

# Norris Middle School

2021-2022  
the student handbook



## **Multi-Tiered System of Support for Behavior (MTSS-B) is being implemented in all Omaha Public Schools and Programs.**

### ***We believe...***

We cannot “make” students learn or behave.

But we CAN create environments to increase the likelihood that students learn and behave.

We CAN create environments to increase the likelihood of positive behaviors occurring.

These environments are guided by a set of standardized practices implemented with consistency and fidelity.

MTSS-B is a problem-solving framework for teaching desired behaviors in each school. MTSS-B utilizes consistent practices that have tiers of increasingly intensive supports to increase the likelihood students are academically, emotionally, behaviorally and socially successful.

### ***With consistent implementation, Multi-Tiered System of Support for Behavior***

- Improves the school climate
- Reduces aggressive behaviors
- Reduces major disciplinary infractions such as suspensions
- Improves concentration, positive social behavior, and emotional regulation
- Improves academic achievement.

***If you would like more information about how MTSS-B is implemented in your school, contact the building principal.***



# Norris Middle School

**Success, Achievement, Respect...  
It's a Redbird Thing!**

2235 South 46th Street / Omaha, Nebraska 68106-3399

531-299-2500 / [norris.ops.org](http://norris.ops.org)

Facebook: Norris Middle School Redbirds / Twitter: follow us @OPS\_Norris

## **Mission Statement of Norris Middle School:**

Norris Middle School prepares all students for their future by providing a safe, caring and diverse school environment that maintains high expectations, academic excellence and respect for all.



## **Mission Statement**

Omaha Public Schools prepares all students to excel in college, career, and life.

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## **Vision Statement**

Every student. Every day. Prepared for success.

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Omaha Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, citizenship status, veteran status, political affiliation or economic status in its programs, activities and employment and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following individual has been designated to accept allegations regarding non-discrimination policies: Superintendent of Schools, 3215 Cuming Street, Omaha, NE 68131 (531-299-9822). The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Director of Equity and Diversity, 3215 Cuming Street, Omaha, NE 68131 (531-299-0307).

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**NOT UPDATED...  
 GENERIC INFO  
 FOR NOW**

## George W. Norris Middle School

Welcome to Norris Middle School where academic excellence and high expectations are the standard. Our mission is to prepare all students for their future by providing a safe, caring and diverse school environment that maintains high expectations, academic excellence and respect for all.

At Norris Middle School, we embrace middle school best practices and teaming. All students are placed on a team which includes core academic classes such as reading, language arts, social studies, mathematics, and science. The curriculum is aligned with the academic standards of the Omaha Public Schools and the state of Nebraska.

In addition to core classes, students are scheduled into a cooperative arts rotation which includes classes in art, computer applications, technology and living, human growth and development, and careers. Students may have the option to take elective classes depending on their interest and academic achievement. Our focus is to prepare students to be successful in meeting the demands of high school and post-secondary education.

Norris Middle School provides academic support through Gifted and Talented programs and programs that support students with special needs. We also provide additional academic support for students during Redbird Block (homeroom).

Students will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of extra-curricular programs and activities. Basketball, volleyball, performance choirs, drama, band, drum line, soccer, yearbook, wrestling, and Academic Pentathlon are just a few sports, clubs and academic activities available for your consideration. We are proud of all our extra-curricular offerings.

Parents are always welcome at Norris Middle School during the day, or through attendance at one of our Title I Parent Nights. The Title I Parent Nights are theme nights where we open our building to parents and community partners and allow parents to connect with community resources.

We are excited to partner with Digital Promise through the Verizon Innovative Learning Schools Grant to provide iPads for our students and teachers. This exciting opportunity allows for greater access to resources and greater collaboration and innovation in our classrooms!

**Sincerely,**

Norris Leadership Team



## School History

George W. Norris Junior High opened in the fall of 1959. During the spring of 1960, it was one of the three magnificent new junior high facilities dedicated to Omaha specifically designed with the educational needs of boys and girls in their adolescent years. In 1996, the junior high was changed to a middle school to reflect a concept that was adopted by Omaha Public Schools.

