

# MCSS

Madison County School System



# Parent & Student Handbook 2023-2024

Madison County Board of Education, Approved April 6, 2023



Madison County School System

# Parent & Student Handbook 2023-2024

MCBOE Approved 04.06.2023

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# ABOUT MCSS

## PURPOSE

The Madison County School System (MCSS) Parent-Student Handbook for 2023-2024 provides information regarding the operation of our school system. This publication includes a school calendar, a campus directory, along with information and procedures.

Information in the 2023-2024 Parent-Student Handbook is subject to change. Please contact a school administrator, counselor, or visit the MCSS website ([www.mcस्क12.org](http://www.mcस्क12.org)) for updated information or links to school district policies and procedures. Suggestions for improvement to the publication are welcomed. Please email: [mcस्क@mcस्क12.org](mailto:mcस्क@mcस्क12.org).

*The following documents are references for the MCSS Parent-Student Handbook:*

- [Madison County Board of Education Policy](#)
- MCSS Student Code of Conduct
- [MCSS Data Governance Policy and Procedures](#)
- [MCSS Acceptable Use Agreement](#)

## MISSION

The mission of the Madison County School System is to create and support high quality public schools that maximize student achievement, expand student opportunities, and prepare graduates for success in a globally-competitive world.

## DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

- [Mr. Ken Kubik](#), Superintendent
- [Mrs. Karen O'Bannon](#), Chief School Financial Officer
- [Mr. Daniel Evans](#), Chief of Staff
- [Dr. Mark Minsky](#), Chief Operations Officer
- [Mr. Allen Perkins](#), Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services
- [Mr. Jeff Malone](#), Assistant Superintendent of System Services

## MADISON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Madison County Board of Education representatives are elected to six-year terms. Each board member resides in their geographically defined school zone.

**District 1- Nathan Curry** (Board President) (2018-2024) [District1@mcस्क12.org](mailto:District1@mcस्क12.org)

Hazel Green HS, Meridianville MS, Moores Mill IS, Lynn Fanning ES, Hazel Green ES, Walnut Grove

**District 2- Angie Bates** (Board Vice President) (2018-2024) [District2@mcस्क12.org](mailto:District2@mcस्क12.org)

Buckhorn HS, Buckhorn MS, New Market, Mt. Carmel ES, Riverton ES, Riverton IS

**District 3-** Brian Brooks (2020-2026) [District3@mcस्क12.org](mailto:District3@mcस्क12.org)

New Hope HS, New Hope ES, Owens Cross Rds ES, Madison Co. HS, Madison Co. ES, Central

**District 4-** Heath Jones (2022-2028) [District4@mcस्क12.org](mailto:District4@mcस्क12.org)

Sparkman HS, Sparkman 9, Sparkman MS, Harvest ES, Madison Cross Roads ES

**District 5-** Bill Byrd (2022-2028) [District5@mcस्क12.org](mailto:District5@mcस्क12.org)

Sparkman HS, Sparkman 9, Monrovia MS, Monrovia ES, Legacy ES, Endeavor ES

## BOARD OF EDUCATION EXPECTATIONS

The Board expects each student to know all policies of the Madison County Board of Education (MCBOE) and rules and regulations of his or her school. The school principal is responsible for carrying out MCBOE policy, rules, regulations, and procedures.

During Enrollment, families must verify that they have read and understand the policies and procedures outlined in the MCSS Student Code of Conduct and the Parent-Student Handbook. Both documents are linked in the Enrollment portal and available on the MCSS website.

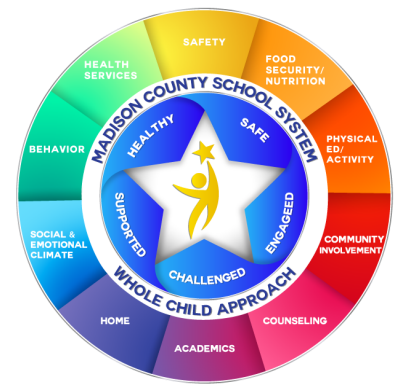
**Refer to MCSS website > Student Services**

## WHOLE CHILD

The Madison County School System believes that educating students includes serving the needs of the whole child. Children who attend our schools experience a wide range of needs that impact their ability to learn and thrive in the educational environment.

Meeting these needs, to the best of our ability, enables us to provide:

- Healthy & Safe System of Supports
- Engaging Environments
- Supportive & Challenging Instruction



With our students' needs in mind, the Madison County School System supports its students with services from:

- Social Workers & School Counselors
- Mental Health Coordinator/Wellstone Counselors
- Special Education Resource Specialists & Related Service Providers
- Madison County Virtual Academy
- Nurses/Community Medical Care
- School Resource Officers
- Promoting Academic & Character Excellence (PACE)
- Language Interpreters
- Professional Learning Communities

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## IMPORTANT DATES

**July 4:** Independence Day  
**July 26-28:** Staff Development  
**July 31-Aug 1:** Institute and Work Days  
**August 2:** First Day of School  
**September 4:** Labor Day  
**September 20:** E-Learning/Collaboration Day  
**October 2-6:** Fall Break  
**October 6:** Fall Break 240 Employees  
**November 1:** E-Learning/Collaboration Day  
**November 10:** Veterans Day (observed)  
**November 20-24:** Thanksgiving Break  
**November 22-24:** Thanksgiving Break 240 Employees  
**December 18-January 1:** Winter Break  
**December 21-January 1:**

**December 18-January 1:** Winter Break  
**December 21-January 1:** Winter Break 240 Employees  
**January 2:** Teacher Workday  
**January 15:** Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
**January 31:** E-Learning/Collaboration Day  
**February 19:** Presidents Day  
**February 28:** E-Learning/Collaboration Day  
**March 11-15:** Spring Break  
**March 15:** Spring Break 240 Employees  
**April 8:** E-Learning/Collaboration Day  
**May 21-22:** Graduation Ceremonies  
**May 22:** Last Student Day  
**May 23:** Teacher Workday  
**May 27:** Memorial Day  
**June 19:** Juneteenth

## REPORT CARD SCHEDULE

Grading Period    Progress Report    Report Card

1	August 31	October 12
2	November 7	January 4
3	February 6	March 21
4	April 18	May 30

- No School
- School System Closed
- Workday/Staff Development Day
- Student Instructional Day
- E-Learning Day
- Half-Day for Students

# RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

## STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are entitled to exercise rights secured to them under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, including the right to freedom of speech, religious expression, and assembly, subject to the imposition of reasonable restrictions on the time, manner, and place of such activities.

Students are expected and required:

- To know and follow the policies and procedures outlined in this Parent-Student Handbook, the Student Code of Conduct, and the Madison County Board of Education Policy
- To show respect for the person, property, and rights of fellow students, faculty, and staff, and other persons with whom they come into contact as students
- To attend school in accordance with state law and MCBOE policy

## PARENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES (Code of Alabama § 16-1-24.1)

Custodial parents, or individuals acting in that capacity, are responsible for seeing that each student under his/her care and control follows MCBOE policy and local school rules and regulations. It is also the responsibility of parents to know such policies, rules and regulations, and to contact the school in the event he/she has not received or is not aware of such policies, rules and regulations.

According to Alabama law parents are:

- Responsible financially for a child's destructive acts against school property or persons
- Responsible and required to appear at school when requested by an appropriate school official for a conference regarding acts of a child and/or the discipline of a child
- Required to see that a child is enrolled in school according to state law
- Required to see that the child regularly attends school and abides by the system's rules and regulations related to attendance
- Required to compel the child to properly conduct him/herself in accordance with the policies, procedures, rules, and regulations of behavior adopted by the system and the local school

## PARENT ENGAGEMENT

MCSS schools are fortunate to have many supportive parent and community groups who volunteer time to help provide activities and support for our students. If you would like to get involved with a school PTA, PTO, Community Advisory Group (CAG), booster club or organization, please contact your building principal to learn more.

- **PTA/PTO/Parent Supporters-** Several schools in our district have a PTA, PTO, or a group of parents that support the activities of its local school.

- **Community Advisory Groups (CAG)**- Each school has a CAG with members appointed by the principal and school board representatives. These groups assist the principal and superintendent by providing important feedback and providing the community of with information about activities at the schools
- **Booster Clubs**- Middle and high school athletic and school organizations often have booster clubs to provide financial and physical support

**Parent-Teacher/Parent-Administrator Conferences**- During the school year, specific dates have been set aside for parents to schedule conferences. MCSS teachers will be happy to discuss your child’s progress whenever you feel it is necessary. Please contact your child’s teacher or the school office staff in order to set up an appointment.

## **VOLUNTEER**

Volunteers are welcomed and encouraged to support MCSS schools. Please contact the school principal or your child’s teacher to inquire about volunteer opportunities.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **GRIEVANCE/COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

Subject to the limitations set forth in the Madison County Board of Education Policy, any employee, student, or member of the public may present to the Board a concern, complaint, grievance, or request for corrective action regarding any aspect of the school system operations. Before requesting corrective action or relief from the superintendent of Madison County Board of Education, persons with such grievances, complaints or requests, should present them for resolution to the employee, counselor, or administrator at the lowest administrative level who has the authority and ability to address the issue or implement a requested action.

### **MASS NOTIFICATION SYSTEM**

The Madison County School System, its schools and teachers communicate with parents via a mass notification system. Modes of communication include email, telephone calls, text, and mobile app notifications. The contact information parents provide during enrollment is used for our mass notification system. To ensure that all parents receive important information, please provide accurate cell phone numbers and email addresses. Registrars at each school can assist you with updating contact information should the need arise. If you do not receive messages from the district, your school, or child’s teacher, contact the school registrar for assistance.

For standard communication, only primary or custodial parents will receive information. For emergency information, all contacts listed will be contacted.

## COLLABORATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Together, students, parents, staff, and the district share the responsibility in creating and sustaining an environment that enhances student achievement and well-being in the Madison County School System. Below find a list of essential responsibilities that will better ensure that we all work in a collaborative way to build and maintain a supportive school community.

**Responsibilities for  
Creating a Safe, Positive, and  
Collaborative School Environment**

<i>STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES</i>	<i>PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES</i>	<i>DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be punctual, attend all classes, and complete all assignments on time</li><li>• Set educational goals and work to attain them</li><li>• Establish and maintain good communication with teachers and administrators.</li><li>• Help maintain a positive school climate</li><li>• Be respectful of all members of the school community</li><li>• Follow school rules and procedures</li><li>• Be responsible for your conduct</li><li>• Be familiar with the MCSS Code of Conduct and Handbook and consequences for violations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure that your child is punctual, attends all classes, and completes all assignments on time</li><li>• Support your child in reaching educational goals</li><li>• Establish and maintain good communication with teachers and administrators</li><li>• Be respectful of all members of the school community</li><li>• Teach your child to be respectful of all members of the school community</li><li>• Teach your child to follow school rules and procedures</li><li>• Be responsible for child's conduct</li><li>• Be familiar with the MCSS Code of Conduct and Handbook and consequences for violations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure students and staff learn and work in a safe and healthy learning environment</li><li>• Assist students in setting educational goals</li><li>• Establish and maintain good communication with all stakeholders</li><li>• Be respectful of all members of the school community</li><li>• Ensure that all members of the school community are treated with respect and equity</li><li>• Provide support and intervention as needed by students and families</li><li>• Enact policy and procedures that facilitate rigorous learning for all students</li><li>• Listen to and act upon the concerns of stakeholders</li></ul>



# ACADEMICS & SERVICES

## ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

MCSS elementary schools provide a wide variety of experiences and opportunities to prepare students for middle school, high school-- and beyond.

Our Pre-K to grade 6 programs are designed to build a solid academic foundation while developing each student's unique interests and strengths. With Arts Education, innovative STEM technologies, computing opportunities, and more, we are equipped to provide a 21st Century education.

Our teachers are trained to address the multiple learning styles of young, active minds and to foster complex, creative thinking. The Pre-K to grade 6 years are a time of growth and exploration. The Madison County School System provides programs and activities that incorporate the 5 C's of relevant, project-based learning—Creativity, Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Communication, and Citizenship—into all subject areas so that students are actively engaged in learning and applying information.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL EDUCATION

MCSS serves middle school students in sixth through eighth grades. Our district's middle school instructional program provides students with fundamental skills to ease the transition between elementary to high school and young students to adolescence. Teachers utilize the Alabama Course of Study as the foundation of the middle school instructional program as they provide instruction in the core content areas and elective courses.

## HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

The high schools (grades 9-12) in Madison County provide approximately 6,000 students with the opportunities to develop academic, personal, social, and career awareness through a comprehensive curriculum. The goal of the Madison County School System is to prepare each student to be college and career ready as he/she graduates from high school. Students entering high school have the opportunity to select a course of study based on their career interests. Some restrictions may apply to the selection of a curriculum based on the academic performance and ability of a student as well as the availability of particular courses.

The College Preparatory curriculum provides students the opportunity to take advanced courses in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, foreign languages, and studio art. This curriculum consists of College Prep (CP), Advanced Placement (AP), and Dual Enrollment (DE) courses. The Dual Enrollment and AP courses allow students to complete college level studies while in high school. These students have excelled in high school, have a high interest in the subject area, and are college-bound.

Students are encouraged to request the academic requirements for admission from the colleges they wish to attend and ensure acceptance of AP scores and/or Dual Enrollment credits.

The Career Tech Preparatory curriculum prepares students for advanced courses required by two-year technical and community colleges through a blending of traditional academics and technical courses. This program is designed to be as academically challenging as College Prep while ensuring that students are properly prepared to meet the demands of technical schools, two or four-year colleges/universities, and/or the technical job market. Articulated college credit may be issued in many career technical classes if a student makes a grade of 85 or higher. (Students may apply for articulated credit upon enrollment at a junior college.)

Courses listed in the 2023-2024 MCSS Academic Guide are included in a comprehensive list of all courses taught in the entire Madison County School System. Not all courses will be available at every school. Additional courses may be offered through ACCESS (Alabama Connecting Classrooms, Educators, and Students Statewide) or other virtual learning providers. Information about virtual learning opportunities can be obtained at the local schools. If a student opts to take a virtual course for which an equivalent course is available at the school, he/she will be responsible for any textbook or other fees that may be involved in the course.

[Refer to MCSS 2023-2024 Academic Guide](#)

## **EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT SERVICES**

The Madison County School System offers a variety of services and support to assist students with exceptionalities. We value working collaboratively with the student, family, school staff, community, and state agencies, when applicable, so that all students make progress in our schools and programs.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

The mission of the Madison County School System's Special Education Department is to provide layers of support and resources to students, teachers, families, and schools in order to promote student preparedness for life.

## **CHILD FIND**

[Child Find](#) is a statewide effort by the Alabama State Department of Education and the Department of Rehabilitation Services to locate, identify, and evaluate children with disabilities from birth to age 21.

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The Madison County School Systems offers a continuum of services to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. Eligibility for special education services is determined by a formal evaluation process using

criteria established by the Alabama Administrative Code (AAC) and in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federally funded statute whose purpose is to provide financial aid to states in their efforts to ensure adequate and appropriate services for school-aged children who fall within one of the following specific disability categories, and who because of the disability, need special education (specially designed instruction).

Disabled students are those (ages 3-21) with one or more disabilities who need special education and related services to meet their unique needs and to receive a free, appropriate public education. All individuals who are disabled under IDEA are protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

For more specific information concerning IDEA and its provisions, contact the Madison County Board of Education Director of Special Education, Ms. Mary Stump at 256.852.7073 (62257).

## **GIFTED EDUCATION**

Intellectually gifted students are those who perform at or who have demonstrated the potential to perform at higher levels in academic or creative fields when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment. These students require services not ordinarily provided by the regular school program. Students possessing these abilities can be found in all populations, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor. Gifted students may be found within any race, ethnicity, gender, economic class, or nationality. In addition, some students with disabilities may be gifted.

Teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or custodians, peers, self, or any other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities may refer a student to the Gifted Program.

Additionally, all second grade students will be screened as a part of Second Grade Child Find and may be referred for evaluation to determine eligibility for the Gifted Program. For each student referred, information is gathered in the areas of Aptitude, Characteristics, and Performance. The information is entered on a matrix where points are assigned according to established criteria. The total number of points earned determines if the student qualifies for gifted services. To make a referral, contact the counselor at your child's school.

## **MADISON COUNTY CAREER TECH CENTER**

Students taking Career Technical classes may be required to attend the Madison County Career Technical Center for some courses. Since the Career Technical Center is located off campus, transportation from the local high schools to and from the Career Technical Center is provided at no cost to the students. Students

may drive or carpool to the Career Technical Center with parental and local school approval. This transportation option is a privilege and may be revoked at any time.

[Refer to the MCCTC website for more information](#)

## **MADISON COUNTY VIRTUAL ACADEMY**

Madison County Virtual Academy (MCVA) is a public school serving the students of the Madison County School System in grades 4-12. Our school provides an online learning environment that allows students to be challenged academically, while maintaining a flexible schedule to accommodate outside interests and individual circumstances. Students have the opportunity to progress through courses at an individualized pace with the support of highly qualified teachers who customize content, adjust instruction as needed, and monitor student progress. There is no cost to attend but students are required to provide their own computer or Chromebook, Internet, and transportation to and from the learning labs.

Grades 4-6 utilize the Odysseyware program, featuring courses aligned with the Alabama State Department of Education. The lesson design encourages collaboration between students and their teachers, allowing them to progress and practice at their own pace while receiving support and guidance as needed. Edgenuity will provide flexible standards-aligned digital content and curriculum for students in grades 7–12. Courses are aligned to the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards and include rigorous, interactive lessons that keep them motivated and engaged.

Numerous extracurricular clubs and activities are available at MCVA, but students may also participate in athletics, JROTC, through their zoned school.

At MCVA, we strongly believe that a parent's involvement in their child's education is the key to success. Our teachers are in frequent communication with parents regarding student progress so we can work together to ensure they are successful in online learning.

