



**STUDENT HANDBOOK
2021-2022**

Gunston Middle School
Home of Hornet Nation



**2700 S Lang Street
Arlington, Virginia 22206
www.apsva.us/gunston/
@APSGunston**

Dr. Wiggins
Principal

Office Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
School Hours: 7:50 a.m. - 2:24 p.m.

Main Office: 703-228-6900



Dear Gunston Students!

This handbook is created for you, so that you will understand the important resources, rules and regulations, which help make Gunston Middle School a positive, rewarding, and safe place to learn.

Middle school is a time of great growth; emotional, mental, and physical. It is important that you read this handbook; it will help guide you in making good decisions and taking responsibility for your own learning and for your behavior.

Expectations at Gunston is based on developing positive relationships among students, teachers, parents, and administrators. We take **PRIDE (Preparation, Respect, Integrity, Determination, and Excellence)** in our academic journey. Gunston **PRIDE** is used to guide you as you learn to be more self-directed and self-disciplined. We are here to help you maintain these goals by encouraging you to be a positive member of our school community.

Read this handbook carefully, and be sure you understand everything it says about student attendance, behavior and available school resources. If you have any questions about information in this handbook, be sure to ask your teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, or other staff members for support.

Wishing you a GREAT school year,

Lori A. Wiggins, Ed.D.
Principal



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SCHOOL PERSONNEL OFFICE LOCATIONS

Principal	Dr. Wiggins	Main Office
Assistant 6 th Grade Principal	Ms. Hudson	W136
Assistant 7 th Grade Principal	Mr. Burnett	101C
Assistant 8 th Grade Principal	Mr. Ramirez	GW13
Director of Counseling		G23
Facilities Manager	Ms. Harris-Thomas	127
Activities Director	Mr. Matos	G47
Instructional Technology	Ms. ElChehabi	Main Office
Principal's Admin. Assistant	Ms. Daulón	Main Office
Registrar	Ms. Villaroel	G23
School Treasurer	Mr. Bekele	Main Office
Administrative Assistants	Ms. Bellounis	Main Office
	Ms. Ford	Main Office
	Ms. Rector	Main Office
	Mr. Borruto	Facilities Office
<u>School Counselors:</u>		
Sixth Grade	Mr. Caldwell	G21A
Seventh Grade	Ms. Kolody	G23B
Eighth Grade	Ms. Carr	G21B
EL Counselor	Ms. Cordero	G23C
Montessori Counselor	Ms. King	G21C



PROGRAMS AT GUNSTON

Gunston is home to three academic programs: the Traditional Middle School Program, the Spanish Partial Immersion Language Program, and the Montessori Middle Years Program. All three programs provide academic excellence in a challenging and nurturing environment.

Traditional Program

Gunston offers a variety of traditional middle school courses in math, language arts, science, social studies, and electives. Students are also encouraged to participate in the numerous clubs, sports and after school activities.

Spanish Partial Immersion

The Arlington County Middle School Spanish Partial Immersion Program is offered at Gunston Middle School as a continuation of the elementary programs offered at Key and Claremont Elementary Schools.

The program is designed to continue the development of Spanish language proficiency. The skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are taught specifically through the language arts, science, and social studies content instruction.

Language of Instruction in Immersion

Courses taught in Spanish:

Social Studies

Science

Spanish Language Arts

Courses taught in English:

Math - English - Electives - P.E.

Montessori Program

The Arlington County Middle School Montessori Program offered at Gunston is a continuation of the elementary program offered at the Public Montessori Elementary School.

The program is designed to continue the educational methods based on the work of Maria Montessori. Instruction is offered in an environment that encourages students to learn independently and work at their own pace.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

After School Activities

As a Gunston student, you are encouraged to participate in a variety of activities offered after school. We offer lots of opportunities to support you academically, encourage your creativity, and develop your talents and leadership skills. The different after school activities and clubs are announced at the beginning of each school year.

After school activities are divided into two periods. PM 1 runs from 2:35 to 3:10 and PM 2 runs from 3:15 to 4:10.

Check-In (Extended Day)

The Extended Day program requires students to check-in at the end of the school day and goes until 6:00 p.m. Students who are in Check-In may also participate in any Gunston after-school activities.

Community Center

The recreation center located in our building also provides after school activities through the Arlington County Department of Parks and Recreation. Programs are open to all Gunston students. Late buses are provided for students who attend activities in the recreation center.

PROCEDURES FOR AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- You are expected to leave the building at the end of the school day, if you are not staying for after school activities.



