**St. Elmo Center for the Gifted**

**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**2025-2026**



*2101 18th Ave.*

*Columbus, GA 31901*

*706-748-3115*

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**ST. ELMO STAFF DIRECTORY**

**Name Email Title**

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**POLICIES AND CODE OF CONDUCT**

Please note that St. Elmo will follow Muscogee County School District’s policies as found in the MCSD Student Handbook and Code of Conduct.

**ATTENDANCE**

**St. Elmo provides your student with their required gifted service for the week on their designated St. Elmo day. Regular attendance is essential and expected.**

**St. Elmo Attendance Protocol**

**1 Unexcused Absence** – School Staff will contact home school and parent via phone, e-mail, text, or letter.

**2 Unexcused Absences -** School Staff will contact home school and parent via phone, e-mail, text, or letter.

**3 Unexcused Absences –** Director/School Staff will contact parent regarding continued participation in St. Elmo Gifted services.

**6 Unexcused Absences –** Director will contact parent and has the right to withdraw student from gifted services until further notice from the parent.

**EXCUSES for Absence**

Parents must submit an excuse for absence within one week after an absence, whether excused or unexcused. A link will be e-mailed to the parent for convenience on the date of the child’s absence from our clerk, Amy Stephens.

**Doctor Appointments**

Please try to avoid scheduling doctor’s appointments on your child’s designated St. Elmo Day. We do understand that sometimes it is unavoidable. However, we only have 18 instructional days with your student a semester, and we want to provide the best gifted service and instruction possible during their designated time. Thank you for your help with this.

**SCHOOL HOURS**

Office Hours 7:45 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.

**Student Arrival/Drop-Off**

Student arrival or car riders being dropped off will begin at 8:30 a.m., as our St. Elmo buses typically do not arrive until at least 8:30 a.m.

Any student being dropped off must be escorted into the building by a parent/guardian. A staff member located in the front office will assist parent/guardian with signing each student in for the day.

**Student Dismissal**

* Bus pick up begins 1:10 p.m. to transport students back to the home schools.
* Student Check Out/Pick Up – Students must be checked out no later than 12:55 p.m.
* Car Riders – Students can be dropped off starting at 8:30 a.m. and picked up no later than 1:00 p.m. Parents/Guardians must sign the students in and out at the front office.

\*Any changes in transportation must be communicated to the school by phone call no later than 12:30 p.m. on the day of the change.

**CHANGE IN ROUTINE MODE OF TRANSPORTATION**

If your child’s normal routine of home transportation is to be changed, please do one of the following:

* Send an e-mail to St. Elmo to your child’s teacher, or Dr. Jennifer Roe, Director.
* Phone St. Elmo before 12:30 p.m. The caller must provide office staff with the required form of identification specified by the school administration. Without knowledge of this means of identification or other personal information, the message will not be delivered to student.

Note: If the school has not been provided with written notification, email or office personnel have not been contacted, the child will follow his/her regular routine. Schools cannot rely on verbal statements from the child describing desired transportation changes. Children will be expected to ride their St. Elmo bus to and from the home school unless written permission has been provided and approved.

**VISITORS**

Visitors will be required to report to the main office for appointments/visits and must provide their picture identification and / or driver’s license to obtain a Visitor’s Pass. Please be sure to schedule a time with your child’s teacher prior to coming for a conference or a class visit.

**LUNCHROOM VISITS**

Parents may arrange to eat lunch with their children during their lunch time.

**BIRTHDAY PARTIES**

Parents are invited to bring cupcakes or other treats for their child’s birthday. Please schedule the best time to have the party with the student’s teacher. Please also ask about possible food allergies of your child’s classmates. We have a few students in the school who are extremely allergic to nuts. We ask everyone to not include nut products or products processed in the same facility as peanuts or tree nuts in the special party treats or in snacks/lunches.

**CLASSROOM VISITS AND CONFERENCES**

Visits to the classroom must be prearranged with the child’s teacher. Conferences are encouraged and may be scheduled directly with teachers. We request you arrange conferences in advance so they may be scheduled at times that do not interfere with class instruction.

**ST. ELMO SCHOOL COUNSELOR**

The school counselor is available for every student. The staff works closely with the counselor to help support students’ success in school.

Should students be concerned about school, getting along with friends, and other matters, working the counselor will help them better understand themselves and others so they can cope realistically with everyday situations and/or problems.

If students need to see the counselor during school, they must obtain teacher permission. Parents can contact their school counselor any time.

**UNIFORM POLICY/DRESS CODE**

All St. Elmo students that attend a magnet program that requires a uniform may wear their home school location’s uniform or can wear their St. Elmo attire as an alternative on their designated St. Elmo day. St. Elmo Attire/Spirit wear is available to purchase through special orders or as available at our center.