[Refer to the MCVA website for more information](#)

## **MADISON COUNTY ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL- PACE**

PACE Academy serves as an alternative educational placement for students of the Madison County School System. PACE promotes academic and character excellence with the belief that together we can make the difference for the student's educational experience. The goal at PACE is to empower students with academic, cognitive, personal, and social growth for a successful transition back to their base school. Its mission is executed through nurturing self-awareness and self-discipline, while providing individual and

small-group instruction. Counseling, social skills instruction, and service learning opportunities add to the student's overall success. Education in all areas is the key to success!

## **PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM**

MCSS believes that high-quality Pre-K experiences prepare children for lifelong learning and future success. The goals of our high-quality Pre-K programs include: social-emotional learning, language and literacy development, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, physical development, and creative arts. We strive to develop a partnership between the family and the school that enhances the learning experience for all children.

Madison County Schools participate in the following preschool programs:

### **Alabama First Class Pre-K (OSR)**

The Alabama First Class Pre-K is a grant-funded program operated by the Office of School Readiness. Enrollment in these programs is based on a random selection process that takes place in the spring. The following schools participate in this program:

- Central School\*
- Harvest Elementary
- Hazel Green Elementary
- Legacy\*
- Madison County Elementary
- Madison Cross Roads Elementary
- Monrovia Elementary\*
- Mt. Carmel Elementary\*
- New Hope Elementary
- New Market School
- Owens Cross Roads School
- Walnut Grove School.

\*The Pre-K programs at Central, Legacy, Monrovia, and Mt. Carmel charge tuition for students to attend.

***For more information contact Kim Haynes: 256.852.2557 ext. 62263 or [mcssprek@mcssk12.org](mailto:mcssprek@mcssk12.org)***

### **Developmental Preschool Program**

The Developmental Preschool Program provides specialized instruction and related services to improve kindergarten readiness skills for eligible students ages three through five. Children served in this program exhibit a significant delay in one or more of the following areas: cognition and problem solving; motor skills; communication; self-help; social emotional; and behavior.

***For information about developmental Pre-K contact Nancy Hosmer: 256.852.2557 ext. 62220***

## EXAM EXEMPTION

A student will earn the option of exempting a comprehensive final examination if the following minimum criteria for attendance and academic achievement are met:

<u>Course Average</u>	<u>Course absences (No more than)</u>
90.0	3
80.0	2
70.0	1
60.0	0

A student who earns exemption status has the option to take the comprehensive final examination to raise the final grade average for the course.

Absences (excused and unexcused):

- Absences due to an out-of-school suspension will count against course attendance
- Absences due to approved school activities will not count against course attendance
- Medical Provision: A student with a chronic health condition (physical or mental) may still be eligible for exemption status providing all the following criteria are met:
  - The medical provision must be requested by the parent; and
  - All absences above the allowed number of days require a physician's note, the physician's note must state the reason for the absence and the direct correlation to the student's chronic health condition (physical or mental); and
  - The physician's note must be reviewed by the local school principal and nurse or a health services designee for approval
  - Medical provisions are not guaranteed and are assessed on a case by case basis

[Refer to 2023-2024 Academic Guide](#)

## STUDENT ASSESSMENT & GRADING

Student Assessment information is available on the MCSS Instruction webpage. Each year the Student Assessment calendar is published along with information about each assessment.

[Refer to the MCSS website > Student Assessment](#)

## REPORT CARD

### 2023-2024 Progress and Report Card Schedule

Grading Period	Progress Report	Report Card
1	August 31, 2023	October 12, 2023
2	November 7, 2023	January 4, 2024
3	February 6, 2024	March 21, 2024
4	April 18, 2024	May 30, 2024

## TRANSCRIPTS

The Madison County School System has partnered with Parchment to order and send transcripts securely to students and alumni.

[Refer to MCSS website > Transcripts](#)

## GRADUATION

The current high school diploma, which applies to all students beginning with the ninth-grade class in 2013- 2014, was approved by the Alabama State Board of Education in January 2013. For these students, this diploma replaces all variations of the prior diploma. It allows more flexibility for students in pursuing their interests and to enable more balance through equivalent course offerings, preparing students for entry into college as well as careers. There are many differences in the courses students may take with this diploma; everyone will not take the same courses just because there is one diploma. No high stakes test will be attached to the requirements for receiving this diploma.

[Refer to 2023-2024 Academic Guide](#)

[Refer to MCBOE Policy](#)

## Graduation Dates

Graduation ceremonies are held at the Von Braun Center in Propst Arena. Tickets are required for admission and are provided to students at each high school in advance of the ceremonies.

### Tuesday, May 21, 2024

- Sparkman High School 12 PM
- Hazel Green High School 3 PM
- Madison County Virtual Academy 5:30 PM

### Wednesday, May 22, 2024

- Buckhorn High School 12 PM
- Madison County High School 3 PM
- New Hope High School 5:30 PM

## FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA)

The Alabama State Board of Education passed a requirement that high school seniors complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) before graduating from high school. The new Alabama FAFSA requirement took effect during the 2021–2022 academic school year.

In Alabama, a graduating senior may choose not to complete—or opt out—of FAFSA. To opt out, a nonparticipation waiver must be submitted. The nonparticipation waiver can be completed by a parent, legal custodian, legal guardian, or a minor legally emancipated or of the legal age of majority.

[Refer to Alabama Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\) Completion Project and Non-Participation Waiver for the Graduating Class of 2022](#)

## SUMMER LEARNING

Learning continues throughout the school year, including summer in the Madison County School System. From Credit Recovery to Summer Reading Camps, many of our schools are centers for our students to continue learning. Each school provides information about summer learning opportunities.



# ADMISSION & ATTENDANCE

## ADMISSION

### ADMISSION DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS

- Birth Certificate
- Custody Documents
- Proof of Residency
- Certificate of Immunization- [Refer to Alabama Department of Public Health](#)

### ADMISSION OF SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Pursuant to the requirement of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act, all homeless, migratory, immigrant, foster care, and English Learner children in the district will have access to the education and services needed to ensure that an opportunity is available to meet the same academic achievement standards to which all students are held. The enrollment of homeless, migrant, immigrant, foster care, and English Learner children shall not be denied or delayed due to any of the following barriers:

- Lack of birth certificate
- Lack of social security number
- Lack of school records or transcripts
- Lack of immunization or health records
- Lack of proof of residency
- Lack of transportation
- Guardianship or custody requirements
- Language Barriers
- Disabilities

The student will be admitted to the district school in the attendance area for which the student is actually living or to the student's school of origin as requested by the parent, guardian, or homeless liaison in the case of an unaccompanied youth, and in accordance with the student's best interest. Transportation will be provided to and from the student's school of origin at the request of the parent, guardian, or in case of an unaccompanied student, the district's liaison for homeless students. In the event circumstances are not in the best interest of the student to attend the school of origin based on determination by the parent, guardian, or liaison, the students will attend the school in the attendance area of their current residence.

[Refer to MCBOE Policy 7.12](#)

## MCKINNEY-VENTO PROGRAM

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act defines a homeless individual as one who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.

If your family lives in any of the following situations, you may be considered homeless:

- In a shelter, motel, vehicle, or campground
- On the street
- In an abandoned building, trailer, or other inadequate accommodation
- Doubled up with friends or relatives because you cannot find or afford housing

If your child is considered eligible for the homeless program, he/she has the right to:

- Access to the same public education as other children.
- Continue in the school they attended before becoming homeless, if feasible. If a school sends your child to a school other than the one you request, the school must provide you with a written explanation and offer you the right to appeal the decision. Transportation would be provided if needed to the school of origin.
- Participate in all programs and activities with students that are not homeless.
- Enroll immediately in school. The school will work with parents to obtain necessary records.
- Services are provided to students that qualify for the homeless program. Services include, but are not limited to:
  - School supplies
  - Payment of class fees/dues
  - Payment of field trips
  - Clothing
  - Personal hygiene items
  - Referral for medical, dental, counseling, etc. through access to Heals Clinics, New Hope Children's Clinic
  - Free school breakfast/lunch
  - Counseling services

To find out if your child qualifies for homeless services, please speak to your school guidance counselor, or call the **MCSS Homeless Liaison, Linda Arredondo: 256.852.2557, [laredondo@mcस्क12.org](mailto:laredondo@mcस्क12.org)**.

## FOSTER CARE CHILDREN

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into Federal law on December 10, 2015. ESSA removes barriers related to children in foster care so that smooth transitions occur as they move through the out-of-home care process. The educational stability of children in out-of-home care is a joint responsibility of the educational and child welfare systems. ESSA requires collaboration between DHR and the LEA to keep children in out-of-home care in the same school setting when placements change. Any changes in

school placement should be made only when they are in the best interest of the child. ESSA states that children are entitled to school stability and prompt school enrollment protections, with requirements as follows:

- A child in foster care remains in his or her school of origin, unless it is determined that remaining in the school of origin is not in that child's best interest;
- If it is not in the child's best interest to stay in his or her school of origin, the child is immediately enrolled in the new school, even if records normally required for enrollment are not available; and
- That the new (enrolling) school immediately contacts the school of origin to obtain relevant academic and other records.

[Refer to US Department of Education Every Student Succeeds Act](#)

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The Madison County School System's English Learner Department's mission is to:

- Provide equitable access to high quality, rigorous instruction designed within a systematic framework built on values and respect for students' cultures and languages
- Provide a socially and emotionally supportive learning environment
- Empower English Learners to excel socially, academically, and linguistically
- Empower English Learners to lead productive lives

Our goals are:

- To advance student English Language for student to attain proficiency
- To successfully meet yearly AL state Title III EL goals
- To ensure students achieve at high levels in core academic subjects
- To develop high quality language instruction educational programs and employ highly qualified teachers
- To promote parental and community involvement
- To advocate for English learners

[Refer to the MCSS website > English Learners for more information](#)

**For assistance contact:**

**Jessica Aguirre-Cantrell**

Title 1 Resource Specialist

E: [jcantrell@mcssk12.org](mailto:jcantrell@mcssk12.org)

P: 256.852.2557 ext 62245

**Kerrie Bass**

Director of Federal Programs

[kbass@mcssk12.org](mailto:kbass@mcssk12.org)

P: 256.852.2557

## CHILDREN OF DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

An employee of the Madison County Board of Education may request for their child(ren) to attend the school in which the employee works or a school that feeds into or from the employee's school. Employees with system-wide responsibilities may request enrollment approval on an individual student basis.

Approval of such out-of-zone attendance may be granted for the duration of the student's attendance at the requested school and is dependent on the continued employment of the custodial parent.

## ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to attend the Madison County School System, the student's custodial parent(s) must reside in a zone served by the Madison County School System, be wards of the courts and/or institutions of Madison County, except as provided for in other stated policies when approved by the Madison County Board of Education.

Custodial parents shall furnish all required information to include enrollment forms, immunization card, birth certificate, documentation of legal residence, and proof of custody, when enrolling their student(s).

## ENROLLMENT

All new and returning students planning to attend school in the Madison County School System must enroll annually during the enrollment period which begins in the spring. Enrollment is conducted through the PowerSchool Enrollment Portal which is accessible through the MCSS website.

ALL students, new and returning, must register online through PowerSchool Enrollment for the upcoming 2023-2024 school year and registration for returning students should be completed by May 31st.

**[To Enroll: MCSS website > Departments & Information > PowerSchool Enrollment](#)**

For the 2023-24 School year ALL new and returning students will be required to provide proof of residency, annually during open enrollment. You will need the following documents on hand to upload during registration:

- A valid lease or rental agreement, deed, property tax, or mortgage statement for the custodial parent
- A current Huntsville Utilities bill for the legal residence in the custodial parent's name
- If you cannot provide proof of residence because you are living with someone else, then you must complete the [Madison County School System's Shared Residency Application](#). The application will also have to be verified by the social worker and then receive final approval by the Student Services Department before enrollment can be completed.
- Custody documents- if applicable
- Parent ID

- Student Birth Certificate
- Immunization record
- Transcript if transferring from another school system

Required documents may be uploaded directly into PowerSchool when convenient and then verified at the local school and/or district level. Should you need it, the PowerSchool Enrollment Portal offers many language translations. Follow the on screen instructions to select your language choice. If you need assistance, please call the registrar at the school your child will attend in the fall.

[Refer to the MCSS Enrollment webpage](#)

### **FALSIFYING INFORMATION (Alabama Criminal Code § 13A-10-109)**

Registration of any student whose primary custodial parent is not a bona fide resident of Madison County School district is a violation of the laws of the State of Alabama. All residences in the MCSS zone are subject to periodic home visits. Any student found to be enrolled fraudulently must withdraw and enroll in his/her zoned school or school system. The parent(s) may be subject to prosecution for falsifying documents.

### **FOREIGN EXCHANGE STUDENTS**

Exchange programs are intended to provide students from other countries an opportunity to experience life in the United States. Due to the rapid growth in Madison County and with crowded conditions in the Madison County School System, foreign exchange students will be admitted only under the following conditions:

- The students/sponsoring family must make a request in writing to the principal no later than one month preceding the first day of the school year the student wishes to attend school
- All exchange students attending an MCSS school will be charged a fee equal to the Alabama State Department of Education's Per Pupil Expenditure. The fee must be paid in full to the school district prior to enrollment. The fee should be paid at the local school.
- Exchange students will be accepted on a space availability basis
- The maximum number of exchange students at any one school should not exceed five (5) students per school year
- Exchange students enrolling in Madison County School System will be placed in an eleventh (11th) grade homeroom
- An exchange student will not receive a diploma from Madison County School System as their purpose in attending an MCSS school is for enrichment

[Refer to 2023-2024 Academic Guide](#)

## HOME SCHOOL (Code of Alabama § 16-1-11.1 2020)

Per the Code of Alabama, if the intention is to home-school a student currently attending an MCSS school, the registrar must be informed of your intention and the student must be withdrawn from school. Parents are no longer required to notify the state superintendent, establish a private school, or submit attendance to the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE). Follow these steps:

- Complete this [Homeschool Enrollment Form](#)
- Mail the completed form to the Student Services Department within the first week of the new school year or when you withdraw your student to home school

If, at a later date, your child re-enters an MCSS school, grade/subject assessments will be required to determine grade placement.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Are parents or guardians required to submit proof that their children ages 6-17 are in school?**

Yes. The law requires parents who choose to home-school their children to notify the local education agency of their intention to homeschool. Parents or guardians must submit proof their children ages 6-17 are in school by giving their names to the local superintendent. This notification is only required at the initial decision to home-school and is not required each year.

#### **I home school my children. Am I required to register with the state?**

While Act 2014-245/SB38 requires that private schools (except church schools) register annually with the Department of Education, it is the interpretation of the State Superintendent of Education that this requirement does not apply to home school students. The law requires guardians to prove their children are in school by giving their names to the local education agency.

#### **Is a "cover school" required for homeschooling in Alabama?**

It is the opinion of the State Superintendent of Education that a "cover school" is not required of parents who choose to homeschool their children.

#### **As a homeschool parent, am I required to submit attendance to the district? No**

#### **Is there a homeschool program that is recommended by the Madison County School System?**

The Madison County School System is a public school system, therefore, we do not recommend any specific homeschool program or curriculum. It is up to the parent to find the program that best suits their child.

#### **I graduated from a private/church school in Alabama. I need my transcripts. What should I do?**

ALSDE does not maintain individual records for any public, private or church school student. Please refer back to the school in which you graduated. If it is a closed private school, conduct research to locate a former trustee or board member to see where the records were stored. If it is a closed church school, refer back to the church that

sponsored the school. If the church school is closed, conduct research to identify a former member, pastor or deacon that might know the whereabouts of any stored student records.

[Refer to \(ACT #2014-245 | Alabama SB38 2014\)](#)

[Refer to Alabama Code § 16-1-11.1 2020](#)

## **KINDERGARTEN (Code of Alabama § 16-28-4)**

A child may not enter Kindergarten unless he or she will be five years of age on or before September 1. Student screening will take place in the spring for all children entering Kindergarten. Each school will publish event details prior to the screening dates. During the kindergarten screening, each child will complete various literacy and language related tasks to assess readiness skills. Information gathered during the screening is used to enable our staff to create classroom environments that help children grow and learn.

Enrollment will open in the spring of each year and all students must enroll through the PowerSchool Enrollment Portal.

## **MILITARY FAMILIES**

### **PURPLE STAR PROGRAM (Alabama Act 2021-7)**

The Madison County School System's Purple Star Program will support military families across our district. We encourage every school in our district to develop a plan to meet the needs of all military families and to ease the transition of these families into and out of our school system. We partner with MCEC and the ALSDE Purple Star Program to reach these goals.

The Alabama Purple Star Schools Program and Committee, established by the Legislature with the passage of Act 2021-7, recognizes the efforts of the K-12 schools in the state that are committed and supportive of military students, and their families, as they transition to their new homes and schools. The Purple Star School program was designed to help mitigate the challenges of high mobility by setting standards for and publicly designating military-friendly schools. The Purple Star Award recognizes schools that show a major commitment to students and families connected to our nation's military. Schools that earn the award will receive a special Purple Star recognition to display on site.

[Refer to the MCSS Military Families webpage](#)

[Refer to the Alabama Act 2021-7](#)

[Refer to the ALSDE Purple Star Program](#)

### **ADVANCED ENROLLMENT FOR MILITARY STUDENTS (Alabama Act 2022-90)**

Under the recently passed Alabama Act 2022-90, children in military families may receive advanced enrollment if their parents are relocating to Alabama for active duty. The act will ensure the same

opportunities for school assignment, selection of courses and sporting activities as those offered to resident students.

[Refer to Alabama Act 2022-90](#)

## **PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM**

[Refer to 2023-2024 Parent-Student Handbook > Academics & Services > Pre-Kindergarten](#)

## **SCHOOL ZONES**

The student must attend the school serving the attendance zone in which his or her custodial parent's domicile is located. It is the parent's responsibility to furnish correct and complete residential information so that the proper attendance zone can be determined. Principals shall deny admission to students not having domicile in the attendance zone served by that school without permission from the superintendent or designee, as provided by policy.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **PHILOSOPHY**

The Madison County Board of Education believes good student attendance enhances learning. When a student is not in school, he or she misses valuable instructional time. For this reason, the Board of Education equates attendance with academic achievement, and establishes policies and procedures designed to encourage and require students to be in school.