- ALL students staying after school must be under the direct supervision of a staff member.
- Students participating in PM1 activities only, must leave the school building and grounds by 3:15 p.m. No bus transportation will be provided.
- Students participating in after school events and activities for both sessions will be provided transportation at 4:20 p.m. Late buses will be available on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.
- **Once students leave the building, they may not re-enter unless accompanied by an adult.**
- Special sports buses will be provided for athletes on event days.

INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS PROGRAM

At Gunston, you have the opportunity to try out for our various competitive sport teams. The sports program is available to 6th, 7th, and 8th students.

SPORTS INCLUDE:

Boys' Basketball	Girls' Basketball
Boys' Ultimate	Girls' Ultimate
Co-ed Swimming*	
Boys' Soccer	Girls' Soccer
Co-ed Tennis	Co-ed Track
Co-ed Wrestling	

*must know how to swim

Practices are usually after school Monday through Thursdays from 2:35 - 4:10 p.m. However, coaches will give a specific practice schedule at the start of the season.

SPORTS FOR 8TH GRADERS

Eighth graders are eligible to try out for high school freshman football, field hockey, volleyball, JV Baseball, Crew, JV Softball and JV Lacrosse. For the 2021-22 school year, all 8th grade students participating on a high school sports team must be vaccinated.

SPORT PHYSICALS

In order to participate in a sport, students must have a completed physical form dated after May 1, 2021, on file at school. See the activities director, Mr. Matos, for the physical form or visit our school website, under Activities for the physical form.

SPORTS CALENDAR

Cheerleading	TBD
Boys' Ultimate	Oct. 12 th
Boys' Soccer	Sept. 13 th
Tennis	TBD
Track	March 14 th
Girls' Soccer	Oct. 25 th
Boys' Basketball	Oct. 18 th
Girls' Basketball	Jan. 3 rd
Wrestling	Jan. 3 rd
Swimming	Feb. 22 nd
Girls' Ultimate	Sept. 13 th



DAILY ROUTINES



ARRIVAL TO SCHOOL

Students riding the bus are reminded that bus pick up may start as early as 6:40 a.m. (and for some students, even earlier). The regular school buses leave Gunston at approximately 2:34 p.m. every day; however, there are late buses provided Monday – Thursday at 4:20 p.m., for students that stay after school for sport practices and other school related activities. Students participating in after school events and activities for both sessions will be provided transportation at 4:20 p.m.

School Bus Conduct

Riding a school bus is a privilege. In order to make all bus rides pleasant and safe, it is expected that students be polite and also that they read and follow the bus regulations.

In addition:

- Students must ride their assigned buses.
- Students must abide by the school rules while riding the bus.
- Student will need to wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth during the bus ride.
- If a student needs to ride a different bus or expects to get off at a different stop, the student must have a written note from a parent or guardian.

Bus Note Procedures: Bus notes should be brought to the office during lunch. Approval will be based on seat availability on the bus. A bus pass will be given to the student to show to the bus driver.

*** Failure to comply with bus rules may result in the loss of bus riding privileges and/or further disciplinary action.**

ATTENDANCE

Attending school regularly is essential to be a successful student.

Attendance is taken every period of the day. Tardiness to class and frequent absences will have a negative effect upon your achievement and grades. **Students are responsible for making up missed work when absent.**

EXCUSED ABSENCES

The following are considered excused absences from school (all others reasons are unexcused):

- Illness, doctor or dentist appointment
- Death in family
- Observance of a religious holiday
- Summons to a court of law
- Suspensions
- Severe family emergency

You must bring a note from parents in order to excuse your absences from school and tardiness to school.

EARLY DISMISSALS

Your parents/family must come to the main office to sign you out of school early. You are not able to leave until your family arrives.

BICYCLES & SKATEBOARDS

Students may ride bikes to school. Any person under the age of fifteen years of age must wear a protective helmet. There are bike racks located near the bus ramp entrance of the school for bike riders. Students are responsible for securing their bike. The school is not responsible for the damage or theft of a bike on school grounds. Skateboarding or rollerblading is not allowed on school grounds.

CAFETERIA

Breakfast is served from 7:20-7:40 a.m.

For lunch, the cafeteria provides hot and cold items. You may bring your lunch. Breakfast and



lunch are provided at no cost to all students.

CELLULAR PHONES

Students may use cell phone devices with earbuds/headphones to listen to music or play games in the theater, cafeteria, or gym prior to the start of school, or after school. ***Personal electronic devices must be put away in your locker by 7:50 a.m.; cell phones are not allowed to be used during school hours.*** Additionally, a personal cell phone does not replace a school issued electronic device. Gunston Middle School is not responsible for any lost or stolen personal devices. Cell phones/electronic devices will be confiscated if these expectations are not followed.