The school is named for the Honorable George W. Norris, who, as a congressman, went to Washington D.C., in 1903 to represent Nebraska. He served the government for forty years. He was a member of the House of Representatives from 1903 – 1913 and a member of the Senate from 1913 – 1943. Senator Norris was instrumental in passing the Tennessee Valley Authority legislation and worked diligently to get electricity to rural areas as a means of improving lives. In 1981, the Unicameral of Nebraska designated January 5th, as George W. Norris Day.

In 2014 Omaha voters approved a \$421 million bond that provided substantial updates and additions to many school, including Norris Middle School. Our renovation was completed August 2018, and included over 20 new classrooms, an updated library and office spaces, an updated tornado shelter, and bus parking and driveway, and the removal of all of our portables. We are excited to share this new space with our students and families!

## **The School Day**

### **Beginning the Day**

The school day will begin at 7:40 AM. Norris Middle School will have a structured procedure to start the school day. We ask students to report to the assigned classes and areas as soon as they are allowed to move to their first block.

### **Procedures for Arriving to and Leaving School**

The expectation is that each student will use the most direct route without loitering or stopping along the way to and from school. Students arriving in the vicinity of the campus are expected to come directly onto the campus and not loiter in the neighborhoods. Once on campus, students who walk, get a ride or are transported by bus or van may not leave without permission. All Norris staff, including teachers, secretaries, custodial staff and security personnel, have the authority to enforce rules of the Norris handbook. This obligation is valid on Omaha Public Schools property and property which is visible from Norris in order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of students. The obligation extends to all school related activities, day or night.

### **Ending the Day**

Students are expected to leave the building and grounds at dismissal unless they are involved in an after school activity. Norris asks that all students are picked up from school by 3:35 p.m. Students waiting for rides may wait by the Miranda Street sidewalk. During inclement weather, students may wait for rides in the entryway by the main office. Students are not allowed to loiter on school grounds after school. Students who receive OPS Transportation are expected to go home on the assigned bus at the end of the school day. Students are not permitted to leave campus and come back to the Norris campus including to use the late activity bus. No student is to be in the building without authorization from staff after 3:12 p.m. without a teacher/sponsor supervisor. Once students leave the building, they may not re-enter without permission from staff. Students exit the building to ride a school bus are expected to exit out the Northwest or Northeast doors. Buses will be located in assigned bus lanes on the East side of Norris.

## **Norris Attendance Policies**

### **Absence Procedures**

A parent/guardian should call the school (531 299-2508) in the morning of the student's absence to inform the office personnel. Attempts will be made to call regarding the reason for the absence if a phone call was not received. It is imperative that current home, work, and alternate phone numbers are given to the main office to keep communication open at all times. Please keep your phone number current, you can call the main office at (531) 299-2500.

### **Tardy to School**

Any student arriving tardy to school after 7:40 a.m., or with a written parental/guardian excuse, is to go to the attendance desk for a tardy check. The tardy check will serve as an admit to class. Students who are habitually tardy may be subject to disciplinary action by administration. Repeated tardiness will be reported to parents/guardians and the School Support Liaison (SSL).

### **Tardy to Class**

Students are expected to be in every class on time. Teachers and administrators will work with families to support on time arrival to class. An all school tardy policy will be implemented by the Norris administration to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment and to encourage students to report to class on time.

## **Expectations for Norris Middle School Students**

### **A Good Start**

Become familiar with the student handbook.

### **Middle School Teams and Scheduling**

- You will be a member of a team with approximately 150 other students.
- Norris follows a block schedule. Each academic class is approximately 88 minutes in length.
- Norris Middle School follows a block schedule which will also include Redbird Block, their advisory time.

### **Manage Time Effectively**

- Please turn your work in on time.
- Get to class on time.
- Plan visits to locker – you cannot go after every class.
- Teachers are patient the first few weeks of school about locker problems.
- Use “wait” time before and after school to read or work assignments.
- Carry your reading book or novel at all times – great for those “wait” times.
- Students are permitted to use backpacks for school related items.

### **Manage Materials**

- You should carry your agenda to EVERY class and write in it EVERY class.
- Daily use of the agenda is an expectation of the school.
- Carry your own writing utensils – math teachers prefer pencils.
- Bring your own paper and notebooks – each teacher will tell you what you need for his/her class.
- Students are responsible for the care of their school-issued iPads.