### **COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE (Code of Alabama § 16-28-3)**

According to state law, every child between the ages of six (6) and seventeen (17) shall be required to attend school. Any student enrolled in the Madison County School System is required to be in school each day, regardless of the student's age. All students enrolled in the Madison County School System are subject to the regulations of this law.

The parent or custodian of a child who is six (6) years of age, may opt out of enrolling their child in school at the age of six (6) by notifying the Madison County School System's Student Services Department in writing, that the child will not be enrolled in school until he or she is seven (7) years of age.

The MCSS Attendance Staff/Officer will investigate all cases of non-enrollment or non-attendance. In all cases investigated, the Attendance Staff/Officer shall provide the parent written notice, which shall require the attendance of the child in school within three (3) days from the date of the notice. The investigation may also require the Attendance Staff/Officer to conduct a home visit and/or bring criminal prosecution against the parent or custodian.



Madison County School System, like all public school systems in the state of Alabama, is evaluated, in part, on student attendance. Each school is assessed by the number of students who are chronically absent under the current state definition. Accordingly, students should be present at school each day except when absence is absolutely necessary.

## **ABSENCES (Code of Alabama § 16-28-15)**

Every parent or custodian of any child required to attend school, shall, within three (3) school days, explain the cause of any absence of the child. Failure to furnish written excuse explaining the absence shall be admissible as evidence of the child being truant. A good cause or valid excuse explanation is outlined below:

### **Excused Absence**

#### **Parent Excuse (PE)**

- **Elementary, Intermediate, and Middle School Students** – A maximum of eight (8) absences for the school year shall be coded as an excused absence when a valid excuse is provided by the parent or custodian.
- **High School Students** - A maximum of four (4) absences per semester shall be coded as an excused absence when a valid excuse is provided by the parent or custodian.

#### **Doctor Excuse (DE)**

- Doctor, dental, or other medical excuse for the child

#### **Religious Observance (RO)**

- Death in the immediate family (Parents, Grandparents, and Siblings) - A maximum of two (2) excused days or three (3) if the memorial service is beyond a radius of 100 miles from the local school.

#### **Emergency School Closure (X)**

- Inclement weather or other which would be dangerous to the life and health of the student as determined by the principal.

#### **Legal (LG)**

- Required court appearance as ordered by subpoena or other court document.

#### **COVQE or COVQP**

- Legal quarantine due to positive diagnosis or exposure – Medical documentation required.

## Unexcused Absence (UA)

- Any absence for which a valid written explanation is not provided within three (3) school days shall be coded as unexcused. Any absence beyond the eighth for elementary, intermediate, or middle school or fourth per semester for high school, shall be unexcused unless the written explanation meets an excused absence category. Any student having an unexcused absence will be considered truant as defined by the Alabama Administrative Code, Chapter 290-3-1-.02(7) (c).

## Administrator Approved (AA)

- Prior permission of the principal upon request of the parent or custodian.
- According to the MCBOE approved guidelines.

All requests must be submitted to the principal on the approved request form at least twenty (20) days prior to the date of the requested absence. Students may not exceed five (5) Administrator Approved (AA) excuses per school year.

### **The following reasons may be coded using (AA):**

- Military circumstances related to the deployment or return of a parent/custodian
- Accompany parent/custodian on an overnight school trip that involves a sibling (i.e. cheer competition, band trip, etc.)
- Visit to college/university campus
  - Limit of 2
  - A third visit may be approved for an exceptional circumstance (i.e. athletic scholarship, academic scholarship, etc.)
- Obtaining a driver's permit or license
- Legislative Page or other opportunity to participate in an operation of one of the three branches of government
- Parent or sibling graduation from college or a military ceremony
- Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) scheduled by recruiter
- Religious Holidays with supporting documentation
- If bus fails to run or pick child up and parent has no means of transportation (must verify with bus driver or transportation department)
- Catastrophic event (fire, flood (not weather-related), eviction) that results in loss of housing or a temporary change of housing
- Extenuating Safety Threat (escaped prisoner, threat of school shooting, etc). Twenty (20) day prior permission is not required

Any absence not identified in the above list should be decided on a consistent case-by-case basis by the principal. Principals in feeder patterns should consult with one another before a decision is made when siblings are involved.

\*Note: Individual schools within the Madison County School System do not offer a remote or virtual learning option for students. Students in grades 4 through 12 who wish to attend school in an online learning environment may withdraw from their current school and enroll in the Madison County Virtual Academy.

## **TARDINESS**

Students, who consistently arrive late to school, may be referred to the Attendance Staff/Officer to assist with a plan designed to ensure the student arrives on time. The plan may include:

- A meeting with the parent, student, principal and Attendance Staff/Officer and use of the district's bus transportation system
- A district social worker may conduct a home visit to assist families who are consistently tardy to school

## **INSTRUCTIONAL EXPECTATIONS**

To properly carry out its belief that attendance equates with academic achievement, the Board of Education expects the following:

- Principals and teachers will mutually plan and ensure that each student receives instruction each day, each period, and in every subject.
- Every student in attendance in school will receive academic credit for each period and each class of every instructional day by one or more of the following methods as determined by the teacher:
  - Completing and handing in homework or class work on time. (Penalties may be assessed for late work submissions at the discretion of the administration and the teacher.)
  - Taking a daily test, for which the student will receive a grade based on the results of the test
  - Participating in class discussion, class work, and/or other participation as determined by the teacher
  - At the end of each grading period, each student will be given a daily average grade based on the criteria set forth above
  - At the end of each grading period, daily grades received by a student in attendance will be averaged with test grades to determine the final grade
  -

## **Make-up Work, Tests, and Other Assignments**

- Grades should reflect a student's academic performance
- Students are expected to complete, to the best of their ability, all work, tests, and other assignments given by their teachers
- Students are expected to attend school on a daily basis, but the Board recognizes there may be times when a student may be absent from school. While the absence counts against the student's attendance record, it should not prohibit the student from obtaining and completing their assignments

The following options are available for teachers, students, and their parents to ensure education is uninterrupted due to an absence.

## **Excused Absence**

- Students are permitted to complete work, tests, and other assignments when absences are for excused reasons. The teacher(s) will give students the number of days equal to the number of days absent to complete the assignments. It is the responsibility of the student or parent to request and obtain assignments from the teacher(s) through normal school channels (in person, by telephone, email, learning management system, etc.)
- In cases of extreme or extenuating circumstances based on the nature of the absence, the teacher(s) may grant additional days to complete and return assignments or take tests, not to exceed two weeks beyond the student's date of return to school

## **Unexcused Absence**

- Students are permitted to complete work, tests, and other assignments when absent for unexcused reasons. The teacher(s) will give students the number of days equal to the number of days absent to complete the assignments. It is the responsibility of the student or parent to request and obtain assignments from the teacher(s) through normal school channels (in person, by telephone, email, learning management system, etc.)
- Administration of tests given during the unexcused absence period will be scheduled by the teacher(s) within the required period as determined by the number of days absent and at a time, which does not interfere with the normal instructional day. The teacher(s) will notify the student and parent when this is to occur
- After the accumulation of three (3) unexcused absences (not including suspensions), please refer to the truancy policy

## **Absence Due to Out of School Suspension**

- Students who are suspended out of school are expected to complete work and other assignments during their suspension period. At the student or parent's request, teacher(s) will

provide assignments given during the suspension period. It is the responsibility of the student or parent to request and obtain assignments from the teacher(s) through normal school channels (in person, by telephone, email, learning management system, etc.)

- The student is expected to complete all assignments provided and turn the assignments into the teacher(s) on the day they return to school from their suspension or before if possible.
- Tests will be administered on the day the student returns to school from their suspension at a time of day that does not interfere with the normal instructional day, which may include before or after school hours
- If a suspension occurs after the start of the school day, the student will have the suspension day and the day immediately following the suspension to make up any missed assignments for classes (periods) missed due to the suspension
- Due to the timing or length of a suspension, the teacher has the discretion to modify the timeline on a case-by-case basis

## **EARLY SIGN OUT**

- Only custodial parent(s) will be allowed to check a student out of school, unless the custodial parent(s) has specifically designated someone else to check the student out of school. School officials will keep accurate records as to whom, what time, and for what reason students are checked out of school.

## **SCHOOL-RELATED EVENTS**

- Students who participate in school-sponsored or school-authorized activities and are thereby away from school or class will not be counted as absent from school for this purpose
- Students are expected to make up work missed while at these activities, and should be given the same opportunities as those afforded students with excused absences
- Absences due to these activities should be indicated with proper coding to indicate the absence was due to such activities
- The school may require appropriate documentation to support any absence coded in this category
- Failure to provide the requested documentation may result in an unexcused absence

## **EARLY WARNING PROGRAM**

The Early Warning Program is a joint effort between the Madison County Board of Education, the Huntsville City Board of Education, the Madison City Board of Education, and the District Attorney's Office. It is designed to reduce truancy and the number of student dropouts. The format of the program consists of a group session held at the Board of Education. The purpose of the Early Warning Program is to share information concerning the legal requirements and school board policies pertaining to attendance –thus,

an early warning. Additionally, an important part of the program is to offer help or assistance to parents and students with problems that may be interfering with attendance.

The Code of Alabama requires schools to notify parents of their student's unexcused absences, and to inform parents of Alabama's compulsory school attendance laws and be advised of the penalties that can be applied if the student continues to be truant from school. It is advised that schools notify parents after the student's first unexcused absence from school.

Please understand that the Early Warning Notice is intended to correct any error and/or to remind parents of Alabama's Compulsory Education Law. Upon the accumulation of an unexcused absence, the student is considered truant from school, and consequently in violation of state law and the Board's attendance policy.

State law requires that parents ensure their child has good attendance in school, and further states that failure to do so could lead to prosecution of the parents and/or child for failure to comply with the law. School officials are required to report to juvenile authorities those students and parents who are in violation of the law. It is at five (5) unexcused absences that a student is considered seriously truant and parents are required to participate in the Early Warning Program to prevent further unexcused absences.

The following guidelines will be used and steps will be taken to handle truancy by students of the Madison County School System:

Upon the first, third, and seventh unexcused absence, a warning will be issued as follows:

- Parent/custodian will be notified by principal (or designee) that the student is truant and the date(s) of truancy via the Truancy Dashboard
- Upon the third (3rd) unexcused absence, the school will contact the parent/custodian to participate in a pre-early warning conference
- Upon the seventh (7th) unexcused absence, the parent, custodian, or person having control of the child, shall:
  - Receive a Notice of Violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law from the District Attendance Staff/Officer
  - Participate in the early warning program
  - Participate in a home visit conducted by a district social worker to discuss attendance requirements
- Upon the tenth (10th) unexcused absence, and no later than ten (10) school days after the tenth (10th) unexcused absence, the Attendance Staff/Officer will meet with the student, parent, and principal (or designee) to discuss attendance violations

Failure to participate in the conference within the specified period may result in a complaint or petition being filed with the Court against the parent or custodian, under Code of Alabama (1975), 16-28-12(c) (failure to cooperate), or a truancy against the child, whichever is appropriate.

## **TRUANCY**

If a parent/custodian does not explain in writing within three (3) days of a student's return to school after being absent, that student will be classified as truant for each and every absence.

The student will also be classified as truant if the principal (or administrative designee) determines that an absence(s) is unexcused based on the parent/custodian's written explanation.

### **Truancy Court**

Alabama state law requires parental notification at one (1), three (3), and seven (7) unexcused absences. At seven (7) unexcused absences a student is considered habitually truant (absent without excuse).

The parent/guardian and the student are required to appear in person at Early Warning Conference at ten (10) unexcused absences. Failure to appear at the Conference and continued unexcused absences may result in charges being filed for violation of the attendance law.

## **WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS WITH EXCESSIVE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

The District Attendance Staff/Officer should be notified of any student between the ages of six (6) and seventeen (17) who has accumulated ten (10) consecutive unexcused absences. The Attendance Staff/Officer will work with the school, parent, and student to address the absenteeism. Only the Department of Student Services can authorize a withdrawal for excessive unexcused absences.

## **WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS OVER THE AGE OF SEVENTEEN (17)**

A child over the age of seventeen (17) may be withdrawn from public school prior to graduation if both of the following circumstances exist:

- Written consent is granted by the child's parent or legal custodian
- An exit interview is conducted where the student and the student's parent or legal custodian have been advised that withdrawal from school shall likely reduce the student's future earning potential and increase the student's likelihood of being unemployed in the future

During the exit interview, the student who is withdrawing from school shall be given information that has been prepared and supplied by the State Department of Education regarding the detrimental impacts and effects of early withdrawal from school along with any available training and employment opportunity programs, provided such information is available.

## **DENIAL OF DRIVING PRIVILEGES DUE TO ATTENDANCE**

### **(Code of Alabama § 16-28-40)**

The Madison County Board of Education is required to report, upon request, documentation of enrollment status of any student fifteen (15) years of age or older who is properly enrolled in a school under the jurisdiction of the Board. Such information is provided to the Department of Public Safety on a student in this category on application for, or renewal or reinstatement of, a driver's license or a learner's license to operate a motor vehicle.

For students sixteen (16) years of age or older who withdraw from school, the Attendance Staff/Officer notifies the Department of Public Safety of the withdrawal. Withdrawal is defined by Code of Alabama as more than ten (10) consecutive or fifteen (15) days total unexcused absences during a single semester.

The Department of Public Safety shall deny a driver's license or a learner's license for the operation of a motor vehicle to any person under the age of nineteen (19) who does not, at the time of application, present a diploma or other certificate of graduation issued to the person from a secondary high school of the state of Alabama, or any other state, or documentation that the person:

- Is enrolled and making satisfactory progress in a course leading to a general educational development certificate (GED) from a state approved institution or organization, or has obtained the certificate;
- Is enrolled in a secondary school of this state or any other state;
- Is participating in a job training program approved by the State Department of Education;
- Is gainfully and substantially employed;
- Is a parent with the care and custody of a minor or unborn child;
- Has a physician certify that the parents of the person depend on him or her as their sole source of transportation; or
- Is exempted from this requirement due to circumstances beyond his/her control as provided in *Alabama Code 16-28-40 (1975)*.

## **VIRTUAL ACADEMY ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS**

Students attending the Madison County Virtual Academy (MCVA) must meet the following attendance criteria:

- Students must adhere to the Madison County School System Attendance Policy
- Students must attend class each day (as monitored by MCVA staff) and maintain course assignments and pace
- Students must log into courseware daily to document attendance
- Students will be counted present based on physical attendance when directed by MCVA staff



The school system reserves the right to set specific attendance requirements for each virtual course. The superintendent or his or her designee is authorized to develop alternate attendance policies for virtual courses, provided that students in such programs are given notice of the attendance requirements. A student's failure to comply with such requirements may result in administrative action including, but not limited to, probation and/or a charge of truancy.

## CHANGE OF RESIDENCE

Parents are required to provide to the Madison County Board of Education accurate residency information so that the Board may meet its obligations under state and federal law. Accordingly, when a student's address changes during the school year, parents should notify the local school immediately if moving out of the school zone.

A student whose family moves during the school year may be provided the opportunity to stay in his or her current school for the remainder of the school year if the student and his or her family meet the required guidelines and timely submit a completed Transfer Request form. The guidelines can be found in the Attendance Zone and Transfer Information section.

## STUDENT TRANSFER

The *local school principal* is authorized to approve the following requests under [MCBOE Policy 6.1.3](#). The requests and supporting documentation should be submitted to the principal at the local school.

- **Senior Status** – When a custodial parent moves to another Madison County high school zone after the completion of the student's junior year AND the student is classified as a senior, the parent may request the student complete their senior year at the school in which they are currently enrolled. Proof of new residence is required and must accompany the transfer request.
- **Alternate Enrollment** – When a custodial parent moves from one MCSS school zone to another MCSS school zone during the semester, the parent may request the student finish the semester at the school of current enrollment. Proof of new residence is required and must accompany the transfer request.
- **Advanced Enrollment** – When a custodial parent has a building contract, lease, rental agreement, or sales contract with an occupancy date that falls during the school year, the parent may request enrollment as the school zoned for the residence for the semester the occupancy is scheduled to occur. A copy of the appropriate document showing the occupancy date must accompany the transfer request. The local school principal will review the request and documentation and approve or deny the request for transfer.

The Student Services Department will verify and notify the parent of the decision by email or by letter. The transfer request, documentation and notification will be filed in the student's cumulative record and a copy of each will be kept on file with the Student Services Department.

The *Student Services Department* is authorized to approve the following requests under [MCBOE Policy 6.1.3](#). These requests and supporting documentation must be submitted to the Student Services Department by the custodial parent.

- **Custody** – When the person with whom the student is residing has presented the appropriate custodial paperwork, the student may be granted permission to enroll for one semester, school year, or permanently based on the conditions outlined in the court documents.
- **Employee's Child** - When the employee, who is the custodial parent, wishes to request attendance in the feeder pattern of their worksite or when the district level employee, wishes to request attendance in a school zone other than their zone of residence, the student may be granted permission to enroll for the school year. This provision is based on continued employment and is required annually.
- **Double Occupancy** – When the custodial parent lives in a home that is owned, rented, or leased by someone other than the parent AND the utility bill is not in the parent's name, the parent will complete the [Shared Residency Application](#) AND submit to a home visit from district social work staff to verify residency within the school zone, the student may be granted permission to enroll for one semester or the school year.

The Student Services Department will review the request and documentation and approve or deny the request for transfer. The Student Services Department will notify the parent of the decision by email or by letter. The transfer request, documentation, and notification will be filed in the student's cumulative record and a copy of each will be maintained in the Student Services Department.

The *Madison County Board of Education* is authorized to approve the following requests under [MCBOE Policy 6.1.3](#). These requests and supporting documentation must be submitted to the Student Services Department by the custodial parent.

