good citizenship, through the HTMS Behavior Code, is an important part of our educational program. Students are expected to arrive at school and class on time, prepared to learn (with materials, books, homework, etc.), show proper respect for others, their belongings, the school building, and school property; all forms of physical/verbal harassment or aggression are unacceptable, and to promote everyone's safety, students are to walk in all instructional areas and hallways.

STUDY HALL

Unless there are unusual circumstances, students may not enter the building before the start of study hall at 8:00 a.m. Upon entering the building, all students must report to the study hall supervisor who will have a list of all the teachers or activities that are available for students. Until a student obtains permission from the supervisor, he or she may not leave the study hall. For the benefit of students who are completing assignments, study hall is a quiet setting. As with all classes, students should be prepared upon entering study hall with something to study or read independently. There are no electronic devices allowed in study hall. Students who arrive between 8:45 a.m. and 9:15 a.m. should report directly to homeroom.

HTMS SPECIFIC CONSEQUENCES & BEHAVIORS

***PLEASE SEE YOUR CHILD'S GRADE LEVEL SPECIFIC BEHAVIOR CARD (PACK CARD) FOR DETAILS.**

CONSEQUENCES

To help students understand the expectations of their teachers, during the first week of the new school year will be the distribution of the school wide behavior management plan. This plan will outline the procedures the teachers follow if student behavior becomes unacceptable. When this occurs, consequences will result. The teacher/administrator may assign consequences. Hopefully, the consequences will serve as a corrective measure to improve student behaviors in the future. Various consequences are described below:

Detention

8:00–8:45 a.m. Detention may be assigned by a teacher or an administrator.

FAILURE TO SERVE DETENTION will result in the following:

1st Offense: Parent contacted by an administrator, reassignment of detention

2nd Offense: Student will be assigned ISS

In-School Suspension (ISS)

The student attends school but is isolated from other students. Work is assigned to the student and credit is given for all work completed while in isolation. Any student serving any part of the day in ISS is ineligible for performance activities on the day assigned to ISS.

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)

The student is not permitted to attend school or any school sponsored function. A parent conference may be requested before the student is readmitted to school. All work can be made up as detailed in Policy JDDB (Short-Term Suspension) and is due upon return from suspension. Any student serving any part of the day in OSS is ineligible for performance activities on the day assigned to OSS.

Certain behaviors have specific consequences. It should be noted that consequences may be changed as circumstances arise during the school year. Please know that school rules apply to all school-sponsored events such as field trips and extracurricular activities.

TECHNOLOGY/ DEVICE MISUES GUIDELINES

Per Georgia House Bill 1009, students should not use personal electronic devices (cell phones, smartwatches, and tablets) during the bell-to-bell school day.

Our students live in a digital world! We are grateful for the many technology-based resources (especially now that all students have the ability to use a CCSD laptop) that we are able to provide to enhance the learning experience for our students. However, it is vital that students not misuse technology, especially while at school. If/when students are found to be on a device (cellphone, laptop, earbuds, apple watch, etc.) without permission, the following steps will take place:

1st Offense: “free”- the device will be collected at the time of the violation and the student can retrieve the device from the Front Office after school.

2nd Offense: the device will be collected at the time of the violation and taken to the front office. Admin. will call home and a parent/guardian will need to come retrieve the device.

3rd Offense: the device will be collected at the time of the violation and taken to the front office. Admin. will call home and explain that the next offense will result in a day of ISS. The parent/guardian will need to come retrieve the device.

4th + Offense: the device will be collected at the time of the violation and taken to the front office. The student will receive a referral resulting in 1 day of ISS. The parent/guardian will need to come retrieve the device.

Parents, please assist HTMS administration with this policy by avoiding texting or calling your child’s cell phone during the school day. Students are permitted to use the front office, clinic, or guidance phone at the discretion of HTMS staff members if communication is needed. *The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged property*

STUDENT ISSUED LAPTOPS

It is the expectation that students respect the student issued laptops. If a student damages the student issued laptop, this may result in the loss of the device and possible discipline action.

BUS CONDUCT

Students are expected to adhere to the Bus Conduct Policy of the Cobb County Board of Education (JCDB). The principal has been directed by the Superintendent to suspend bus services for middle school students whose misconduct affects the safe operation of the buses. These suspensions will be for a period of one day up to long-term suspension for extreme cases. When warranted, other disciplinary action beyond loss of bus privileges may be taken by the school administration.