DEVICE USE

All students are provided with iPads. Students will receive training on Internet Safety and Computer use during the school year. School assigned devices should be charged and brought to school daily. Students' personal electronic devices will not be allowed to be used as a substitute for an issued school electronic device.

Regardless of the device, all students are to abide by the Internet policy, [Section M-8 of the Policy Implementation Procedure](#):

*** Students who violate these guidelines may result in consequences or loss of privileges.**

Students are expected to:

Use technology for educational purposes

For the purposes for completing assignments and or research directed by a staff member.

Conserve Resources.

Print only with a teacher's permission.

Protect Yourself

- Never give out personal information on the Internet.
- Never share your login and password.

- Never use someone else's login or password.

Obey Copyright Rules

Use proper citation and documentation.

Respect Privacy of Others

Photographs or videos cannot be taken without the permission of students and staff.

Technology Safety

- Cyber bullying is a violation.
- Cyber bullying can include "repeated" negative behaviors using communications technology such as text messages, chat rooms, e-mail, and instant messaging. Never use electronic media negatively in a way to harm or frighten.

<http://www.apsva.us/digital-learning>

COUNSELING SERVICES

Your counselor will work hard to make sure you feel connected and supported as a student at Gunston.

If you would like to meet with your school counselor, make an appointment through the counseling department office, located on the ground floor, across from the gym.

CLINIC PROCEDURES

If you are feeling ill at school, your teacher must first call down to the clinic to speak with the nurse or clinic aide. The clinic is located near the Main Office.

MEDICATIONS

All medications, both prescription and over-the-counter, must be brought to school by the parent and left in the nurse's office. Misuse of medications and substances is prohibited.

GUNSTON LIBRARY

The library hours are 7:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Additional after school hours are often held on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, as noted in the weekly after school activities list, for students to read, research, study, and complete homework.



When classes are not being held in the library, students with a lunch pass are welcome to eat in the library as space allows as long as they clean up after themselves.

HAZARDOUS WEATHER & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Schools Closed - All school buildings are closed. Extended Day and Check-In are also closed. All school activities are canceled unless otherwise announced.

Delayed Opening - Schools will open two hours later than usual. The morning bus route schedule is also delayed by two hours. Field trips are canceled. **Breakfast is not served.**

Early Dismissal - Schools will dismiss two hours early if conditions require. Extended Day will close at 4 p.m., extracurricular activities, interscholastic contests, team practices, field trips, and recreation programs in schools and on school grounds are canceled.

GRADING

Student grades reflect student achievement and not student behavior. Student grades will reflect their level of mastery by standard using the following scale:

- Meeting (4) The student consistently demonstrates mastery of the standard.
- Approaching (3) The student is in the process of mastering the standard.
- Developing (2) The student demonstrates initial understanding of the standard with support.
- Insufficient Evidence (1) The teacher does not have evidence to determine a student's mastery level for this skill.

Standards-Based Grading Conversion Chart

Letter Grade	Proficiency
A	Meets (4)
B+	Approaching (3)
B	
C+	Developing (2)
C	
D+	Insufficient Evidence (1)
D	
E	No Evidence

HOMEWORK EXPECTATIONS

Homework may be assigned as supplemental practice. Homework will not be calculated in the students' end-of-quarter grade. The assigned homework will be documented as complete or incomplete.

Homework should:

- Prepare for, relate to, build on, reinforce, and/or enhance learning in the classroom.
- Encourage a student's sense of responsibility, develop a sense of personal accountability, promote learning, and improve study habits.
- Strengthen the communication between home and school.
- Be appropriate for the age and stage of development of the student.
- Acknowledge individual differences among students through differentiation when feasible.

The length of time spent on homework



assignments should avoid undue intrusion on the time students may spend in other activities outside the school day. In general, the following total amount of time spent daily on homework over four nights a week represents an average for the typical student:

- Grade 6-8: maximum of 20 minutes a night for each course, plus an additional minimum of 30 minutes of reading

Refer to Homework Policy, [Section I-11.2](#)

HOMWORK HELP

Homework support is offered after school on most days. Check with your teachers for their office hour schedule. You should ask for help when you don't understand an assignment, if work is too hard, or if you need to make up for missed work. *Our goal is to make homework a positive support for student academic achievement.*

LOCKERS

You will be assigned a locker during the first weeks of school. If you lose or forget your combination, ask your homeroom teacher. **DO NOT share your locker or give your combination to anyone else.** Administrators have the right to inspect lockers.