- **Unique Situation** – A "unique situation" is defined to be a situation where disruption of the school and the family involved is likely to result in the opinion of the Board of Education unless an exception is granted. Situations due to psychological, mental or physical circumstances must be documented by a doctor's statement explaining the circumstances, the history of the condition, and the reason for a change in school. This type of request must be submitted for review to the Students Services Department. If the request meets the unique situation criteria then the request shall be submitted for Board action.

The Student Services Department will notify the parent and the school of the decision of the Board by email or by letter. If the request does not meet the criteria for submission to the Board, the parent will be notified in writing.

[\*Complete the Student Transfer Request form at this link\*](#)

[\*Refer to MCBOE Policy 6.1.3\*](#)

## **EXAM EXEMPTION**

[\*Refer to the MCSS 2023-2024 Parent-Student Handbook > Academics > Exam Exemption\*](#)

# CONDUCT

## STUDENT ANTI-HARASSMENT & ANTI-BULLYING

No student shall engage in or be subjected to harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, violence, threat of violence, intimidation, or discrimination by any other student that is based on any of the specific characteristics that have been identified by the Board in this policy. Students who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary sanctions and may be referred to an outside agency as applicable by law.

No student shall be subjected to harassment, sexual harassment, violence, threat of violence, intimidation, or discrimination by any employee or third person that is based on any of the specific characteristics that have been identified by the Board in this policy. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary sanctions. Referral to an outside agency may be applicable by law.

If a student threatens to harm themselves or commit suicide, their parents will be notified and the student should speak with the school counselor or school administrator and may be referred to an outside agency for additional services.

[Refer to the MCSS website > Student Services for more information](#)

[Complete the Bullying/Harassment form at this link](#)

[Refer to MCBOE Policy 6.10](#)

### Definitions

**Bullying:** The term “bullying” means a continuous pattern of intentional behavior on or off of school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function including, but not limited to: cyberbullying or written, electronic, verbal, or physical actions that are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any characteristic of a student, or by the association of a student with an individual who has a particular characteristic, if the characteristic falls into one of the categories of personal characteristics contained in this policy. To constitute bullying, a pattern of behavior may do any of the following:

- Place a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property
- Have the effect of substantially interfering with the educational performance, opportunities, or benefits of a student
- Have the effect of substantially disrupting or interfering with the orderly operation of the school whether the conduct occurs on or off school property, online, or electronically
- Have the effect of creating a hostile environment in the school, on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function

- Have the effect of being sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student

**Harassment:** The term “harassment” as used in this policy means an intentional abusive behavior that takes place on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function including, but not limited to, written, electronic, verbal communication and/or, physical acts or contact that are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any characteristic of a student, or by the association of a student with an individual who has a particular characteristic, if the characteristic falls into one of the categories of personal characteristics set forth below.

To constitute harassment, a pattern of behavior may do any of the following:

- Place a student or employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property
- Have the effect of interfering with the educational performance, opportunities, or benefits of a student
- Have the effect of substantially disrupting or interfering with the orderly operation of the school
- Have the effect of creating a hostile environment in the school, on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function
- Have the effect of being sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student

**Hostile Environment:** The term “hostile environment” as used in this policy means harassment objectively severe or pervasive enough to interfere with or limit a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or opportunities offered by a school for purposes of Section 504 or Title II.

**Intimidation-** The term “intimidation” as used in this policy means a threat or other action that is intended to cause fear or apprehension in a student, especially for the purpose of coercing or deterring the student from participating in or taking advantage of any school program, benefits, activity or opportunity for which the student is or would be eligible.

**Sexual Harassment:** The term “sexual harassment” is defined in the [MCBOE Policy 6.11.2](#).

**Student:** The term “student” as used in this policy means a student who is enrolled in the Madison County School System.

**Threat:** The term “threat” means a statement of an intention to inflict pain, injury, damage, or other hostile action to cause fear of harm. The intention may be communicated through an electronic, written,

verbal, or physical act to cause fear, mental distress, or interference in the school environment. The intention may be expressly stated or implied and the person communicating the threat has the ability to carry out the threat.

**Threat of Violence:** The term “threat of violence” as used in this policy means an expression of intention to inflict injury or damage that is made by a student and directed to another student.

**Violence:** The term “violence” as used in this policy means the infliction of physical force by a student with the intent to cause injury to another student or damage to the property of another student.

## **EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

Students are expected to treat other students with courtesy, respect, and dignity and comply with the Student Code of Conduct. Students are expected and required to:

- Comply with the requirements of law, policy, regulation, and rules prohibiting harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, violence, intimidation, or discrimination
- Refrain from inflicting or threatening to inflict violence, injury, or damage to the person or property of another student
- Refrain from placing another student in fear of being subjected to violence, injury, or damage when such actions or threats are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any personal characteristic of the student that is identified in this policy.

Bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, violence, threat of violence, intimidation, and discrimination are prohibited and will be subject to disciplinary consequences and sanctions if the perpetrator of such action is found to have based the prohibited action on one or more of the following personal characteristics of the victim of such conduct: The student’s race, religious preference, disability, age, gender, sex, national origin, citizenship, non-English speaking ability, or homeless status.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION**

The extent of the action taken will be determined by the degree and nature of the bullying or harassment. A series of graduated consequences for any violation of this policy will be those outlined in the Student Code of Conduct or any rule or standard adopted under MCBOE policy. In certain circumstances, law enforcement or other appropriate government agencies may be contacted.

## **REPORTING, INVESTIGATION, AND COMPLAINT RESOLUTION**

Complaints alleging violations of this policy can be filed orally and/or in writing to the principal and/or counselor. The complaint will be documented on the MCSS Bullying and Harassment Complaint Form, available on the district webpage and at the principal and/or counselor’s office. The complaint must be

signed by the student alleging the violation and by the student's parent or legal custodian. At the request of the complaining student or the student's parent or legal custodian, incidental or minor violations of the policy may be presented and resolved informally.

Upon receipt of the complaint form, and evidence, if applicable, the principal or the principal's designee will undertake an investigation of the complaint. The investigation will entail the gathering of relevant facts and evidence and will be conducted in the following manner.

- The principal or the principal's designee shall investigate all complaints within ten (10) school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.
- The principal or the principal's designee shall use the Referral Action Form to document actions taken throughout the investigation within twenty (20) days following the investigation.
- The principal or the principal's designee, within thirty (30) school days of the receipt of complaint, shall complete Investigative Summary Report and mail to the parents of the complainant and the alleged perpetrator.
- If the investigation establishes a violation, appropriate disciplinary sanctions will be imposed on the offending student(s). Other measures to prevent a recurrence of the violation(s) may also be imposed by the principal or the school system.
- The complaint form developed to report violations of this policy will include a provision for reporting a threat of suicide by a student. If a threat of suicide is reported, the principal or the principal's designee is authorized to inform the student's parent or guardian of the report unless at the discretion of the school principal or the principal's designee the apparent cause of the threat of suicide is child abuse or other significant harm from a parent or guardian.
- Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any student who has reported a violation of this policy or sought relief provided by this policy are prohibited, and are themselves a violation of this policy. Any confirmed acts of reprisal or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary sanctions that may include sanction, penalty, or consequence that is available to school officials under the Code of Student Conduct. A student who deliberately, recklessly, and falsely accuses another student of a violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary sanctions as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

## **NOTICE OF POLICY**

This policy and any procedures, rules, and forms developed and approved to implement the policy will be published, disseminated, and made available to students, parents and legal guardians, and employees by such means and methods as are customarily used for such purposes, including publication on the district's website, the Student Code of Conduct, Student Handbooks, or from the MCSS Title IX Coordinator. Contact information:

Mrs. Jennifer Whitt, Coordinator of Student Services, 1275 F Jordan Road, Building B; Huntsville, AL 35811  
256.852.2557 (61715)/Facsimile: 256.852.1038/Email address: [jdwhitt@mcsc12.org](mailto:jdwhitt@mcsc12.org).

## STUDENT SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment in any form that is directed toward students is prohibited. Persons who violate the policy will be subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences up to and including termination (for employees) and expulsion (for students) as dictated by the nature and severity of the violation and other relevant considerations. If appropriate, the circumstances constituting the violation may be reported to law enforcement agencies or child welfare agencies for further investigation and action.

### Definitions

Title IX regulations define sexual harassment to include one or more of the following:

- An employee conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the school/school district on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (i.e., quid pro quo sexual harassment)
- Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the school/ school district's education program or activity
- Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, as each of those terms is defined by federal statutes enumerated in the Title IX regulations, 34 C.F.R. § 106.30(a).

The following are examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment, depending on the circumstances:

- Verbal harassment or abuse of a sexual nature, including graphic comments, the display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, and sexual propositions
- Repeated unwelcome solicitations of sexual activity or sexual contact
- Unwelcome, inappropriate sexual touching
- Demands for sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment or threats with regard to the student's educational status.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

The superintendent is authorized and directed to establish, implement and revise more detailed sexual harassment complaint procedures in compliance with Title IX that are designed to provide students who believe that they are victims of unlawful sexual harassment with a thorough, discreet, and prompt internal procedure for investigating and resolving sexual harassment complaints. The process and procedures will be drafted so as to provide supportive measures, facilitate the gathering of relevant facts and evidence, permit timely assessment of the merits of the complaint, provide an opportunity for informal resolution of complaint where appropriate, eliminate any harassment that is established by the investigation, and prevent any retaliation based upon the filing of the complaint. The procedures will reflect due regard for the legal rights and interests of all persons involved in the complaint, and will be drafted, explained, and



implemented so as to comply with federal regulations, and to be understandable and accessible to all student population groups and ages.

## **CONFRONTATION OF ACCUSED HARASSER**

A student who invokes the harassment complaint procedure will not be required to present the complaint to the accused or suspected harasser for resolution. Students will be permitted to report allegations of suspected harassment to any appropriate MCSS administrator, teacher, counselor, or employee, and such persons have a duty to promptly refer such allegations to the Title IX Coordinator or to take such action as may be required by the procedures established under *Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures*.

In no case will any employee who is the subject of a complaint be permitted to conduct, review, or otherwise exercise decision-making responsibility in connection with the processing of the complaint.

## **NOTICE OF POLICY**

The Superintendent will promulgate and disseminate this policy and the complaint procedures to applicants for admission and employment, the schools, parents and legal guardians, unions and professional organizations, and will take such other steps and measures as may be reasonably available and expedient for informing the school community of the conduct prohibited by this policy and the recourse available to students who believe that they have been subjected to sexual harassment.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

To the extent possible, reports of sexual harassment will be kept confidential: however, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

## **RETALIATION PROHIBITED**

No retaliation or adverse action may be imposed as a result of a good faith complaint or report of sexual harassment. False accusations that are made in bad faith or improper reasons may result in disciplinary action.

## **PENALTIES**

Any student who violates the terms of this policy or who impedes or unreasonably refuses to cooperate with a Board investigation regarding allegations of sexual harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

## TRANSPORTATION

### DRIVING PRIVILEGE

Students who drive vehicles on school campuses will be responsible for all accidents, injury or damage caused by their driving of vehicles on school campuses. In order to supervise student drivers, principals shall obtain completed student parking permit applications before issuing a parking decal to a student.

The student parking permit application shall require the following information: student's name; student's grade; student's homeroom; student's home phone number, student's driver's license number; student's car tag number; make, body style, year and color of student's automobile; and, student's liability insurance carrier and policy number. Students shall be required to provide the school with information regarding part-time employment.

### PARKING REGULATIONS

- All vehicles must be registered with the school and decals must be appropriately displayed on the vehicle at all times while it is on school property. Students who drive more than one vehicle on campus must have each vehicle registered with the school and covered with liability insurance
- Unregistered vehicles may be removed from the school parking lot at the owner's expense
- All students must be licensed and covered by liability insurance (the school is not responsible for the vehicle or its contents)
- Parking is strictly limited to the student parking area. Students should not park in staff or visitor parking
- To facilitate identification, vehicles are to be parked front end in first into a parking space
- Vehicles which are improperly parked may be towed
- Loitering is not permitted in the parking lot
- Students must use designated entrances and exits to school campuses
- Speeding, over five (5) miles per hour, or any form of reckless driving on the school grounds is not permitted
- Flying any flag, or any other item deemed a distraction by administration, on or from your vehicle is strictly prohibited
- Students must lock their vehicles during the school day
- School officials reserve the right to inspect vehicles on school property
- Students are responsible for the contents of their vehicles
- Violation of these regulations will result in suspension or revocation of parking permits

Parking regulations are strictly enforced. It is considered a privilege to park on school grounds and suspension of driving privileges or suspension from school may occur when violation of these regulations occur.

## **SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION**

The Madison County Board of Education provides bus transportation to students who are eligible to ride based on state and local Board of Education provisions. Safety is of utmost importance in the transportation of students; therefore, students are expected to strictly follow all policies and regulations regarding school buses.

The principal, or his or her administrative designee, has the authority to deny the privilege of riding a school bus when a student violates established policies and regulations or exhibits behavior deemed inappropriate or detrimental to the safe transportation of students. School officials may impose specific rules and regulations for students to follow in riding school buses. The following rules apply as a part of, and in addition to, any bus rules and regulations adopted by the school. School rules are applicable to the bus.

## **SCHOOL BUS REGULATIONS**

- Be at your pick-up location ahead of the scheduled bus arrival time and prepared to board the bus
- Wait until the bus comes to a COMPLETE stop and a signal from the driver before attempting to get on or off
- Stay seated properly in seats at all times
- Listen to and obey bus drivers
- Keep the aisles clear of feet, books, bags, etc
- Keep buses free of litter
- No food or drink on the bus
- Keep conversations at a low volume, no loud or boisterous talk
- No talking during railroad crossings
- No use of profanity, obscene, or vulgar language
- No headphones/earbuds in use while loading or unloading a bus

Video cameras may be placed on school buses as a tool for school personnel to monitor behavior, and shall not limit the bus driver's authority or the discretion of school officials in implementing and enforcing the provisions of the MCSS Student Code of Conduct.

Any carry-on equipment (i.e., book bags, band instruments or uniforms, sports equipment, science projects, school fundraiser items, etc.) must be held by the student owner or placed under the seat and must not interfere with either the seating or the safety of other students on the bus.

***Bus Behavior Violations and Disciplinary Actions are fully outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.***

## **DRESS CODE**

The Madison County Board of Education believes good grooming and personal appearance are essential elements in the teaching and learning process. Students are expected to dress in a manner to ensure their health and safety.

- Students must be neatly dressed, clean, and well groomed
- Hair should not impair vision and is not considered unsafe or hazardous
- Students must wear clothing in the manner for which it is designed. Pants must be worn at the waist
- Student dress must not distract or interfere with the educational opportunity of other students
- A student's appearance that draws excessive or unnecessary attention to the extent it is disruptive, potentially disruptive, or suggestive of disruption or violence, is not allowed
- Principals and other administrators have the authority to use discretionary judgment to prohibit such dress based on past or current circumstances
- Unless otherwise specifically stated or addressed, rules and regulations contained in the Dress Code apply to normal school hours; however, such rules and regulations may be enforced at any school function or activity where the wearing of such dress is inappropriate for the type of activity, or such dress is determined to be potentially disruptive or dangerous
- The Dress Code additionally applies at any school- sponsored activities at any hour or location in which students are direct participants, representing the school, and/or recipients of recognition
- However, other dress requirements may be specified and enforced at any school function or activity where the Dress Code for normal school hours is not appropriate for the type activity or is determined by the Principal to be potentially disruptive or dangerous
- Rules and regulations of the dress code apply to all students, unless exceptions are granted due to a student's disability, medical condition, or other exceptions approved by the principal

### **Coats and Outer Garments**

- Heavy coats and excessively bulging outer garments are not to be worn inside school buildings. Garments to be removed include overcoats, trench coats, bulky and/or oversized jackets or oversized pullovers.
- Garments that equate to a lightweight windbreaker or sweater are permissible.

- Parents and students should assure that student attire provides for adequate comfort indoors without the wearing of outdoor garments.

### **Jewelry and Body Piercings**

- Piercings are allowed as long as they are not hazardous or unsafe and do not distract or draw unnecessary attention.
- Except for piercing of the ears and wearing of earrings that do not distract or draw unnecessary attention, the wearing of other body piercing jewelry is not allowed, including but not limited to the tongue, nose, or eyebrow.
- Band-Aids may not be worn to conceal unauthorized jewelry. Materials such as plastic or wooden sticks or clear loops may not be worn to keep new piercings open during the school day.
- If it is determined by a school principal or designee that allowable earrings or jewelry worn by a student may become a safety hazard in an activity such as physical education, science laboratory, athletics, etc., the student shall remove such ornamentation.
- Jewelry must not include pictures, writings, symbols, etc., promoting, acknowledging, or suggesting drugs, drug paraphernalia, tobacco products, alcohol, sexual activities, gangs, groups, individuals, or activities that would be considered potentially dangerous, disruptive, or hazardous to the student, to other students, or to the school environment.
- Wallet chains and/or oversized chains are not allowed at school or on school buses.

### **Pants, Shorts, Dresses, and Skirts**

- Appropriate dress that does not reveal the body in an inappropriate manner, e.g. clothing must not be too tight, too short, or bare at the midriff or sides. Sundresses, off the shoulder tops, spaghetti straps, tank tops, sheer or see-through clothing, and clothing with holes above the knee, may not be worn.
- Clothing, pants, or shorts which are excessively baggy and/or which are worn so as to expose underwear or body above or below the waist, and/or which drag on the floor will not be permitted.
- Prohibited items of clothing include, but are not limited to, clothing with holes above the knee or other exposure, or clothing that is too short. Generally, the length of the clothing should fall below the tips of the fingers when arms are fully extended to the side; however, due to physical differences in some students, this guide may mean some items are still too short. The principal has the authority to make the final decision regarding the appropriateness of the garment length.
- Leggings, jeggings, and yoga pants must be covered by garments that fall to mid-thigh and are an appropriate length for the wearer as described above and as determined by the principal.
- Pajama pants and sleepwear are not acceptable.