*Per CCSD policy-students are not permitted to ride a school bus other than their own, even with a parent note.

FORGOTTEN ITEMS

To minimize disruptions in our classrooms, teachers will be emailed when a non-emergent “forgotten item” is dropped off from home. Students will be notified to collect the items throughout the day. (Ex: homework, project, books, lunch, etc.) For emergent items such as medication, house keys, etc. the front office will call into classrooms directly for delivery.

CHEATING

CHEATING ON ASSIGNMENTS, QUIZZES, OR EXAMINATIONS WILL RESULT IN BOTH AN ADMINISTRATIVE REFERRAL AND:

- **1st Offense:** Zero given on exam, quiz, or assignment, student/teacher conference; verbal and/or written notification of

parents. Student will be responsible for redoing assignment or retaking quiz/test.

- **2nd Offense:** Zero given on exam, quiz, or assignment; conduct grade lowered; verbal and/or written notification of parents; student/teacher/parent conference.
- **Additional Offenses:** Administrator/student conference (at staff request); zero on quiz, exam, or assignment; verbal and/or written reprimand; verbal and/or written notification of parents; ISS or OSS (1–3 days); "U" in conduct.

**All CCSD student policies will be upheld at Hightower Trail. The Cobb County Behavior Code and other policies, such as JCDB/C for alcohol and illegal drug use and JCDB for weapons will be enforced. See your county student folder for copies of the weapons, alcohol/illegal drug use, and other policies. You may also view these online at <http://www.cobbk12.org>.*

DRESS CODE

Parents – we need your assistance with student compliance to an appropriate daily attire. We hope the information below will be helpful. We want our students to dress for success each day which implies being comfortable and able to function in the school environment.

HIGHTOWER TRAIL follows the DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE - JCDB-R regarding Student Dress Code.

RATIONALE/OBJECTIVE: All students of the Cobb County School District (District) are encouraged to observe a standard of grooming and dress consistent with the level of formality of the school situation.

GENERAL PROVISIONS: All students shall be required to maintain the level of personal hygiene necessary to ensure a healthful school environment and to refrain from any mode of dress which proves to contribute to any disruption of school functions.

1. Appropriate shoes shall be worn.
2. Midriffs shall be covered.
3. Appropriate under-garments shall be worn and may not be visible.
4. Strapless garments and tank tops shall be worn with a jacket.
5. Suggested length for shorts is mid-thigh. At all times, the backside must be completely covered.
6. No caps, hats, bandanas nor hoods covering the head are to be worn in the school buildings during the school day unless there is a special activity during which they are deemed appropriate by the school administration. Administrators shall evaluate requests to wear coverings in accordance with sincerely held religious beliefs on a case-by-case basis.
7. Pajamas may not be worn to school. (Specific “pajama days” will be offered throughout the year.)
8. Clothing or ornamentation that does any of the following is prohibited:
 - a. Displays or advertises substances illegal for minors.
 - b. Displays suggestive phrases, designs, markings, or profanities.
 - c. Advocates, promotes, or suggest illegal activity.

** The administrative team shall be the final judge as to the appropriateness of the apparel and whether or not the apparel is in violation. If in doubt, do not wear the outfit.

If a student wears clothing that is questioned our goal is to help the student and go on with the day. We keep clean clothes in the counseling area. However, please note that repeated concerns can result in disciplinary action.

STUDENT RECOGNITION OPPORTUNITIES

We love to celebrate our students! We have many opportunities for students to be recognized. We have programs designed for teachers to recognize students who are positive role models. Two specific programs are:

Leader of the Pack Award: This award is given to students who exhibit outstanding growth, leadership, citizenship and character. It is awarded monthly by teachers who are inspired by their teachers.

Hard Working Husky Award: This award is given out each quarter by teachers to one student who they choose to recognize for their continued dedication, hard work and positive attitude. Student recipients have their picture taken with their teacher, and it is displayed on a poster outside of the teacher's classroom door for the quarter.

HONOR ROLLS

The *Principal's Honor Roll* is composed of students who earn all A's on their August-December and/or January-May report cards.

The *Academic Honor Roll* is composed of students who make all A's and B's on their August-December and/or January-May report card.

Earning any conduct grade other than an "S" in any class will prevent students from obtaining any honor roll status.