PE POLICIES

The following are guidelines established by the Physical Education Department: Students must dress for PE each day.

- Students must wear their Gunston PE t-shirt to participate in all aspects of class.
- Backpacks and coats are not allowed in the gym area or locker rooms.
- Students will be assigned a PE locker and lock to secure belongings.
- Students are responsible for their lock,

locker and its contents.

- Replacement locks are \$7.00.
- Use of electronic devices is not permitted in the gym during class. Devices must be locked away in the student's hallway locker during the school day.
- PE uniforms are \$25 (\$13 for the shorts and \$12 for the shirt). Students are only required to purchase a shirt for the 2021-22 school year. If a student cannot purchase a uniform, wear alternative clothes to PE and communicate with their teacher at the beginning of the year.

LOST AND FOUND

The Lost and Found Items section is located in the school cafeteria. Valuable items such as money, eyeglasses, cell phones, keys, and jewelry should be turned to the main office.

REPORT CARDS/GRADING PROGRESS

Report cards will be distributed on a nine-week basis. In middle school, it is important for you to be responsible for your learning and academic growth. We will work with you to establish short and long term goals. You should regularly check your grades and assignments through StudentVue.

HONOR ROLL

At the end of each nine-week grading period, students will be recognized for their achievement.

1. **An Honor Roll:** A student who has achieved all A's.
2. **A's & B's Honor Roll:** A student who has achieved all A's and B's.
3. **B.U.G. (Bring up Grades) Award:** Recognizes students who have improved their grades with no decline in any subjects.
4. **GMS PRIDE:** Demonstrating positive student values and behaviors.



Standards-Based Grading Conversions

Letter Grade	Proficiency
A	Meets (4)
B+	Approaching (3)
B	

PRIDE

#GUNSTONPRIDE

PREPARATION:

The action or process of getting ready. Coming to class prepared with materials, being ready to learn, and arriving on time to class.

RESPECT:

A feeling or understanding that someone or something is important, serious, etc., and should be treated in an appropriate way

INTEGRITY:

The quality of being honest and fair.

DETERMINATION

A quality that makes you continue trying to do or achieve something that is difficult.

EXCELLENCE:

Extremely high quality.

SCHOOL VISITORS

Parents and visitors must sign in at the main office. **No student visitors** will be permitted in classrooms during the regular school day.

TEACHER ADVISORY PROGRAM (TA)

This is a period that provides an opportunity for you to be a part of a supportive classroom community. On some days, your TA teacher will help with organization. Other days are designated for DEAR (Drop Everything and Read), bonding activities, and for watching Network 21 News show, *Good Morning Gunston*.

A Guide to Success at Gunston Middle School

The Gunston staff is here to provide you with the opportunity to get the best education possible for your future. The result, however, is in your hands. Demonstrate GMS PRIDE and you are guaranteed a successful school year.

HALLWAY BEHAVIOR

Students are expected to move through the halls in a polite fashion.

Students will:

- Walk in the halls at all times.
- Keep their hands to themselves.
- Speak using a pleasant tone “indoor voice.”
- Respond with respect when addressed by a staff member.
- Profanity and other offensive language are not appropriate and will not be permitted.



APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL CONTACT

- Students are expected to be polite and to touch others only in appropriate ways.
- Students will not fight, push, kick, shove, horse around, play fight, wrestle, or any other type of inappropriate physical contact.
- Students will not engage in public displays of affection such as kissing.

KIND & CARING

Gunston is a wonderful place to learn, with modern equipment and classrooms available. Just as students learn to care for themselves and others, they are also expected to show care towards school property and the property of others.

See Anti-Bullying Pledge at the end of this handbook

HONESTY

Students are expected to demonstrate integrity in their actions. The following behaviors are not acceptable:

- Cheating- either giving or receiving information on tests and assignments.
- Plagiarism- copying information from books, the Internet, or other people and claiming it is your own work.

DRESS CODE

GMS is a high-achieving middle school. We expect our students to be dressed for an academic atmosphere of purposeful learning and responsible citizenship. These guidelines will help you make good choices about what to wear to school. The guidelines exist to ensure a safe learning environment.

The following guidelines for apparel and appearance are to be adhered to:

- Garment for students will fit in a manner as to allow appropriate ease of movement

and comfort.

- Clothing should reflect PRIDE values.