### **Shirts, Blouses, and Tops**

- Clothing must not include pictures, writings, symbols, etc., promoting, acknowledging, or suggesting drugs, drug paraphernalia, tobacco products, alcohol, sexual activities, gangs, groups, individuals, or activities that would be considered potentially dangerous, disruptive, or hazardous to the student, to other students, or to the school environment.
- Prohibited items of clothing include, but are not limited to, off-the shoulder tops, tank tops, halters, sheer or see-through clothing, clothing with holes or other exposure. Such garments are not to be too tight, oversized, or bare at the midriff or sides.

### **Book and Athletic Bags**

- Book bags are allowed in all grades, but must be used strictly for the purpose of transporting books, school supplies and student personal items to and from school and classes.
- Athletic Bags are allowed, but must be used only for the purpose of transporting athletic material. They are not to be used as a normal method of transporting regular school supplies on school campuses.
- In compliance with established procedures for searches outlined in the Code of Conduct, school officials have the authority to search book and athletic bags, and any other containers, when they have reasonable suspicion to believe a bag contains dangerous, illegal, or other unauthorized material.

### **Footwear**

- Shoes or sandals must be worn and properly laced or fastened. House shoes or slippers are prohibited.
- Foot apparel determined by the principal or other administrator to be dangerous or a safety hazard may not be worn.

### **Head/Face Coverings and Sunglasses**

- Hats, caps, hair picks, bandanas, visors, and sunglasses must be removed and placed in the locker or designated area and remain during the school day.
- Head scarves may be worn as an accessory as long as they are neither gang related nor draw unnecessary attention or cause a disruption. Exceptions may be made due to religious and medical reasons (documentation may be required).
- Students may not wear a hood during the school day.
- During inclement weather, head coverings may be worn for purposes of protecting against such weather, but are not to be worn in school buildings.
- Face coverings, including but not limited to, face masks, neck gaiters, or any other face covering intended for the sole purpose of practicing safe hygiene must be compliant with the dress code policy as it relates to a student's appearance that draws excessive or unnecessary

attention to the extent it is disruptive, potentially disruptive, or suggestive of disruption or violence, is not allowed.

### **Tattoos**

- Tattoos with pictures, writings, symbols etc., promoting, acknowledging, or suggesting drugs, tobacco products, alcohol, sexual activities or anything of a sexual nature, gangs, groups, individuals, or activities that would be considered potentially dangerous, disruptive, or hazardous to the student, to other students, or to the school environment must be kept covered by the student's clothing, and not otherwise displayed in the overall school environment during the normal school day or any school sponsored activity.

### **Additional**

- The principal may allow exceptions in dress for a specific activity, e.g., athletic events, drama productions, etc., but such exceptions are only for those activities. Exceptions that compromise the Dress Code's intent to ensure the safety of students and employees are not permitted.
- Certified sponsors or coaches of school-sponsored activities may require a higher level of dress for sponsored activities whenever the school is being represented locally or away, to include in the school.

## **STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

Students are entitled to exercise rights secured to them under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, including the right to freedom of speech, religious expression, and assembly, subject to the imposition of reasonable restrictions to the time, manner, and place of such activities.

Students are expected and required to know and follow the policies and procedures as set forth in the Student Code of Conduct and this Parent-Student Handbook; to show respect for the person, property, and rights of fellow students, faculty, and staff, and other person with whom they come into contact as students, and to attend school in accordance with state law and Board policy.

## **ASSEMBLY**

The Board recognizes the need for occasional assemblies for students for purposes of special programs, disseminating information, and other needs as determined by the principal of the school. It is also necessary for students to assemble occasionally in small groups for purposes of conducting school-related activities and business. Student assemblies, and students meeting in groups, shall not be held without prior approval of the principal. School-sponsored groups and organizations shall have a certified sponsor appointed by the principal, and that sponsor shall be present at all meetings held by that organization.

## **MOMENT OF SILENCE (Code of Alabama § 16-1-20)**

To comply with State of Alabama legislation, the principals of each school will establish procedures so that at the beginning of each school day each teacher in charge of a group of students will conduct a brief period of quiet reflection for not more than 60 seconds with the participation of every student in the classroom. A brief period of quiet reflection for 60 seconds will also be held at the beginning of every school athletic event and graduation ceremony.

These activities are not intended to be and shall not be conducted as a religious service or exercise, but shall be considered an opportunity for a moment of silent reflection on the anticipated activities of the day.

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (Code of Alabama §16-43-5)**

Alabama law (Code of Alabama §16-43-5) requires that the pledge of allegiance to the United States flag shall be conducted at the beginning of each school day and all students attending public kindergarten, primary, and secondary schools shall be given the opportunity each school day to voluntarily recite the pledge of allegiance to the United States flag. A student who refuses to recite the pledge of allegiance may not be punished or penalized for that refusal.

## **STUDENT PUBLICATIONS**

The Board of Education authorizes school officials to allow students to have student-sponsored publications within the school, and expects the administration to monitor such publications to the extent that disruptions do not result from the contents. Student publications are subject to and will be expected to meet standards associated with responsible journalism. The principal and student publication sponsor are responsible for the content of such publications.

Student publications that are not approved by the principal are not allowed, and the principal shall not allow distribution of publications without prior approval. A certified person shall be appointed as responsible for supervising student publications, and shall report directly to the principal in the production of such publications.

## **SCHOOL PROPERTY**

Students, and parents of students, are responsible for returning all school property used by the student that is subject to being returned to the school at the conclusion of the activity, e.g. extracurricular activity uniforms, equipment, materials, etc. Principals, or his/her designees, are to give students specific instructions as to when school property is to be returned.

When school property is not returned by the student in a timely manner, the principal will directly contact the parent and request that such material be returned. After contacting the parent if the property is not returned within seven (7) days, the principal will submit in writing to the parents a letter requesting the



property be returned and will inform the parent that failure to return the property will result in a referral of the matter by the principal to law enforcement officials.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

All textbooks issued are the property of the Madison County Board of Education and the public school system and shall be retained for normal use only during the period students are engaged in the course of study for which the textbooks are selected. All textbooks must be returned to the issuing school by the student when promoted or transferred or when he/she terminates attendance for any reason.

Students have responsibility for the proper care of books checked out to them by observing the following practices:

- Keep books clean outside and inside.
- Do not mark in the book with pen or pencil.
- Do not turn down, tear, or otherwise damage pages.
- Protect books from soil, water, or other damage.
- Protect books with a book cover (optional).

Parents and students must accept liability for any loss, abuse, or damage in excess of that which would result from normal use. For such loss or damage, the student will be assessed a variable of:

- Full price if new when issued.
- Seventy-five percent of full price for books except for first and last year of adoption.
- Fifty percent for books issued during the last year of their adoption.

No textbook will be issued to any student until all charges for lost or damaged textbooks have been paid.

[Refer to Code of Alabama § 16-36-69](#)

## **RESPECT FOR PERSON, PRIVACY, AND PROPERTY**

The Madison County Board of Education respects the rights of each student as it relates to person, privacy and property. The Board has an obligation to provide for the safety and well-being of its students and employees and for that reason authorizes school personnel to take appropriate action, when reasonable suspicion exists that a student is in violation of the MCSS Student Code of Conduct or possesses any item prohibited by law, Board policy, or school rules and regulations.

## **INTERROGATING/QUESTIONING STUDENTS**

### **By Law Enforcement**

Students may be questioned at school by law enforcement authorities, with or without warrant or subpoena, under the following conditions:

- The questioning shall be done in the presence of the principal, or his/her designated administrative official.
- If administratively possible, the child's parent or custodian should be contacted and the questioning done in their presence.
- In no case should questioning of a student by law enforcement authorities be allowed unless at least one of these conditions is met.

### **By Department of Human Resources (DHR)**

Schools will cooperate with the Department of Human Resources (DHR) in duties and responsibilities concerning child welfare and safety. Schools will abide by DHR guidelines and procedures in dealing with students on matters that fall within the jurisdiction of the agency. School officials should ensure that DHR officials present proper identification and/or documentation when contacting students within the schools.

## **GENERAL SEARCH (Alabama Administrative Code §290-3-1-.02(3)(d))**

To maintain order and discipline in the schools and to protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel, school authorities may conduct searches of all school system property, facilities, equipment, and grounds may be entered, inspected, and searched for any lawful purpose at any time, without prior notice and to the fullest extent permitted by law. The right to enter, inspect, and search includes and extends to, but is not limited to, MCBOE owned or controlled offices, desks, file cabinets, lockers, computers, files, documents, data, and devices however and wherever kept, stored, or maintained. Authorities, under the circumstances outlined, may seize any illegal or unauthorized materials discovered in the search.

Law enforcement agencies are allowed, in cooperation with school administration officials, to make periodic visits to schools to detect the presence of illegal drugs, with such visits unannounced to anyone except the local superintendent and/or principal.

Unless otherwise impractical or impossible, such searches should be carried out by administrative personnel under the direct supervision of the principal.

### **Personal Search**

A student or a student's personal property, including but not limited to vehicles, purses, wallets, gym bags, book bags, cell phones, computers, and personal electronic communication devices

may be searched by authorized school officials, including school principals or their designees, when reasonable suspicion exists that:

- The student is in bodily possession of substances or material prohibited by MCBOE policy or state law, including but not limited to, controlled substances, drugs, alcoholic beverages, guns, knives, weapons, incendiary devices, or any other material or substances of similar nature
- The student's property contains prohibited materials, illegal substances, weapons, or other items that are reasonably deemed to present a risk or threat to the safety or welfare of the school community or significantly disruptive to the overall discipline of the school or is evidence of a crime or violation of MCBOE policy or state law, provided that the nature and extent of the search shall be reasonably related and limited to the suspected violation.

### **Bodily Search**

When conditions are such that a more intrusive search than that set forth under Personal Searches is required, the following guidelines shall be followed:

- If a "pat-down" search is necessary, the student's consent should be sought, but consent is not required to conduct such a search. If consent is not given, a "pat-down" search may be conducted when the measures used to conduct the search are reasonably related to the objectives of the search and are not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction.
- Pat-down searches, if conducted, shall be made by persons of the same sex for all students.
- Searches should be individualized if at all possible, and the superintendent or his/her designee should be contacted when personal searches of more than two persons are to be conducted.
- Strip searches, i.e., searches in which students are required to remove clothing, should not be conducted by school officials. Principals may request students to pull up pant legs, pull down socks, pull up shirts to expose midriff, or other moving of clothing that does not require removing clothing.
- A search of the student's person and/or his/her personal belongings shall be conducted out of the presence of other students under the supervision of the principal or assistant principal (determination of person making search may be determined by sex of person), and with at least one additional faculty member present as a witness.

### **Student Refusal of Search**

If a student refuses to be searched, and the search cannot be made without the use of excessive intrusion upon the person of the student in light of the objective of the search and the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction, school officials shall:

- Notify parents

- Refer the case to the superintendent or designee to initiate review for disciplinary action which may include expulsion
- Contact law enforcement authorities when conditions warrant at the discretion of school authorities. Probable cause must exist for search by law enforcement authorities, and such cause is determined by law enforcement authorities.

## Locker Search

Lockers are property of the school and under the control of the school. The student assumes full responsibility for the contents of the locker. School authorities have the right and responsibility to inspect student lockers when reasonable suspicion exists that a locker contains material illegal to the school under the following guidelines:

- When possible, lockers should be opened in the presence of the student.
- A member of the school faculty should be present as a witness with the principal or assistant principal.
- If the student is not present, he/she shall be informed of the search within a reasonable time thereafter and informed of any contents taken from the locker.
- Any items that are specifically prohibited by law, board policy or school regulations, may be impounded. In cases where impounded material may be used in criminal prosecution, the Superintendent or designee should be notified.

## Vehicle Search

Parking vehicles on school campuses is a privilege. The school retains authority to conduct routine patrols of student parking lots and inspect exteriors of vehicles and look through windows into cars. If during such inspection, items are observed that give school officials reasonable suspicion to believe the vehicle contains illegal materials, school officials should secure student or parent permission for initiating a search of the inside of the vehicle. If permission to inspect the contents of the vehicle is refused, the principal, or designee, should stand near the vehicle to prevent any removal of contents from the vehicle and call law enforcement authorities, who may, at their discretion, conduct the actual search of the vehicle.

## VANDALISM, PROPERTY DESTRUCTION AND/OR THEFT

### (Code of Alabama § 16-1-24)

Attempted or actual theft of and/or damage and/or willful vandalism to school and personal property is prohibited. In addition, knowingly possessing or utilizing stolen property, or being a bystander to damage or vandalism will also be seen as a violation of this policy.

Students reported for participation in social media challenges that encourage property damage, and/or theft are subject to one or more of the following:

- Prosecution for criminal charges
- Restitution of the costs for repair, replacement or recovery of the property
- Disciplinary action via the student conduct process

## PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES AND DEVICES

The Madison County Board of Education prohibits certain substances from being in school, on school premises, on school buses, or at school-related activities away from the school. The following is a list of those substances and the action taken against those who violate this policy. This list is not a complete listing of items prohibited in school, but contains the ones most dangerous and most notable. Other items may be prohibited at the discretion of the principal and according to other stipulations in the Student Code of Conduct.

### TOBACCO

Students shall not bring, possess, use, or sell tobacco in any form in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, or at any other school-sponsored function. Students shall not bring, possess, use, or sell an electronic cigarette; e-cigarette, personal vaporizer, or electronic nicotine delivery system on school grounds, school buses, or at any other school-sponsored function. Students in violation of this policy will be subject to consequences as outlined in the MCSS Student Code of Conduct.

### DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Students are not to bring, possess, have in their personal belongings, in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, or at any school-sponsored activity,

- Illegal drugs, oils, derivatives, synthetic drugs, prescription medication, over the counter medication, drug paraphernalia, electronic (e-cigarettes) cigarettes, personal vaporizers, or electronic nicotine delivery systems
- Drug seeds and/or residue, simulated drug substances, alcohol or products containing alcohol; nor shall students be under the influence of illegal drugs, simulated drug substances, medication not prescribed for use by the student. *See Medication Policy for rules concerning prescription drugs and medicine.*
- Over the counter medication, alcohol or products containing alcohol on school grounds, on school buses, or at any school-sponsored activity, or have consumed illegal drugs, oils, derivatives, synthetic drugs, prescription medication not prescribed for use by the student, over the counter medication, alcohol or products containing alcohol while in route to school or to any school-related activity

Students who violate this policy will be suspended from attending regular classes and a disciplinary or expulsion hearing will be conducted to determine if additional action is necessary.

Discipline of students with disabilities who violate this policy shall be determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

## **GUN-FREE CAMPUSES**

Any student bringing or having in his/her possession, either on his/her person or in his/her personal belongings, a handgun, firearm, rifle or shotgun, either on a school bus, school property or at a school event/activity, must be expelled from the Madison County School System for at least one calendar year. The Board has the authority to expel beyond one calendar year.

A gun or firearm is defined using Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code.

- Contact law enforcement
- Contact parents
- Suspend from school immediately pending investigation
- Complete investigation as soon as possible to include written reports
- Request an Expulsion hearing for the student according to MCSS procedure

Following a student's expulsion by the Madison County Board of Education from school:

- The expulsion will be recorded on the student's permanent record, and will be transferred to any other school, to which the student seeks to enroll
- The student cannot attend any regular public school for one calendar year following the expulsion or longer if determined by the Board
- If expelled, the student is prohibited from all MCSS campuses and school sponsored activities for the duration of the expulsion

Discipline of students with disabilities who violate this policy shall be determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

## **WEAPON POSSESSION**

A weapon is defined as a device, instrument, material, or substance, animate or inanimate that is used for, or is readily capable of causing death or serious bodily injury. Any student bringing or having in his/her possession, either on his/her person or in his/her personal belongings, a weapon (to include explosives, incendiary devices, or poison gas), either on a school bus, school property or at a school event/activity, may be expelled from the Madison County School System.

School administrators are to handle incidents involving a student possessing a weapon, as noted above in the following manner:

- Contact law enforcement
- Contact parents
- Suspend from school immediately pending investigation
- Complete investigation as soon as possible to include written reports
- Contact the District Hearing Officer to discuss the facts of the case
- Request a hearing for the student according to MCSS procedure

When the hearing has been conducted, the following shall occur:

- The disposition will be recorded on the student’s permanent record, and will be transferred to any other school, which the student seeks to enroll.
- The student must comply with the disposition as assigned by the hearing officer.
- If expelled, the student cannot attend any regular public school for the duration of the expulsion period determined by the Board and the student is prohibited from all MCSS school campuses and school-sponsored activities for the duration of the expulsion.

Discipline of students with disabilities who violate this policy shall be determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

## **KNIFE POSSESSION**

A knife may be considered a weapon.

- Students should not bring, possess, or have in their belongings, either on a school bus, school property or at school functions, a knife.
- If the knife is determined to be a weapon, see *weapon possession* above.
- If the knife is not determined to be a weapon, the school principal may handle it on a case-by-case basis depending on the circumstance
- All incidents that involve a knife should be reported to law enforcement and should be discussed with the District’s Hearing Officer

## **PHYSICAL HARM (Code of Alabama § 13A-10-15)**

The Madison County Board of Education prohibits any person from doing physical harm, or from threatening physical harm, to students or employees. School officials must treat it seriously when any person causes physical harm, or threatens to do physical harm, to students or school employees.

- Each report of such actions will be investigated and appropriate action taken.
- School administrators have the prerogative to take extenuating circumstances into account when deciding on a course of action when investigating such incidents.
- If conditions warrant, the administrator may request a hearing to determine if additional action is necessary, and based on circumstances may recommend expulsion of a student from school.

- Such actions by students, employees or outside individuals may necessitate the involvement of local law enforcement officials.