**Norris Middle School**  
Redbirds on the R.I.S.E.



	All Settings	Arrival	Assembly	Cafeteria	Hallways	Restrooms	Technology	Dismissal
Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow adult directions the first time</li> <li>Keep hands and feet to yourself</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sit in assigned locations</li> <li>Speak at a volume 2 or lower</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sit in assigned location</li> <li>Give presenter your attention</li> <li>Wait to be dismissed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use appropriate voice level (0-2)</li> <li>Ask permission to leave seat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use appropriate voice level (0-2)</li> <li>Walk on the right side of the hall</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask for permission at appropriate time</li> <li>Use a pass to be in the hallway</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry your iPad with 2 hands or in a backpack</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walk quietly to the correct exit</li> </ul>
Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be truthful and honest</li> <li>Accept responsibility and consequences for actions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enter the school after 7:00 am</li> <li>Go directly to the gym or cafeteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay quiet during a presentation</li> <li>Practice active listening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sit at assigned table</li> <li>Keep in a quiet line</li> <li>Report problems to an adult</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use your own locker</li> <li>Always lock your locker</li> <li>Use a pass when in the hallway</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respect others' privacy</li> <li>Clean up after yourself</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep personal electronics put away and turned off</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep your belongings with you</li> <li>Dispose of items in the appropriate place</li> </ul>
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep areas clean and organized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wait for dismissal to class at 7:32</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sit in bleachers facing forward with feet flat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wash hands with soap or use hand sanitizer</li> <li>Eat your own food</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walk with purpose to your destination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use nearest restroom</li> <li>Wash hands using soap and water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only use technology for school related activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use assigned stairwells</li> <li>Go directly to after school activity RASA, or athletics</li> </ul>
Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Treat others' property with respect</li> <li>Be kind to others</li> <li>Use appropriate language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be aware of others personal space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applaud at appropriate times</li> <li>Remind others to be respectful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remain single file in the correct line</li> <li>Stay behind those in front of you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep an appropriate distance away from others</li> <li>Greet people you meet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report problems to an adult</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be kind online</li> <li>Respect other's opinions and ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greet the adult who checks in bus and bus driver</li> </ul>

**Success, Achievement, Respect.....It's a Redbird Thing!!**

## Student support through MTSS-B at Norris

At Norris Middle School we use MTSS-B (Multi-tiered system of support for behavior) as a systematic approach to teach behavior.

The purpose of the MTSS-B is to create a proactive and restorative environment at school. MTSS-B is a philosophy that centers around identifying and recognizing positive behaviors and teaching appropriate behaviors for the school and work environment. Norris Middle school also uses the below approaches to intervene with most hurtful and disruptive behaviors at school.

### Goals for Life:

I can be productive and follow directions even if I am mad or overwhelmed.

I can be productive and follow directions even if others are not okay.

I can be productive and follow directions even if I don't want to or it's difficult.

**Grace** – We accept you, your problems, your pain, your needs.

**Accountability** – Guiding students to look at what problems the behavior creates in the student's life.

**Early Intervention** – It's never okay to be disruptive. It's never okay to be hurtful.

**Caring Confrontation** – I see... (disruptive/hurtful behavior), can you (desired behavior), even though (student's feeling).

**Protective Plan** – Teaching and practicing the goals of life through strategies that provide support and accountability for the student to be successful.

**Outlasting the acting out** – Providing relationships, support, and accountability when a student is struggling to maintain the standard and meet the student's goal for life.

**Student Support Concepts** – Safe Seat, Buddy Room, Recovery Room, Think Sheet, Processing, Protective Plan, Triage, Class Meeting, Team Focus.

## iPads

As part of the Verizon Innovative Learning Grant each student will receive an iPad. Parent/Guardians may complete paperwork for the student to take the iPad home or the iPad may be kept at the school. The iPads are the property of Omaha Public Schools and Norris Middle School. Any inappropriate use is subject to the code of conduct. The expectation is for the iPad to be charged and used daily by the student.

## Library/Media Center

The Norris Library has material to meet the curriculum needs of students as well as material for pleasure reading. Books are checked out for a period of 28 days. Each student is financially responsible when books are not returned. Students will use the library as an extension of the classroom to research or to borrow books. Teachers will bring students to the library for class work or to individually check out books.