We ask that all students dress in appropriate and comfortable clothing and shoes.  Closed shoes and athletic shoes are recommended for all to help to ensure safety indoors and outdoors. Students may choose their own outerwear, including coats and jackets.  Students should remember to wear their coats/jackets from the home schools, especially in winter.

**No bookbags are allowed** due to limited space on the bus and in the classrooms; only STE drawstring bags are permitted, which are available to purchase for $10.00.

**School Store:** Our St. Elmo store can be accessed at this website:

<https://the-dragons-den-102514.square.site/s/shop>

**LUNCH/MONEY**

Lunch is served at St. Elmo or students can bring a lunchbox.  Money in their account at their homeschool will also work and can be accessed to pay for lunch at St. Elmo. The weekly menu will be posted on Mondays on our website. Columbus High School provides our lunches for our students daily.

**SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

Students do not need to bring any school supplies with them on a daily basis as many of the activities are hands on and teachers will supply materials or ask for materials as needed from home such as toilet paper rolls, empty bottles, etc. However, each teacher does have a wish list on our school website page and providing items off our teachers’ wish lists would be greatly beneficial and appreciated so that teachers can provide the quality gifted instruction and services for all of our students.

Our St. Elmo website address: https://e044550.wixsite.com/my-site-1

**MEDICATION/HEALTH CONCERNS**

The following is the MCSD Medication Policy for detailed information regarding medication distribution during the school day at St. Elmo.  

* The medication must be in the original container and labeled with the child's name, Physician's name, name of medication, and the dosage instructions for the child.
* There must be a Medication Administration Authorization Form signed for each medication, even over the counter medication. This form can be obtained from the clinic at St. Elmo.
* Parents are responsible for bringing medication to school and turning it in to the clinic or office staff.
* Children are not permitted to transport medication to and from home school without proper documentation. Forms are located in the clinic.
* Emergency medication, such as a rescue inhaler, auto inject-able epinephrine, and insulin, can be carried on the student's person with physician's permission and completed paperwork. The appropriate form is located in the St. Elmo Clinic. Please CONTACT our clinic worker if this applies to your child's health situation.

**Communicable Conditions:**

It may be necessary to exclude your child for symptoms consistent with a communicable condition, temperature of 100º or higher, vomiting or diarrhea. We understand that this may be an inconvenience, however, this is necessary to keep your child healthy and protect the health of the other students.

**Students with Severe Food or Other Allergies*:***

MCSD works to accommodate students with severe allergies. We rely on parents and students to provide accurate and updated information about a student’s food allergies or other allergies, their impact, and what to do to avoid exposure or address exposure. The school district allows Epi-pens and other allergy medications but asks that parents share information with St. Elmo about their child’s allergy. Please provide information to the clinic worker as early as possible, so that appropriate steps can be taken. We ask parents and students to be aware that others may possibly have food sensitivity/allergies (including but not limited to peanuts, tree nuts, milk/dairy products, fish/shellfish) and encourages students to refrain from sharing food in the cafeteria or at any time during the school day.

**EMERGENCY DRILLS**

The following safety drills may be conducted throughout the school year.

•Fire Drills

•Lockdown drills

•Severe Weather Drills

•Tornado Drills

NOTE:  Fire drills and tornado drills are held without prior notice.

One evacuation/fire drill is required the first 10 days of school, then the second within 30 days and subsequent drills each month thereafter.

Severe Weather drills are scheduled for November and February and may replace fire drills.

In addition, the Safety Plan is updated annually. If needed, the designated reunification site for an emergency at St. Elmo is St. Paul United Methodist Church located on 2101 Wildwood Avenue, Columbus, GA 31906.

**COMMUNICATION**

School newsletters, special event flyers, and grade-level information/student progress information will be sent home with students. Important information will also be posted on the school website. Parents are encouraged to use Canvas and e-mail to communicate with teachers. Communication may also be facilitated through phone calls, text, conferences, notes, and emails. The school will utilize the St. Elmo Facebook page, emails, phone calls and text to relay important information to our St. Elmo families.

**Please check with the home school to ensure that your e-mail address and phone number is correct in Infinite Campus as that is where the information is pulled from for St. Elmo and we do not have access to update it for you. The home school has to update your information if necessary.**

**OPEN HOUSE/VERFICATION**

St. Elmo’s Verification will take in August prior to students attending St. Elmo. It is imperative to attend verification as the home school does not share information with St. Elmo and we cannot always access important information. This is also an opportunity for you to tour the center and meet your child’s teacher.