Such decisions to suspend and/or expel must include a review and consideration of the student's exceptional status, if applicable, discipline of students with disabilities who violate this policy shall be determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

According to the Criminal Code of the State of Alabama it is a Class C felony to threaten by any means to commit a crime of violence or damage any property by intentionally or recklessly:

- Terrorizing another person
- Causing the disruption of school activities
- Causing the evacuation of a building, place of assembly, or facility of public transportation, or other serious public inconvenience

When matters of this or a similar nature are reported to law enforcement officials, school officials are removed from enforcement of criminal law. School officials may, however, take appropriate disciplinary action against a student for such violations. School officials are required to report all criminal matters to law enforcement immediately.

In the event a student violates this policy, he/she may not be readmitted to the public schools of this state until:

- Criminal charges or offenses arising from the conduct, if any, have been disposed of by appropriate authorities
- The person has satisfied all other requirements imposed by the local board of education as a condition for readmission
- Students may be required to attend the Alternative School for a period of time following the disposal of charges by the appropriate authorities

Persons found guilty of an offense involving drugs, alcohol, a handgun, firearm, rifle or shotgun, weapons, physical harm to a person, or threatened physical harm to a person, may be readmitted to school upon such conditions prescribed by the school system to ensure the preservation of the safety or security of students and employees.

Discipline of students with disabilities who violate this policy shall be determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

## **CORPORAL PUNISHMENT (Code of Alabama § 16-28A-2)**

The Board does not permit the use of corporal punishment, which is defined by the Board as bodily punishment restricted to the use of a paddle on the buttocks, as a consequence for inappropriate behavior.



## **DUE PROCESS**

School officials are to ensure fairness in treatment when a student violates conduct codes. Generally speaking, and depending on the seriousness of the incident, school officials will follow these procedures:

### **School-level Referral Process (teacher initiated referral)**

1. The teacher will submit the referral form to the administrator
2. The administrator will investigate the referral
  - a. The student will know what has occurred
  - b. The student will know the evidence to support the violation
  - c. The student will be allowed to give an explanation
3. Discipline alternatives will be discussed
4. When possible, the student will be allowed to choose a discipline method from those offered to the student. If a parent(s) disagrees with the decision, he or she may appeal in writing to the school principal.
  - a. Appeal should identify the student
  - b. Reason for appeal
  - c. Indicate what he or she would like to happen in order to resolve the issue

### **District-level Referral Process (principal disciplinary hearing)**

The school level referral process will occur.

1. If the evidence supports a Class III violation, the school administrator will submit a hearing packet to the Student Services Department for review. If a hearing is warranted, the following procedure will occur:
2. Date and time of hearing will be set by the Student Services Department
  - a. Hearing will normally be held at the Central Office within 10 school days.
  - b. Administrator will review statements and evidence
  - c. Student and parent/custodian will be given an opportunity to address hearing officer and present evidence
  - d. Grades, attendance, and discipline will be reviewed
  - e. Parent/Custodian will be notified in writing of the decision of the hearing officer within 24 hours.
3. If the parent/custodian disagrees with the decision, he or she may appeal in writing to the Superintendent.
  - a. Appeal should identify the student
  - b. Reason for appeal
  - c. Indicate what he or she would like to happen in order to resolve the issue
  - d. All decisions by the Superintendent are final.

### **District level Referral Process (principal-initiated expulsion hearing)**

1. The school level referral process will occur.
2. If the evidence supports a Class IV violation, the school administrator will submit a hearing packet to the Student Services Department for review. If a hearing is warranted, the following procedure will occur:
  - Date and time of hearing will be set by the Student Services Department
  - Hearing will normally be held at the Central Office within 10 school days.
    - Administrator will review statements and evidence
    - Student and parent/custodian will be given an opportunity to address hearing officer and present evidence
    - Grades, attendance, and discipline will be reviewed
  - Parent/Custodian will be notified in writing of the decision of the hearing officer within 24 hours.
3. If the hearing officer confirms the expulsion recommendation, the review committee and the Superintendent will review the case and make a recommendation to the Board of Education
4. Only the Madison County Board of Education can expel a student from school; therefore, the expulsion hearing will be conducted at the next scheduled board meeting after the hearing.
5. The decision of the Board of Education is final.

The principal and other school officials are encouraged to involve parents when possible and practical in discipline matters, especially those serious enough to warrant the more serious types of discipline.

## **UNSAFE SCHOOL CHOICE OPTION (AL Administrative Code § 290-3-2-.02)**

The Madison County Board of Education complies with the Alabama Unsafe School Choice Option as developed by the Alabama State Department of Education in compliance with the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015.

As a result, students in the Madison County School System are offered a transfer option when for three (3) consecutive years a school in which a child is enrolled becomes a persistently dangerous school by having expelled one percent (1%) of the student population or five (5) students (whichever is greater) for violent criminal offenses committed on school property during school hours or committed at school-sponsored activities. For purposes of this policy, a "violent criminal offense" shall mean homicide; robbery; assault in the first and/or second degree; sexual battery (including rape); and use of a handgun, firearm component, explosive, knife, and other "unknown weapons" as defined by the Student Incident Report (SIR).

## **SECLUSION AND PHYSICAL RESTRAINT**

### **(AL Admin. Codes §§290-3-1-.01, 290-3-1-.02)**

As a part of the policies and procedures of the Madison County School System, the use of physical restraint is prohibited in the system and its educational programs except in those situations in which the student in

an immediate danger to himself or others and the student is not responsive to reasonably implemented and less intensive behavioral interventions such as verbal directives and other de-escalation techniques.

- Physical restraint is prohibited when used as a form of discipline or punishment.
- The use of other physical restraint, chemical restraint, mechanical restraint, or seclusion is prohibited in the school system and its educational programs.
- The use of restraint may occur along with other emergency actions such as the school seeking assistance from law enforcement and/or emergency medical personnel, which could result in a removal of the student by such personnel.
- Significant violations of the law including assaults on students and staff will be reported to law enforcement.
- As soon as possible after the restraint or removal of a student (and no longer than one school day following the occurrence), written notice will be provided to the parent or legal custodian

[Refer to MCBOE Policy 6.25](#)

# EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

## PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Students may be offered an opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities and organizations. The opportunities include but are not limited to, athletics, student-led organizations, JROTC, Band, Choir, etc.

*Refer to [MCBOE Policy 6.19.1](#)*

## STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

The Board encourages students to participate in all programs and activities sponsored by the schools. Principals are expected to develop programs and activities in which all students will have the opportunity to participate. Each program and activity shall have guidelines by which students are to abide, to include requirements for being and remaining in the program.

School-sponsored programs and activities are offered as a privilege to the students, and the privilege of being involved in such programs and activities is forfeited by not obeying the guidelines of the program or activity and the rules and regulations of the school. Disobeying school rules and regulations are grounds for removal from any school-sponsored program or activity at the discretion of the principals.

## ATHLETICS

Participation in Board sanctioned athletic programs will be on such terms and conditions as may be approved by the Board and AHSAA. Local schools may establish additional terms and conditions for participation in such programs above the established Board and AHSAA minimum requirements as long as school eligibility criteria are not inconsistent with system-wide eligibility or participation criteria, rules, regulations, or standards established by any athletic association or organization of which the Board is a member, or any rule, principle, or provision of applicable law. An Interscholastic Athletics Program is conducted as a supplementary part of the instructional program in Madison County. This program is normally conducted after regular school hours and includes sports in which a sufficient number of students are interested.

*Refer to the [MCSS Athletics Guide](#)*

### Academic Eligibility for Athletics

#### 7th Grade Academic Requirements

- Students entering the seventh grade for the first time are eligible where they enroll.

#### 8th/9th Grade Academic Requirements

- 5 New Subjects Passed

- 70% Overall Average
- Promoted To Next Grade Level

### High School Academic Requirements

- 4 core + 2 elective (1 PE)
- 70% Overall Average

### Required Forms

ALL forms must be completed prior tryouts

[AHSAA Forms and Publications Page](#)

### Dragonfly Information

- [Parents Guide to DragonFly](#)
- [DragonFly Tutorial](#)
- [Submit Forms](#)

### Preparticipation Physical Evaluation Form

- Completed in DragonFly with Digital Signature

### Physical Evaluation

- Completed, Dated, and Signed by a Physician (MD/DO)
- Valid for one calendar year
  - **AHSAA Physical Form- The physical document must:**
    - Be on the most up to date [AHSAA Form \(Revised 2018\)](#)
    - Include a signature of both the parent and student-athlete
    - Include the name of the student-athlete on BOTH sides
    - Be marked “cleared” by physician
    - Include a date
    - Be signed by a physician with MD/DO designated (circled)

### Birth Certificate

- PDF/Photo Upload

### NFHS Sportsmanship Certificate

- Free course completed at [NFHSlearn.com](#)

### Concussion Form

- Completed via DragonFly with Digital Signature

### Participation Agreement, Consent, Release, and Venue

- Completed via DragonFly with Digital Signature

## TRANSFER STUDENT-ATHLETE

### AHSAA Non-Traditional Athlete

A student is eligible at his/her home school at the beginning of each new school year.

- The home school is an AHSAA-member school that serves the area where the parents reside.
- Students entering the seventh grade for the first time are eligible at the school where they enroll.
- A student who attends a school outside of his/her home school district must attend that school for one full calendar year in order to establish athletic eligibility.
- Before transferring from one school to another, always check AHSAA eligibility rules. For any questions or clarification of these rules, please reach out to the school's Athletic Director.

### Virtual School Student-Athlete

- Student-athletes who attend the Madison County Virtual Academy (MCVA) must meet all eligibility requirements under AHSAA bylaws.
- The AHSAA recommends taking athletic PE on campus for safety reasons.
- Virtual students may only participate in athletics through their zoned school.

### Home School Athlete

Home school students must:

- Meet all eligibility requirements under the AHSAA [bylaws](#).
- Supply the school registrar and administration with the previous year's transcript to ensure academic eligibility.
- Enroll and attend two electives through the zoned school.
- Only ONE Physical Education (PE) course counts towards AHSAA academic eligibility.
- Elective courses may be taken on campus or through the school's virtual program.
- If the school requires an athlete to take a PE to participate in athletics, the home school student will be required as well.
- If the school does not require athletic PE to participate in athletics, home school students may take PE through the schools' virtual program.

# HEALTH & WELLNESS

## CHILD NUTRITION

The Child Nutrition Program (CNP) plays a vital role in your student’s education by providing access to healthy, well-balanced meals to all students who attend the Madison County School System. Our Department strives to provide a positive experience for all customers by serving safe, nutritious quality meals while encouraging students to develop life-long skills and knowledge to make health food choices. Special diet requests should be turned into your school nurse. Menus can be accessed on the MCSS website.

### Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act

Improving child nutrition is the focal point of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. The legislation authorized funding and set policy for U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) core child nutrition programs: the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, the Summer Food Service Program, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act allowed USDA, for the first time in over 30 years, opportunity to make real reforms to the school lunch and breakfast programs by improving the critical nutrition and hunger safety net for millions of children.

Refer to [USDA Resources for Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act](#)

### Smart Snacks

Beginning in the school year 2014-2015, all foods sold at school during the school day are required to meet nutrition standards. The *Smart Snacks in School* regulation applies to food sold a la carte, in the school store, vending machines, and any other venues where food is sold to students.

[USDA Resources for Smart Snacks in Schools](#)

[Smart Snacks Guide](#)

### Wellness Policy

In furtherance of its commitment to fostering healthy nutritional and physical activities that support student achievement and that promote the development of lifelong wellness practices, the MCBOE endorses the following programs, practices, and activities:

- Nutrition Education
- Nutrition Standards
- Physical Education and Physical Activity Opportunities
- Other School-Based Activities Designed to Promote Student Wellness
- Administrative Implementation

- Communicate to Families
- Reevaluate every 3 years:
  - Compliance with wellness
  - Compares to Alliance for a Healthier Generation’s model wellness policy
  - Description of progress made in attaining Wellness Policy
- Inform families of progress
- Publicize name and contact information of district officials leading the committee

Refer to [MCBOE Policy: 7.09](#)

## Free and Reduced Meals

The *National School Lunch Program* (NSLP) is a federally assisted meal program that provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. The program was established under the National School Lunch Act, signed by President Harry Truman in 1946.

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the (USDA) administers the program at the Federal level. At the state level, the NSLP is administered by state agencies, which operate the program through agreements with school food authorities.

Children may be determined “categorically eligible” for free meals through participation in certain Federal Assistance Programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or based on their status as a homeless, migrant, runaway, or foster child.

This application may be used to qualify families for other benefits such as P-EBT, FCC-EBB, waived fees for ACT/SAT, college applications, academic fees and other programs.

## Meal Prices

Meal prices are published each year on the MCSS Child Nutrition webpage.

Students may pay cash for their meals at the point of sale or pre-pay on the designated day at the specific location in each school. Check with your local school for prepayment details.

## Meal Charging Policy

### PK-6

All students, PK-6, will be allowed to charge reimbursable meals when their meal account is short of funds with no maximum threshold of meals that may be charged. Charging A-La-Carte items will not be allowed by anyone. No charges will be allowed during the month of May, to enable students time to clear any remaining debt. All debt must be paid before the last student day.



### **7th-8th Grade**

All students in grades 7 & 8 will be allowed to charge reimbursable meals when their meal account is short of funds up to a limit of \$25.00. When the debt limit is reached, a meal will be purchased from the school's discretionary fund (where available) or an alternate meal (PBJ & milk) will be offered to the student where no discretionary fund is available. Charging A-La-Carte items will not be allowed by anyone. No charges will be allowed during the month of May, to enable students time to clear any remaining debt. All debt must be paid before the last student day.

### **9th-12th Grade**

All students, grades 9-12, will be allowed to charge reimbursable meals when their meal account is short of funds up to a limit of \$25.00. When the debt limit is reached, no further meals will be provided until payment is received. Charging A-La-Carte items will not be allowed by anyone. No charges will be allowed during the month of May, to enable students time to clear any remaining debt. All debt must be paid before the last student day.

### **Adults**

Adults are not allowed to charge meals.

### **CNP Refund Policy**

Refunds will be granted only upon a student's withdrawal from the Madison County school System. If a student is transferring to another MCSS school the balance in their account will follow the student to their new school.

Refunds under \$100.00 may be collected by the parent or guardian in person from the local school lunchroom upon filling out a Child Nutrition Prepayment Refund form. Requests for refunds over \$100.00 must be submitted in writing to the Child Nutrition Program Department at the Madison County Board of Education Central Office.

Refund requests by students transferring to Madison County Virtual Academy will be issued twice per semester. If a student returns to in-person learning before a refund has been issued, the money will remain in the student's account for use at their enrolled school.

### **Meal Requirements**

Madison County School System's Child Nutrition Program participates in USDA Offer versus Serve program. This program provides students the opportunity to choose only foods which the student intends to eat. This USDA concept is designed to reduce food waste and give the student the opportunity to select only foods they will enjoy.

For lunch, students must choose at least 3 out of the 5 food components (fruit, vegetable, protein, grain, milk) to complete a meal; however, 1 of the 3 groups must be a fruit or vegetable. Choosing less than 3 food groups will result in being charged ala carte prices. For breakfast, students must choose at least 3 out of the 4 food components (fruit, protein, grain, milk).

### **USDA Nondiscrimination Policy**

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online by clicking on this link, by visiting any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA.

The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

**Mail:**

US Dept of Agriculture  
Office of the Asst Sec  
For Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Ave, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-94100

**FAX:** 833.256.1665 or 202.690.7442

**Email:** [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

[Language translations available on the USDA website](#)

## HEALTH SERVICES

### Certificate of Immunization

Parents of MCSS students must provide an up-to-date Certificate of Immunization detailing proof of immunization or a Certificate of Exemption issued by the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) upon enrollment and throughout the student’s scholastic career, as appropriate. In accordance with Alabama state law, students with a missing or expired Certificate of Immunization may not enroll in or begin school each year.

Immunization certificates are available from the Madison County Health Department at 301 Max Luther Drive in Huntsville 256.539.3711 and from local physicians or military clinics.

### Required Vaccinations for School Attendance

REQUIRED VACCINE	NUMBER OF DOSES
Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis (DTP)	5 doses (4 if the 4th dose was received after the 4th birthday)
TDaP (Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis)	11-year-olds prior to enrolling in 6th grade or after 11th birthday
Polio	4 doses (3 if the 3rd dose was received after the 4th birthday)
Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR)	2 doses of Measles, 1 dose of Mumps, 1 dose of Rubella
Hib	4 doses up to age 5
Varicella	1 dose (2 doses separated by at least 28 days for persons 13 years of age or older beginning series) or proof of immunity
Pneumococcal	4 doses up to age 14 months

### Medication Procedures

Students are not permitted to have either prescription or over-the-counter (OTC) medications in their possession during the school day, on the school bus, or during school-sponsored activities. All medications must be securely stored in the school clinic in accordance with ABN guidelines. Exceptions to this rule are made for medications used to treat medical emergencies only after proper consent is received from the medical provider, parent/guardian, and school nurse.

## **Medication Forms**

Both prescription and OTC medications require a Parent/Prescriber Authorization (PPA) form each year. Please ensure that the PPA form matches the pharmacy label for prescription medications and the manufacturer's label for OTC medications. This form is available from your school nurse or on the Madison County Website under Health Services.

## **Delivery Of Medication**

All prescription medication must be in a current, pharmacy-labeled prescription container. All OTC medications must be in an unopened (sealed), manufacturer-labeled container and identified with the student's name written in permanent ink. The parent/ guardian or parent-designated responsible adult (not the student) should deliver to the school. Medications brought to the school by a student can not be accepted or given.

## **Acceptance Of Medication**

Upon ensuring that the medication matches the completed and signed PPA form, both the parent/guardian and nurse will sign the Medication Administration Record (MAR) to verify the amount of medication received or retrieved. If medication is approved to be self-carried, a Student Keep on Person form will be completed at this time.

## **Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medication**

Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) and Acetaminophen (Tylenol) may be administered according to the dosing scale on the package without a physician's signature. The PPA must be completed - to include weight for dosing purposes, be signed by the parent/guardian, and must include a specific reason for the need and administration of the medication. If given more than four times in a month, a physician's signature will be required. All other OTC medications require a provider's signature.