## Lost and Found

Students who need access to Lost and Found items need to go to the Main Office. Found articles should be turned in to the Main Office. The school will hold them until claimed by the owner or until the end of the quarter.

## Transportation

Students are to ride only their assigned bus. Students are not to eat or drink on the bus. Students are to demonstrate proper respect for the bus drivers and abide by their rules. Bus misbehavior is subject to disciplinary action including but not limited to removal from the bus.

## **Guidelines for Appropriate Dress**

School is a place for serious work and study. Not all fashions are appropriate for the school setting. You are expected to dress appropriately. You will be asked to adhere to the following:

1. Appropriate shoes should be worn at all times.
2. Hats, headscarves, bandannas, picks, hoods, or other head dressings are not to be worn in school and must be kept in lockers during the school day.
3. Sunglasses are not to be worn or displayed in school.
4. Gloves, chains of any type, wallet chains, choke collars, safety pins, etc. are not to be worn in school.
5. Exposure to the mid-section of the body is not acceptable. Under garments should not be visible.
6. No see-through clothing that is not fully lined both front and back.
7. No spaghetti strapped tops. Straps must be at least an inch in width.
8. Clothing with references to drugs, gangs, alcohol, gambling, or tobacco are unacceptable. Clothing with profanity or suggestive pictures or language is also prohibited. Administration has the discretion to determine clothing/logos as inappropriate for the school setting.
9. Coats must be kept in lockers during the school day.
10. Short shorts or skirts, cut-offs (shirts and shorts), tank tops that don't appropriately cover the shoulder, fish net shirts, clothing with holes or large tears, sagging pants or excessive baggy clothing, coveralls with unfastened straps and suspenders not on the shoulder are all examples of clothing that is considered inappropriate for the school setting.
11. Clothing/facial decorations and piercings which draw undue attention to a student and which is disruptive to the school environment is not acceptable.
12. Body piercing adornments must be removed if disruptive or when such adornments may present an endangerment to the individual through normal participation in a class, sport, or activity situations.
13. Styles that are disruptive the learning environment will be referred to the appropriate administrator.
14. Any clothing that is "pajama pants" are not appropriate.

**Administration has the discretion to determine a clothing violation and if the violation causes a disruption to the school day.**

## **Lockers**

Hall lockers are assigned the first week of school during Redbird Block. Students should not share lockers or combinations with anyone other than their locker partner. Students who deface or damage lockers are subject to disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct – Guidelines 2c – Reckless Damage to School Property. A student will also receive a gym locker. The locker is to store clothes and books while participating in Physical Education class. Students are to keep this locker locked at all times. Please mark all gym clothing so that if lost, it can be returned. Only the student and the PE teachers know the combination of the gym lockers. To ensure safety, students are not to share the combination. Locker combinations will not be changed. Norris Middle School is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Keep in mind:

1. Student lockers are the property of the Omaha Public Schools
2. Student lockers remain at all times under the control of the Omaha Public Schools
3. Students have no expectation of privacy regarding any of the contents of their locker.
4. Students are expected to assume full responsibility for their school locker.
5. The Omaha Public Schools retains the right to inspect student lockers for any reason at any time without student consent and without a search warrant.
6. Lockers should not be shared for any reason.
7. All students are encouraged to permanently label all clothing and possessions with their name.

## Student Activities

Students are urged to participate in a variety of activities. Students taking an active part in clubs/ organizations/athletic activities are often more successful in all phases of school and get more out of their education.

Many clubs will have standards that must be met and maintained in order for a participant to receive any benefit from the club or organization.

**Clubs may vary from year to year depending on student interest.**

### Clubs/Organizations

Student Council  
Yearbook Club  
Redbird Posse Drill Team  
National Junior Honor Society  
Rotary Honor Roll  
Academic Pentathlon  
Future City Competition  
Book Blasters  
Duke TIP  
Think Tank  
Science Olympiad  
Norris Robotics Team  
No Place for Hate  
Gender Sexualities Alliance  
Bowling  
Leadership Ambassador  
Program