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**ST. ELMO SHOWCASE**

St. Elmo will host an exhibition/showcase in December to share what students have been learning and creating. The St. Elmo Showcase nights will take place in December. More information will be sent home to families closer to the showcase event.

**CURRICULUM, GRADING, AND REPORT CARDS**

Our focus at St. Elmo is enrichment and we focus on the following gifted programming standards/skills that will be assessed through our gifted report card all year long.  Skills assessed include creativity, logical thinking, problem-solving, critical thinking, research skills, communication skills (listening, speaking, written), self-awareness, and success skills. We utilize Problem-Based learning, Personalized Learning, and use components of Odyssey of the Mind, focusing on problem-solving and creativity skills within our curriculum.  Please see the report card on the next page.

The skills for student evaluation are derived from gifted programming standards. These skills will be evaluated through the correlating and appropriate grade level Georgia Standards of Excellence. Please note that the levels are progressive, and students may be working on more than one level within a competency. The goal of student growth is to progress through levels. Students are evaluated on individual strengths and continuous growth. A particular single mastery level is not necessarily expected for any competency or grade level, as these are all skills that students are learning and goals they are working towards.

Please see the report card and gifted programming standards that are assessed.

**St. Elmo Report Card**

**2025-2026**

Academic Performance Level for Gifted Evaluation

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name | **BEGINNING** – Beginning to demonstrate the learning goal, but may be inconsistent and/or may need significant teacher assistance to reach goal | **DEVELOPING** – Demonstrates knowledge of the content and application of the learning goals with some teacher assistance | **PROFICIENT** –  Demonstrates knowledge and application of the learning goals. | **Not Assessed** |
| Score | B | D | P | NA |

|  |
| --- |
| **St. Elmo Center for the Gifted Learning Goals** |
| **RESEARCH SKILLS** |
| Demonstrates ability to use a variety of resources |
| Researches independently and distinguishes relevant material |
| **CREATIVE THINKING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS** |
| Demonstrates creative thinking, expression, and originality in ideas and products |
| Employs a variety of strategies and solutions when solving problems |
| **CRITICAL THINKING AND LOGICAL PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS** |
| Understands and can explain the information gathered |
| Uses learned information to make decisions and solve problems |
| **COMMUNICATION SKILLS** |
| Uses effective speaking in given settings |
| Uses effective listening in given settings |
| Uses effective writing in given settings |
| **SELF-AWARENESS SKILLS** |
| Motivated and engaged in his/her learning |
| Positively interacts with peers to contribute to the class community |
| Perseveres when mistakes are made |
| **SUCCESS CRITERIA** |
| Listens and follow directions |
| Works independently |
| Shows effort and commitment to the task at hand |

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**FIELD TRIPS**

The Board of Education recognizes that field trips, when used for teaching and learning integral to the curriculum, are an educationally sound and important ingredient in the instructional program of the schools. In order for your child to benefit from these activities, appropriate behavior from all students is necessary. St. Elmo reserves the right to prohibit students from attending field trips because of disruptive behavior.

Parent permission is required in advance of field trips. Students will travel by school buses, but St. Elmo authorizes the use of incidental transportation by private vehicle only when necessary. Students will only be released during the course of the trip to parents or guardians. These releases should be arranged in advance by submitting a written request to the teacher or adviser in charge of the trip. In addition, parents will be asked to sign out their child at the time of departure.

**EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND TEAMS**

St. Elmo is excited to be able to offer a Robotics Team as well as an Odyssey of the Mind Team.

Information about the team auditions will be sent home to the students in appropriate grade levels based on student interest. Students must attend all auditions and turn in all required paperwork to be considered for the teams. We would like to thank our families in advance to making the commitment when auditioning for a team, as practices will be held once or twice a week at St. Elmo after students are released and we appreciate your dedication to bringing your students here for practices from the home school as needed.

**MAKE-UP WORK POLICY/ HOMEWORK (FOR HOME SCHOOLS)**

Gifted Program students are to be held responsible for mastery of all standard curriculum objectives. However, due to the unique nature of the Gifted Program and the workload that these students are expected to carry, they will be excused from daily and related homework assignments given while participating in the Gifted Program classes. While all classroom assignments are important, requiring Gifted Program students to make up all work is actually a penalty to the gifted student. The following are guidelines to be used when making decisions regarding work missed while attending Gifted Program classes:

1. Students attending Gifted Program classes will be excused from the daily/homework assigned during the class period(s) missed. Students will be excused from these assignments without penalty to their grades, loss of other scheduled activities, or loss of any classroom privileges.
2. Mastery of standard curriculum objectives may be determined by oral review, teacher observations, quizzes, modified assignments, and/or a few selected problems.
3. If mastery of standard grade appropriate objectives become a problem for any Gifted Program student, the classroom teacher and the teacher of the gifted should work together to find a solution to the problem.
4. Tests, science labs, and other major long-range assignments should not be made up before or after school. It is the responsibility of the student and classroom teacher to make alternate arrangements to ensure that the assignment is completed in a reasonable time period agreed upon by the teacher and the student. (For example, a test administered while the gifted student is attending the Gifted Program might be made up the following class day in lieu of that day’s assignment.)
5. Please try not to plan extracurricular activities on days students attend the gifted program. Many gifted students are more emotionally sensitive and empathetic and may be misunderstood as overreacting, when they are overwhelmed with a situation. In addition, gifted students often have a tendency to be highly sensitive. When “special activities” are planned on days they are in the gifted program, they feel as if they are being punished for being identified as gifted and feel obligated to stay at school to participate in “special activities”.
6. Time spent in the Gifted Program class is governed by State Regulations. Therefore, students are not to miss any of the scheduled time for Gifted Program services. Assignments due on the day the student is to attend the Gifted Program class(es) are to be turned in the next scheduled class time.

It is certainly important that Gifted Program students succeed in their academic classes. By not requiring daily assignments in addition to Gifted Program assignments for these students, the classroom teacher can take some of the pressure off and encourage their success. The thinking skills that gifted students are learning and practicing in the Gifted Program can only enhance their performance in regular education classes.

**CELL PHONE POLICY**

Student cell phones are NOT allowed on St. Elmo campus for personal use!

Students will NOT be allowed to have cell phones on school campus. If students must have a cellphone due to extenuating circumstance, they will NOT be allowed to carry the cell phone with them at any time and the phone will be kept with the teacher during the instructional day.

CONSEQUENCES FOR CELL PHONE VIOLATION

1. First Offense – the teacher will take possession of the cell phone, contact the parent/guardian, and return the cell phone at the end of the school day.
2. Second Offense – the teacher will take the cell phone and transport it to the principal. Contact will be made with the parent/guardian for them to pick up the cell phone from the school office.
3. Third Offense – the teacher will take the cell phone and transport it to the principal. Contact will be made with the parent/guardian for them to pick up the cell phone from the school office. Possible disciplinary action.

**ST. ELMO DISCIPLINE POLICY**

St. Elmo will follow the MCSD student handbook and code of conduct regarding discipline and behavior issues. Please see below for more specific information regarding our discipline policy.

Minor vs. Major Offenses

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Minors | Majors |
| * Not following directions * Horseplay * Running in the hallways * Off task * Refusal to do work * Teasing/Name calling * Inappropriate language * Inappropriate use of technology | * Fighting * Defiance * Weapons * Making threats * Leaving the classroom without permission * Theft * Vandalism * Bullying-repeated harm, intimidation, or threats to injure. Can be verbal, social or physical. |

Three minor incidents can result in an office visit and more severe consequences.

Major incidents are an automatic office referral and appropriate consequences will be administered. Discipline consequences may include the following and will be administered based on the individual situation.

Parent Conference

Lunch Detention

In School Detention

Loss of Privileges such as field trips, etc.

Suspension or loss of bus privileges

Out of School Suspension

Emergency Removal

Three major incidents/suspensions within a school year may result in removal of the student from St. Elmo and the student’s gifted service to be transferred to the homeschool either with a gifted teacher in the building, or via Canvas with a St. Elmo teacher.

**RECORDS REQUEST**

Request for student records must be directed via email or phone call to our office personnel. Our office personnel can email, mail or fax student records to the parent/guardian or directly to the school requesting records.

**WITHDRAWALS/RE-ENTRY**

Parent/guardian should come to St. Elmo Center for the Gifted to complete and sign the Gifted Status form to withdraw their child from gifted services.  This will officially document the withdrawal for us to notify the student’s primary school location.  At that time, if gifted records are requested, the parent/guardian may sign for a hard copy or electronic copy of the gifted eligibility records.  Otherwise, official records will only be sent to the new school upon written request from that school.

If the parent/guardian has already relocated and withdrawn their child from the primary school location in MCSD, we will use the official withdrawal in the system to assist with ending gifted services.

If/when a previously identified student who is Georgia Reciprocity or part of an Active Military family returns to the district, we will confirm that there was no break-in-service for two years and send through the request for a re-entry approval.  Otherwise, the student must be referred during the next gifted window of referral.

**GEORGIA GIFTED IDENTIFICATION POLICY**

Once a student is identified as gifted in the state of Georgia, he/she will not need to be retested again for gifted eligibility UNLESS there is a break in gifted service for two or more years. This means once students are eligible to attend St. Elmo, they do not have to be retested every year.