## **Emergency Medication**

A student may carry his/her emergency medication on his/her person for self-administration with proper authorization on the school PPA and after demonstration of proper administration to the nurse.

## **Expired Medication**

The onsite nurse will begin notification of expiring medication to the parent/guardian or authorized adult two to four weeks prior to the medication expiration date. Expired medication must be picked up by the expiration date. If the medication is not picked up within this time frame, medication will be destroyed in accordance with federal and state guidelines.

## **End Of School Year**

The parent/guardian or authorized adult must pick up all medications on or before the last day of classes or the medications will be destroyed. Medications cannot be kept at the school between the end of the regular school year and the start of summer school.

## **CBD and Medical Marijuana Products**

At this time, Alabama state law does not permit the storage or administration of either product on school grounds. Should your child need this medication during the school day, a parent or legal guardian must check the child out from school, take them off of school property for administration, and then check them back in to school.

## **Field Trips**

For extended or overnight field trips, if medications must be given that are typically not given during the school day, a School Medication Prescriber/Parent Authorization Form (PPA) will be required. The PPA must be completed for each medication. Also, the completed PPA and medication must be delivered to the school nurse no later than one week prior to the trip/event or on designated medication drop-off date(s). Medication or paperwork cannot be accepted on the day of the trip.

Students who require special health procedures daily and/or emergency management of their specific health condition may not be excluded from participation in the field trip. The student's parent/guardian or authorized adult may accompany the student, if they desire, to provide medication or care needed. If a parent/guardian or authorized adult does not desire to attend, Health Services will determine appropriate staff based on the student's health needs.

Only emergency and prescription medications are routinely taken on off-campus, school day field trips. If your child will need an over-the-counter medication to accompany him/her, please advise your school nurse when dropping off the medication.

## **Summer Programs**

The parent/guardian or authorized adult must bring in medication with completed medication forms on the first day of any of the summer programs and pick up the medication on or before the last day. Medications cannot be kept at the school when the student is not attending.

## **Preventative Health Maintenance**

If students are sick, we ask families to please keep them home. We are committed to sending sick students home to decrease exposure to the rest of our students and keep those not exhibiting contagious signs or symptoms in school to learn.

## Hand Washing

Effective hand washing is the most powerful weapon available to fight the transmission of most infections. Adequate nutrition, rest, and exercise are also important in the fight against illness. Routine hand-washing is encouraged at school before and after eating and after using the restroom. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer may also be used.

## Pediculosis (Head Lice)

Checking for head lice is not a routine nursing procedure. Students with live lice will be sent home and should be treated before returning to school the next day. It is recommended that each family periodically check their child's head for nits and live lice. The nurse school can assist with instructions/recommendations for treatment and prevention.

## Communicable Diseases and Exclusion

MCSS follows ADPH recommendations for communicable (contagious) diseases and symptoms. Should a student develop vomiting, diarrhea, and/or fever (100 degrees or higher) while at school, a parent/guardian or other adult on the child's approved check-out list will be required to take the student home in a timely manner. Sick children may not remain at school, ride a school bus home, or attend any after school activities.

With other symptoms that may indicate illness such as persistent headache, stomach ache and/or abdominal cramps, sore throat, upper respiratory symptoms, or cold/flu-like symptoms, the school nurse may contact the parent/guardian or authorized adult and recommend that the student be taken home. Any open wound which may spread infection must be covered at all times while at school and may require a letter from a physician to return to school.

<b>SYMPTOM</b>	<b>MCSS EXCLUSION PERIOD</b>
Diarrhea	Until 24 hours after the last episode of diarrhea
Vomiting	Until 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting
Fever 100° or higher	Until 24 hours fever free without the use of fever-reducing medication
Physician-Diagnosed Communicable Disease	Exclusion period determined based on ADPH Communicable Disease Chart for Alabama Schools

## Body Fluid Precautions

It is the position of the Madison County School system that a student entering Pre-K/K programs shows independence and self-care skills, specifically in the area of toileting. It is considered age appropriate behavior upon school entry to expect “toileting independence”.

## Parent Responsibility - General Education

If a student does not make it to the bathroom and soils his/her clothes with urine or feces and the child can not clean his or herself, the parent will be called to come to the school to clean the student, dress the student in clean clothes and take the soiled clothing off-campus. Once cleaned, the student may return to the classroom. In cases where the student self-cleans, the soiled clothes will remain bagged and held in either the clinic or front office.

Soiled clothes must be stored in a plastic bag until the items can be picked up by the parent. Clothing soiled with the body fluids cannot be transported via the school bus and will be available for parent pick up for one additional day after the incident has occurred. Otherwise, the soiled clothing will be discarded.

## Parent Responsibility - Special Education

If a student has special needs and requires assistance with diapering or toileting, this should be discussed with the teacher and/or case manager. Toileting needs will be addressed both during the time period the student is being evaluated for services, and after he/she is found to qualify in either the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. Every effort will be made to meet these needs in the least restrictive environment. In the best interest of both the student and the employee, the school staff member designated to assist the student with toileting needs will do so in the presence of another staff member whenever possible.

## Environmental/Safety Concerns

Exposure to body fluids is not safe practice. All body fluids are considered potentially infectious and can transmit a variety of communicable diseases. Therefore, it is not viewed as staff responsibility to change or clean a student if feces and/or urine are involved. In the case of stomach contents (vomit), the school custodian has been instructed in the proper procedure for cleanup.

## Annual School-Based Health Screenings

In accordance with the Administrative Code of Alabama, certain school-based health screenings are performed annually.

SCREENING TYPE	GRADE LEVEL	REQUIREMENT
Vision	K, 2nd, 4th	Yes, but parent may opt-out

Scoliosis Spinal Screening	5th through 9th	No, parent must opt-in
Vision, Hearing, BMI, Dental, Blood Pressure	Pre-K - OSR Classes Only	Yes, but parent may opt-out

### School-Based Flu Vaccine Clinic

Once annually, flu vaccines are offered in the school setting through a third party relationship with VAKS (Vaccinating Alabama Kids in Schools), a subsidiary of Huntsville Pediatric Associates. These vaccines are offered to all students, regardless of insurance status. Parents must complete and sign a permission form and return it to the school by the provided date in order for the student to participate. VAKS nurses have sole authority in determining when a vaccine may not be safely administered in the school setting; either VAKS or the school nurse will contact a parent should that determination be made. An MCSS nurse will be present during the administration of all vaccines.

### Sunscreen

Students may possess and self-apply Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulated over-the-counter sunscreen at school and at school-based events with a note from the parent/guardian. Any parent/guardian requesting a school board employee to apply sunscreen to a student shall present to the nurse a Parent Prescriber Authorization Form (PPA) containing a parent or guardian signature. A medical provider signature or medical provider order shall not be required.

### Impact of Heavy Backpacks

Carrying too heavy a backpack may affect children’s health and have long term effects. Research shows that carrying more than 10% of a child’s body weight is damaging to their spinal and postural health.

### Insurance for Children

ALL Kids is administered by the Alabama Department of Public Health and provides low cost healthcare coverage to eligible children under age 19 who live in Alabama. With ALL Kids, parents can have peace of mind knowing their children are covered with quality health insurance.

[For information about All Kids Insurance visit this link](#)



## **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

### **Mental Health Support**

The district has implemented programs to address the following mental health, behavioral health, and substance abuse concerns:

- Mental health promotion and early intervention
- Community agency partnerships to provide mental health access to all students
- Building skills to manage emotions, establish and maintain positive relationships, and engage in responsible decision-making
- Substance abuse prevention and intervention
- Suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention (interventions after a suicide in a community)
- Grief, trauma, and trauma-informed care

### **Suicide Risk Prevention and Intervention**

The district has established policies and procedures to address suicide risk within the student population.

District procedures include:

- Parent or guardians are contacted when school staff have identified warning signs for students at risk of suicide. School staff, including school counselors, teachers, nurses, administrators, school-based therapists, school resource officers, and others who interact with students are routinely trained to recognize warning signs for suicide and other mental health concerns
- Students exhibiting warning signs are screened to assess the need for mental health intervention. The results of this assessment are promptly shared with the guardian in an emergency notification conference. During this conference, school staff will discuss procedures to address the safety of the student. Individuals trained on suicide screening procedures include school counselors, Mental Health Intervention Counselors, administrators, psychological services professionals, youth service specialists, and nurses
- School staff are aware of students at possible risk of suicide or in need of mental health intervention

Interventions include, but are not limited to:

- MCSS Safe Schools Tip Line
- Staff training regarding warning signs
- Student presentations regarding warning signs

Community and counseling resources are provided to parents or guardians when a school staff member is concerned about the need for mental health intervention as well as when requested by the guardian.

## Youth Mental Health First Aid Training

All staff are required to complete Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) training. YMHFA introduces participants to the unique risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems in adolescents, builds understanding of the importance of early intervention, and teaches individuals how to help an adolescent in crisis or experiencing a mental health challenge. The curriculum is primarily focused on information participants can use to help adolescents and transition-age youth, ages twelve (12) - eighteen (18).

## Prevention and Intervention Resources

- Call 911
- Suicide and Crisis Lifeline- Call/Text/ or Chat- 988
  - [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#)
- [Crisis Services of North Alabama](#)- 24/7- 256.716.1000
  - [BeThe1To](#)

## Confidentiality

In compliance with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), services provided by school-based mental health counselors are confidential unless there is a threat of harm to self or others. Parents can decide what information is shared with key school personnel and/or outside agencies by completing and signing disclosure or release of information forms.

## Alabama Mental Health Opt-In Law (Alabama Code § 16-22-2)

The Alabama Mental Health Opt-In Law requires each local education agency (LEA) and independent school system to employ a mental health services coordinator and to adopt a policy concerning parent opt-in for mental health services.

The policy must contain a provision for:

- Written annual notification to parents about school-provided or school-sponsored mental health services
- A provision addressing written permission by parents for students under the age of fourteen (14) to participate in mental health services
- A provision requiring all records pertaining to mental health services to be treated as health care records and kept separately from academic records.

Parents/guardians should complete the Mental Health Opt-In form each year through the PowerSchool Parent Portal.

[Refer to the MCBOE Policy 6.29](#)

# OPERATIONS

## STUDENT FEES

Reasonable fees, fines, and charges not prohibited by law may be established by the superintendent. All such fees, fines, and charges will be collected and accounted for in accordance with the procedures, rules, and regulations to be developed by the chief school financial officer or as provided in the Board finance or local school finance manual(s).

Students and/or parents can be held responsible for damage resulting from acts of vandalism or other destructive acts, intentional or unintentional.

No fees can be charged for courses required for graduation. Students that qualify for the free/reduced lunch program may apply to have fees waived. Waiver forms are available in each high school office. Fee due dates are determined by the local school. Contact your local school or the Career Technical Center for the exact due dates.

*Refer to the 2023-2024 Academic Guide for the 2023-2024 Academic Course Fee information.*

[Refer to MCBOE Policy 6.03](#)

## RETURNED CHECK

The Madison County School System partners with CHECKRedi for the recovery of returned checks. The following information must be provided on every check:

- Full Name
- Current Street Address
- Home Telephone Number

If your bank returns your check unpaid, the returned item is automatically forwarded to CHECKRedi for electronic re-presentation, checks are not returned to the school. CHECKRedi will send notification to begin recovery of the amount of the check plus a state-authorized collection fee of \$30.

## SCHOOL BUS ROUTE SCHEDULE

School bus route schedules are developed at the school level in conjunction with the MCSS Transportation Department. Each school will have specific details about the bus number and time frame for student pick up and drop off. Students should be at their bus stop on time each day and follow safety protocols as outlined in this Parent and Student Handbook and the MCSS Student Code of Conduct. When students miss the bus, parents are responsible for providing transportation to school.

Changes to the method of transportation should be provided to your child’s school in ample time for the change to be implemented. Your child’s school will inform you of the process for requesting a change of transportation method.

Please contact your local school office with questions or concerns.

## **CAR RIDER LINE**

Parents who bring their children to school by car are asked to use extreme caution while on school property.

- Please observe the speed limit around and on school campuses
- Use only the designated entrances and exits
- Do not park in the driveway of the school to wait for children
- All parents are expected to follow building arrival and dismissal procedures to ensure the safety of all students and staff
- Parents and other visitors are asked to stay clear of bus loading zones during arrival and departure times.

## **SCHOOL HOURS**

### **High/Middle Schools**

- All except for Sparkman 9 and SMS: 8:30 AM- 3:30 PM
- S9 Hours: 8:20 AM - 3:20 PM
- SMS Hours: 8:35 AM - 3:35 PM

### **Elementary/Intermediate Schools**

- All except for those listed below: 7:45 AM- 2:45 PM
- Lynn Fanning ES: 7:40 AM- 2:40 PM
- Mt. Carmel ES: 7:35 AM- 2:35 PM
- Riverton ES: 7:35 AM- 2:35 PM
- Madison Cross Roads ES: 7:30 AM- 2:30 PM

*Note: School hours are subject to change due to traffic or safety concerns. Your child’s school will advise you of any changes in school hours.*

# SAFETY

## MCSS SAFE SCHOOLS TIP LINE

The Madison County School System partners with the Madison County Sheriff's Office to provide a safe learning environment for our students and staff. Any person who feels threatened or unsafe, has knowledge of weapons, drugs, violence, bullying, etc., in any of our schools is encouraged to use the anonymous MCSS Safe Schools Tip Line.

- Text or call: 256.536.TELL (8355)
- Email: [256TELL@madisoncountyal.gov](mailto:256TELL@madisoncountyal.gov)
- The tip line is provided and monitored 24/7 by the Madison County Sheriff's Office

Students, staff, parents, and community members are encouraged to report any threats or any other unsafe acts at or on school grounds/school-sponsored activities to the school principal.

Any complaint of bullying and/or harassment should be documented on the Bullying/Harassment Complaint form. This form can be found on the Student Services page of the MCSS website. Completed forms should be turned in to the school administrator.

[Refer to MCSS School Safety webpage](#)

## BUILDING SAFETY AND SECURITY

It is the intent of district staff members to make parents and community members feel welcome in our schools; however, precautions are taken in the interest of student safety. As a school district, the safety and welfare of our students and staff is our highest priority.

For security purposes, all entrances to school buildings are secured after the school day begins. Visitors must use the main entrance to the building where they will be identified by video and/or audio. Visitors must also present official identification and receive authorization to enter the building.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROTOCOLS

On June 27, 2018, Alabama State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Eric Mackey, issued a Memorandum to ensure all local education agencies were making efforts to (LEAs) standardize their school safety procedures and training. In June 2019, Governor Kay Ivey signed into law that the Emergency Response Protocols must be incorporated into each school's emergency operations plan.

The color-coded Emergency Response Protocol signs are designed to give schools a standardized outline to use when planning, writing, training and or drilling their local emergency operations plans.

When used properly they will help school administrators to plan for and communicate a perceived or actual threat quickly. With proper training and implementation, the Emergency Response Protocols help to achieve the desired reaction by staff, students, parents, media, and the general public during a critical incident.

### Heightened Awareness

This means a potential MAY exist for an unusual situation and all parties should have heightened awareness to react as needed.

- Follow school's communication plan for information
- Limit movement to and from your classroom.
- Be accountable for all students
- Be on the lookout for unusual behavior both in and outside of the school
- Check exterior doors to make sure they are secure

### Secure Your Area of Responsibility

Specific incident within your area of responsibility (medical, threat to self or others).

- Execute Alert methods
- Secure all people within your immediate area (May require your to move to a more secure area).
- Lock or Secure doors
- Monitor/use communication devices
- May release by intercom or other personal contact

### Lockout

A potential threat or danger exists within the community/neighborhood and all parties should be aware to react as needed

- Execute Alert methods
- Secure all people within the building
- Lock external doors
- Cover windows
- Stay in secure area within the building until further notice from administration or law enforcement
- Monitor/use communication devices
- Requires leaving unsecure areas such as fields, gym, playground, or library to secure area.
- Continue with instruction
- May release via intercom

### Lockdown

Recognition of Danger. Take immediate action using the safest and best option for survival.

- Execute Alert methods
- Secure yourself and others by assassin and using available information to decide if RUN, HIDE, or FIGHT
- RUN: (Intelligent Escape) Evacuate to safer location, Remain with your group, Call 911 when safe.
- HIDE: (Secure and/or Barricade) Lock doors, Lights off, Barricade entry, Quiet, Stay in place.
- FIGHT: (Defend and Protect) As a matter of survival engage the intruder with any means necessary.
- Monitor/use communication devices
- Release only by administration or law enforcement

## Shelter

This means a potential MAY exist for personal protection. Situations may include, but are not limited to tornado, earthquake or hazmat.

- Execute Alert methods
- Secure all people within your immediate area which may require you to move to more secure area.
- Lock or Secure all doors and windows
- Stay in secure area within the building until further notice from administrator or emergency personnel have issued an all-clear signal

## Evacuate

A situation that requires evacuation from the school building and/or campus

- Execute Alert methods
- Follow safety plan map to move to designated location which may require you to move to off campus location
- Stay in designated area until further notice from administration

[Refer to Code of Alabama Sections 16-1-44 and 36-19-10 \(1975\)](#)

[Refer to MCSS School Safety webpage](#)

## VISITORS TO SCHOOLS

Under proper conditions and for specific reasons related to school operations, visitors are welcome to the campuses of Madison County School System.

The term “visitor” includes, but is not limited to:

- Parents
- Interested citizens

- Invited speakers
- Salespersons
- News media
- Former students
- Students from other schools
- All persons other than school system employees and students

Requirements for visitors:

- All visitors are required to immediately obtain permission from the principal's office before visiting any school campus.
- Visitors are required to provide a driver's license or government ID.
- Each visitor's ID will be scanned through a visitor tracking system.
- All visitors are required to have and display a computer-generated visitor badge when visiting during school hours.

Some activities during the school day may not be open to the general public, and in such cases, only those visitors with direct connection to the activity may be allowed to attend, e.g., parents and family of students participating in the activity.