### Special Events/Activities

Fall Concert (Instr. & Vocal)  
Fall Musical  
Spring Music Tours  
Math Contests  
Poetry Slam  
Academic Honors Night  
African American History  
Challenge  
Read to Succeed  
Quiz Bowl  
All City Music Festival  
Spelling Bee  
Geography Bee  
Team Activities  
Spring Play  
Science Bowl

### Athletics

Basketball (boys/girls)  
Cross Country (boys/girls)  
Soccer (boys/girls)  
Wrestling (boys/girls)  
Swimming (boys/girls)  
Volleyball (girls)  
Track & Field (boys/girls)  
Football (boys/girls)



## **Parent and Family Engagement Policy**

Omaha Public Schools intends to follow the Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy guidelines in accordance with federal law, *Section 1116(a -f) ESSA, (Every Student Succeeds Act) of 2015.*

### **In General**

The written District parent and family engagement policy has been developed jointly with, updated periodically and distributed to parents and family members of participating children and the local community in an understandable and uniform format. This policy agreed on by such parents describes the means for carrying out the requirements as listed below.

- Parents and family members of all students are welcomed and encouraged to become involved with their child's school and education; this includes parents and family members that have limited English proficiency, limited literacy, are economically disadvantaged, have disabilities, racial or ethnic minority background or are migratory children. Information related to school and parent programs, meetings, school reports and other activities are sent to the parents of participating children in a format, and to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.
- Parents are involved in the planning, review, evaluation and improvement of the Title I program, Parent and Family Engagement Policy and the School-Parent Compact at an annual parent meeting scheduled at a convenient time. This would include the planning and implementation of effective parent and family involvement activities.
- Conduct, with meaningful parent and family involvement, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the Parent and Family Engagement Policy. Use the evaluation findings to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to revise the Parent and Family Engagement Policy.
- Opportunities are provided for parents and family members to participate in decisions related to the education of their child/children. The school and local educational agency shall provide other reasonable support for parental involvement activities.
- Parents of participating children will be provided timely information about programs under this part, a description and explanation of the curriculum in use, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress and the achievement levels of the challenging State academic standards. The school will provide assistance, opportunities, and/or materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement in a format, and when feasible, in a language the parents and family members can understand.
- Educate teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, and other school leaders, with the assistance of parents in the value and utility of contributions of parents, how to reach out to, communicate with and work with parents as equal partners.
- Coordinate and integrate parental involvement programs and activities with other Federal, State and local programs, including preschool programs that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children.

## **Parent Right To Know Clause**

At the beginning of the school year, any District that accepts Title I, Part A funding must notify parents that they can request information regarding their child's teacher and his/her qualifications, including certification and endorsements. Parents can also request information about paraprofessionals working with their children.

## **NORRIS MIDDLE SCHOOL A COMPACT FOR LEARNING**

School/Family Compact  
A Partnership for High Student Achievement

**THE MISSION OF THE OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS IS TO PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES THAT ENABLE ALL STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE THEIR HIGHEST POTENTIAL.**

### **Shared Responsibilities for High Achievement**

#### **SCHOOL**

- Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment enabling children to meet State academic achievement standards.
- Give families timely reports on student progress toward mastery of state and district standards.
- Ensure a safe and secure learning environment by setting firm and fair discipline policies in order to guide students to resolve conflicts in a positive manner.
- Communicate effective ways for parents to participate in the educational process by providing homework or information on other at-home learning activities.
- Inform parents of student progress through bi-quarterly grade reports, parent teacher conferences, parent portal access to grades, phone call home, and via email.

#### **PARENTS**

- Communicate and work with teachers and school staff to support and challenge my child.
- Make sure my child attends school regularly and is on time while exhibiting proper behavior.
- Be informed about grade level academic expectations.
- Monitor homework completion and encourage reading at home on a daily basis.
- Attend school events during and outside of the school day and parent-teacher conferences.
- Provide a safe home atmosphere free from the abuse of alcohol, drugs and weapons.

#### **STUDENTS**

- Attend school regularly; ready to learn with homework completed.
- Seek assistance from my teacher when I have problems with my schoolwork.
- Resolve conflicts in positive, non-violent ways.
- Talk to my family about what is learned in school.
- Use my free time wisely by participating in worthwhile cultural, recreational, and learning activities.
- Respect the similarities and differences of all people.

#### **I SUPPORT THE GOALS OF THIS COMPACT.**