These items SHOULD NOT be worn at school or school-sponsored trips:

- Shirts with oversized armholes
- See-through garments
- Shoes with wheels
- Sleepwear/pajamas
- Clothing or jewelry promoting drugs, alcohol, death, violence, or sex
- Clothing or jewelry with profanity, suggested language, or symbols
- Bare feet or stocking feet while at school
- Clothing that may be interpreted as gang attire

**** If a student is not in compliance with the dress code, their Parent/Guardian will be called to bring appropriate attire for the student. Repeated violations of the dress code may result in further disciplinary action.**

PROHIBITED ITEMS

The following items are never allowed at school, on school grounds, or on buses:

- Matches, lighters, and tobacco products
- Laser pointer pens
- Items for sale not sponsored by Gunston Middle School
- Large amounts of money

FRAGRANCE-FREE SCHOOL

All teachers, students, and staff members are asked not to bring or use cleaning products, deodorizers or other personal care products into the school unless they are identified as fragrance-free.

ILLEGAL ITEMS

The following items are illegal to have at school, on school grounds, or on buses:

- Weapons (knives, pocket knives, firearms, bombs, bullets, etc.) or “look alike;” weapons (any item that looks like



- a weapon, including toy guns and knives);
- Alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, drugs, or "look alike"
- Stink bombs, explosives, poppers, or fireworks.

Students should report any information they have about such items to an adult. Students who withhold information about a dangerous situation become part of the problem and may face severe consequences.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

APS School Board policies govern student behavior, [Policy Implementation Procedure J-7.4](#)

DISCIPLINARY REFERRALS

When a student has violated the Code of Behavior, the teacher takes the first step in correcting the observed behavior. The teacher works with the student, parent, and counseling staff in reaching an understanding of the student's responsibility in changing his or her conduct.

When a student is referred to an administrator for a violation of school conduct, the following corrective action(s) may be taken:

- Warnings (verbal or written)
- Parent conferences
- Lunch detention
- Detention after school
- Community Service
- A fee charged for repair of damages
- In-School Alternative Program
- Out of school suspensions
- PM Administrative Detention

- Or other appropriate action as determined by administration.

CAFETERIA BEHAVIOR

Students are expected to demonstrate good table manners and polite behavior in the cafeteria.

- Students should not cut or hold places in line.
- Finish all food and drink in the cafeteria or outside eating area, unless students have a pass to eat in a teacher's room.
- Students talk with peers using appropriate inside voices.
- Students remain in their seats during lunch.
- All trash should be removed from lunch tables and the floors.
- Trays, food, and drink containers are recycled.
- Students may only be excused from the cafeteria by the adult on duty if they have a written pass from the teacher.
- Students may carry clear plastic water bottles outside of the cafeteria.



Gunston Student iPad Agreement

Guidelines apply in school and at home. Parents/Guardians have the right to make additional guidelines for homes that do not interfere with the goals, vision, and guidelines of Gunston. For more information see School Board Policy I-9.2.5.1 Electronic Technologies Acceptable Use and <http://www.apsva.us/digital-learning>

My responsibilities as a student using an APS owned iPad are:

SECURITY & CARE

- I Will use only the iPad assigned to me
- I Will protect the iPad from damage, loss, or theft, and will keep it away from potential dangers (food, drinks, the edge of desks)
- I Will keep all passcodes and passwords private. They can only be shared with teachers, administrators, and parents/guardians
- I Will keep all settings and labels on the device as they were when I received the iPad
- I Will keep Global Protect app logged in and on
- I Will make sure the iPad chargers are never be left unsecured or unattended
- I Will keep the iPad in the protective case that came with the iPad and not put any decorations on the iPad or case
- If I misplace the iPad iWill retrace my steps to each location I have been to recently and search for it. iWill check the iPad lost & found tub located in the main office and notify the ITC immediately

RESPONSIBILITY

- I Will charge the iPad every night and bring it to school every day
- I Will only use the iPad for school use
- I Will always use the iPad in ways that are in line with #gunstonPRIDE
- I Will use paper and pencil to do my work if I am not properly prepared with the iPad unless there is a classroom device provided by the teacher
- I Will only use apps provided in the APS App Catalog
- I Will report any damages or misuse of any iPad to a teacher or the ITC immediately
- I Will fill out an [iPad Help Request form](#) for any help that is needed or issue I may have

I, _____ (full name), have read the Gunston Student iPad responsibilities and expectations. I have clarified any questions with a teacher or our ITC. I agree to follow these guidelines. I understand that violating any part of this agreement may result in a consequence from the administrators, the ITC, or be responsible for the cost to repair/replace the iPad.

Signature Date _____ Student

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

TA Teacher Name