In cases where the general public is invited or public attendance is not restricted, no one will be denied attendance due to race, color, national origin, religious preference, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship, non-English speaking ability, or homeless status except as provided by law or policy.

When hazardous road conditions are forecast, parents are responsible for deciding whether their children should be allowed to drive to school or make alternate arrangements for transportation.

## **RAPTOR SYSTEM**

Raptor is a visitor management system that enhances school security by reading a visitor's drivers' license (or other approved government issued ID), comparing information against a sex offender database to alert school administrators if a match is found. Once cleared through the system, a visitor badge is produced that includes a photo, name of the visitor, date & time, and destination.

## **SCHOOL EVACUATION**

In the event of a school evacuation, information will be provided as quickly as possible. Do not go to the school unless notified to do so. Updated information regarding school evacuation and parent-student reunification will be posted on the MCSS website and sent to parents/guardians via the district's mass notification system.



## SCHOOL CLOSING

When weather conditions- or another emergency situation- warrant, the superintendent may call for schools to be delayed, released early, or closed entirely. These decisions are made with many factors in mind and with the safety of students and staff as the primary concern.

Announcements will be made in the following manner:

- **Automated Mass Notification System** - Information will be sent via telephone and email to all telephone numbers and email addresses listed in PowerSchool for parents/guardians. If you are not receiving these calls, texts, or email messages please contact your child's school.
- **Social Media** - Information will be shared on the MCSS Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram accounts. Follow MCSS @MadCoSchools. Please note, due to the time needed for our automated system to process messages, there may be some instances in which the information is available on social media before you receive a call, email, or text.
- **Media Outlets** - Information is shared with all local media outlets.

When hazardous road conditions are forecast, parents are responsible for deciding whether their children should be allowed to drive to school or make alternate arrangements for transportation.

## SCHOOL DELAY

If the decision is made to start later, schools will open two hours after normal start times and buses will run two hours later than normal route times.

## EARLY DISMISSAL

On days when it is necessary to dismiss school early, families will be provided with as much advance notice as possible to plan for childcare and to transportation.

## ERIN'S LAW- ALABAMA MANDATORY REPORTING LAW

### (Alabama Act 2015-456)

According to Alabama Law, any person who knows or has reasonable cause to believe or suspect that a child has been abused or neglected or who observes any child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in abuse shall be required to report orally, either by telephone or direct communication immediately, followed by a written report, to DHR, law enforcement, or the District Attorney.

***For more information contact the Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention at this link: [Children's Trust Fund of Alabama](#) or call 334-262-2951.***

## **ANNALYN'S LAW (Alabama Act 2018-518)**

Annalyn's Law is named after a child victim who was abused by a juvenile in Alabama.

Juvenile sex offenders must submit an application to all school property and school functions, according to a draft of the model policy. They must also meet with school personnel to create and implement an individualized safety plan.

Also, schools will continue to share information and monitor the students through school enrollment changes and school personnel changes. Officials will offer training to school personnel on how to take appropriate action when an increase or escalation of certain behaviors is noticed.

Members of the advisory committee developing the policy include the state's Law Enforcement Agency, the Alabama Department of Education, the Department of Human Resources, the Governor's Office, the Alabama Coalition Against Rape, the Attorney General's Office and the Southern Poverty Law Center.

## **ALABAMA SCHOOL BUS SAFETY LAW (Code of Alabama § 32-5A-154)**

It is very important that all motor vehicle operators know Alabama's School Bus Safety law (2006) and abide by them.

Alabama Code § 32-5A-154

(a) The driver of a vehicle upon meeting or overtaking from either direction any school bus which has stopped for the purpose of receiving or discharging any school children on a highway, on a roadway, on school property, or upon a private road or any church bus which has stopped for the purpose of receiving or discharging passengers shall bring the vehicle to a complete stop before reaching the school or church bus when there is in operation on the school or church bus a visual signal as specified in Section 32-5A-155. The driver shall not proceed until the school or church bus resumes motion or is signaled by the school or church bus driver to proceed or the visual signals are no longer actuated.

(d) The driver of a vehicle upon a divided highway having four or more lanes which permits at least two lanes of traffic to travel in opposite directions need not stop the vehicle upon meeting a school or church bus which is stopped in the opposing roadway or if the school or church bus is stopped in a loading zone which is a part of or adjacent to such highway and where pedestrians are not permitted to cross the roadway.

[Refer to the MCSS website > Departments & Information > Transportation](#)

# TECHNOLOGY, DATA & INFORMATION

## FEDERAL EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as:

- a student's name

- address
- telephone number
- date and place of birth
- honors and awards
- dates of attendance

However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

High schools will comply with the requirement that student names, addresses, and telephone listings are disclosed to military recruiters when requested unless a parent chooses that such information not be disclosed. If parents do not consent to such disclosure, they should notify the school principal in writing within fifteen (15) school days of receipt of this document or complete the MCSS Media Opt-Out Form.

Unless otherwise prohibited by court order or statute, all records and information pertaining to the child, including scholastic, athletic, and extracurricular shall be equally available to both parents, in all types of custody arrangements. (Code of Alabama, 30-3-154)

[Refer to the U.S.Dept. of Education website for additional information regarding FERPA](#)

***Refer to the MCSS Media Opt-Out Form***

## **ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT (AUA)**

### **Responsible Use of Technology**

The Madison County School System provides its students and staff access to a variety of technological resources, including digital devices and Internet connectivity. These resources provide opportunities to enhance learning and improve communication within the school community and with the larger global community. As the technological environment is large and varied, the use of technology by students and employees must be legal and ethical; and it should be consistent with the educational vision, mission, and goals of the Madison County Board of Education.

Through the school district's technological resources, users can observe events as they occur around the world, interact with others on a variety of subjects, and acquire access to current and in-depth information. The district intends that students and employees benefit from these resources while remaining within the bounds of safe, legal, and responsible use. Accordingly, the MCSS Acceptable Use Agreement (AUA) will govern student and employee use of school district technological resources. This policy applies regardless of

whether such use occurs on or off school district property, and it applies to all school district technological resources, including but not limited to computer networks and connections; the resources, tools, and learning environments made available by or on the networks; and all devices that connect to those networks.

The primary goal of the technology environment is to support the educational and instructional endeavors of students and employees of the Madison County School System. The use of any and all MCSS technology resources is a privilege and not a right.

Each user is expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette, the provisions in this Parent-Student Handbook, and the Student Code of Conduct. Violations of these provisions, or applicable laws and regulations, may result in the loss of computer services, disciplinary action to include termination of employment and/or appropriate legal action, and/or assessment of the cost of damages to hardware/software.

## **Privacy**

No right to privacy exists in the use of MCSS technological resources. Users should not assume that files or communications accessed, downloaded, created, or transmitted using school district technological resources or stored on services or hard drives of individual computers will be private.

School district administrators or individuals designated by the superintendent may review files, monitor all communication, and intercept email messages to maintain system integrity and to ensure compliance with policy and applicable laws and regulations. School district personnel shall monitor the online activities of individuals who access the Internet via a school-issued account.

Under certain circumstances, the district may be required to disclose such electronic information to law enforcement or other third parties, for example, as a response to a document production request in a lawsuit against the Board, as a response to a public records request, or as evidence of illegal activity in a criminal investigation.

Students shall not reveal or post any personal or contact information about themselves or other people on websites and/or social media sites while utilizing district technology resources. Personal information includes, but is not limited to, names, addresses, telephone numbers, photos or likenesses, videos, ages, dates of birth, grade levels, social security numbers, or any other information by which a person might be identified.

Any online message, comment, image, or anything else that causes a student to be concerned for his/her personal safety should be brought to an adult's attention. Students should immediately bring any threatening or unwelcome communications to the attention of school personnel.

## Access

Access to the MCSS network and communication system will be governed as follows:

- All users will be required to acknowledge their receipt and understanding of the responsible use guidelines as published in the MCSS Parent-Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, and the MCBOE Policy.
- Access to the district's electronic communication system, including the Internet, shall be made available to students primarily for instructional and administrative purposes.
- MCSS passwords for all staff and students will be changed routinely and two-factor authentication may be implemented.

Employees and students authorized to access the MCSS network are assigned login credentials. These login user names and passwords must be kept confidential to ensure system security.

- Do not write down or post your MCSS password.
- Do not share your MCSS password
- Do not log into an account for anyone other than yourself. This includes logging into an account for a substitute teacher or a student.
- Do not connect or install any technology hardware or software, components, or equipment to MCSS devices. Contact IT for network and equipment connection questions.

## Electronic Mail (Email)

The Madison County School System provides access to electronic mail for all employees and for specific and selected student use. Such access is for his/her use in any educational and instructional business that they may conduct. Limited personal use of electronic mail is permitted as long as it does not violate MCBOE policy and/or adversely affect others.

- Electronic mail shall not be used to promote political, religious, and/or personal gains.
- The Board cannot guarantee the privacy, security, or confidentiality of any information sent or received via electronic mail.
- Network administrators can review e-mail, file folders, and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly.
- A confidentiality statement in email messages does not guarantee any legal protection, therefore, they should not be added to any MCSS emails.

## Internet Safety

The Madison County School System, either by itself or in combination with the Internet Provider, will utilize filtering software or other technologies to prevent students from accessing visual depictions that are (1) obscene, (2) child pornography, or (3) harmful to minors.

The School will also monitor the online activities of students through direct observation or technological means. Any time a student is logged into Google Chrome while on their school-owned account, whether on a school-issued or personal device, they may be monitored to ensure that students are not accessing such depictions or any other material that is inappropriate for minors. This monitoring can include web searches, social media, videos, or Google products.

Internet filtering software or other technology-based protection systems may be disabled by a supervising teacher or school administrator, as necessary, for purposes of bona fide research or other educational projects being conducted by students age seventeen (17) and older.

The term “harmful to minors” is defined by the Communications Act of 1934 (47 USC Section 254 [h] [7]), as meaning any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that:

- Taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion
- Depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors
- An actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact
- An actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals
- Taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors

## Data Security

The Madison County School System takes seriously its obligations to secure data systems and protect the privacy of students and employees. Strict processes help safeguard the confidentiality and security of the data.

- Employees may use only accounts, files, software, applications and/or other technology resources that are assigned to, provided, or approved by the Data Governance Committee.
- **Staff and students should not have any expectation that their usage of such resources is private.** Reasonable efforts will be taken to maintain security of technology resources, but MCSS cannot ensure that such security will not be penetrated or breached and cannot assume any liability arising out of any such penetration or breach of security.
- Employees are prohibited from emailing outside the school system or storing/saving on external storage devices or portable devices that do not remain on within official district systems, electronic copies of student or staff personal information. This information includes, but is not limited to data containing social security numbers, information protected by FERPA, and any other sensitive and/or protected information. In the event that this type of information is stored on a portable or external device and said device is lost or stolen or if the security of this data is believed to have been breached in any way, the Director of IT should be notified immediately.

- All electronic content stored on any external storage medium or personal off-site storage location that is brought to or accessed from an MCSS is subject to all Board policies and guidelines, as well as local, state, and federal laws.
- Because communications on the internet are public in nature, all staff and students should be careful to maintain appropriate and responsible communications.
- Staff and students are encouraged to avoid storing personal and/or private information on the district and/or school's technology resources. Users must be careful of Social engineering, in the context of information security, which refers to the psychological manipulation of people into performing actions or divulging confidential information. A type of confidence trick for the purpose of information gathering, fraud, or system access, it differs from a traditional "con" in that it is often one of many steps in a more complex fraud scheme. Users are still responsible for any type of data breach they create regardless of falling prey to social engineering.
- Staff and students must take all reasonable precautions to prevent unauthorized access to accounts and data and any other unauthorized usage within and outside the Madison County School System. Any such unauthorized usage shall be reported immediately to the local school Director of Information Technology.
- All staff and students shall be responsible for reporting suspected or actual breaches of data security whether due to inappropriate actions, carelessness, loss/theft of devices, or failures of technical security measures.
- Permission for publishing employee photographs on the MCSS website is assumed unless the employee specifies otherwise in writing to his or her direct supervisor.
- Staff and students may not attempt to log into the network or application using any account and/or password other than the login(s) assigned to him/her. Individuals may not allow someone to use his/her network account and/or password to access the network, email, specific software packages, or the Internet.
- Staff and students are expected to follow all local, state and federal laws and system policy regarding the protection of student and staff confidential data.
- MCSS assumes no responsibility for any unauthorized charges made by students on MCSS devices, internet services, and/or network included but not limited to credit card charges, long distance phone charges, equipment and line costs, or for any illegal use such as copyright violations.

### **Personal Technology Devices**

A personal technology device (PTD) is a portable Internet-accessing device that is not the property of the school district that can be used to transmit communications by voice, written characters, words, or images; share information; record sounds; process words; and/or capture images, such as a laptop computer, tablet, smartphone, smartwatch, cell phone, or any other electronic communication device.



A student may possess and use a PTD on school property, however, the use of such devices is at the discretion of the principal at each school. Under no circumstances may students possess or use a PTD during any state assessment or secure exam.

Possession of a PTD by a student is a privilege that may be revoked for violations of the Code of Student Conduct. Violations may result in the confiscation of the PTD (to be returned only to a parent) and/or other disciplinary actions

The school district is not responsible for theft, loss, or damage to PTDs or other electronic devices brought onto school district property. Students permitted to use PTDs during the school day must follow Board policy concerning Internet safety and use of technology.

## **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying will not be tolerated. Engaging in these behaviors may result in disciplinary actions and/or loss of privileges. Examples of cyberbullying include but are not limited to:

- Harassment
- Intimidation
- Threats
- Impersonation
- Insults
- Displaying offensive photos/images/videos
- Lewd behavior

***Refer to the MCSS Student Code of Conduct***

***Refer to the MCSS Acceptable Use Agreement form***

**[Refer to the FTC Online Security website for more information](#)**

## **Copyright & Plagiarism**

All users are expected to abide by copyright laws and to follow the *Fair Use Guidelines for Educational Multimedia*. If students do not know if the use of online material is legal or ethical, ask teachers or administrators for guidance.

Users should not plagiarize (or use as their own, without citing the original creator) content, including words or images, from the Internet. Research conducted via the Internet should be appropriately cited, giving credit to the original author.

***Refer to the [Fair Use Guidelines for Education Multimedia](#)***

***[For more information visit NASSP](#)***

***[Copyright Basics](#)***

## [TEACH Act 2002](#)

### **MCSS Property**

Students and their parents are personally responsible for the proper care, use, and handling of the assigned devices. Students are responsible for promptly submitting damaged, broken, or non-working devices to the designated school personnel for repair.

The parents of a student who is found responsible for the loss, destruction, breakage, or damage of school equipment (such as, but not limited to, the device, batteries, cords, and chargers) may be required to pay for the replacement equipment. Replacement or repair cost depends on the severity of the damage.

If a student's device is lost or stolen, the student and/or parent are responsible for obtaining a police report within 24 hours of discovery of the loss/theft, immediately providing the school with documentation of the report, and cooperating fully with any subsequent investigation.

The MCSS and manufacturer's identification tags will not be tampered with or removed. No other stickers, ink, or any decorative items may be added to a student's (or staff) assigned equipment (such as, but not limited to, the device, batteries, cords, and chargers).

Students and parents shall address all concerns regarding the use of the technology to the supervising teacher(s) and/or the school administrative staff.

### **DATA GOVERNANCE**

[Refer to MCSS Data Governance Policy and Procedure](#)

### **MEDIA COVERAGE**

News media regularly visit MCSS schools to do special reports or follow up on certain news events. News media are allowed into the schools to cover certain events only with the permission of the Communications Department and the principal. Precautions are always taken to protect the integrity and privacy of the school, staff, and students.

As a part of their coverage, media often record and/or photograph certain aspects of the school. Parents who have concerns about their child possibly being recorded or photographed by the media should contact the principal. Principals will make every effort to accommodate the wishes of the parent, but it should be understood that it is very difficult to foresee every possible situation that might occur from media coverage of the schools and school events.

The following guidelines will help our media partners obtain the desired information, footage, and interviews:

- Media must receive clearance from the Communications Department prior to arriving on campus during the school day. Communication Department staff will assist in scheduling all media requests with district leaders.
- Media representatives should check in at the school's front office immediately upon arriving on campus.
- Requests for interviews and footage are expedited more efficiently if inquiries include details about the information you require, the individuals you are wishing to speak with, and any footage you are hoping to capture.

[Refer to the MCSS website > Departments & Information > Communications](#)

***Refer to the MCSS Media Opt-Out Form via the PowerSchool Parent Portal***

## **POWERSCHOOL PARENT PORTAL**

Our district's student information system, PowerSchool, offers you an opportunity to have online access to information regarding your child. The only prerequisites for access to PowerSchool are a computer with internet access, PowerSchool Parent Portal login, password, and the access ID for each child.

Via the PowerSchool Parent Portal, parents are able to see the student's class schedule, attendance, demographics (address, phone number, etc.), class grades, and progress reports. Contact your child's school for the access ID.

## **MASS NOTIFICATION SYSTEM**

The Madison County School System, its schools and teachers communicate with parents via a mass notification system. Modes of communication include email, telephone calls, text, and mobile app notifications. The contact information parents provide during enrollment is used for our Mass Notification System. To ensure that all parents receive important information, please provide accurate cell phone numbers and email addresses. Registrars at each school can assist you with updating contact information should the need arise. If you do not receive messages from the district, your school, or child's teacher, contact the school registrar for assistance.

For standard communication, only primary or custodial parents will receive information. For emergency information, all contacts listed in PowerSchool will be contacted.

## **FLYER DISTRIBUTION PROCEDURE**

As part of our ongoing commitment to be more environmentally friendly and ensure stakeholders have quick and easy access to critical information, the Madison County School System (MCSS) will no longer distribute paper flyers. Digital flyer distribution will be the only method of flyer distribution.

Schools should direct internal and external organizations to submit flyers to the MCSS Communications Department for approval and distribution. External organizations should submit flyers seven (7) days before the requested distribution date. Internal organizations (PTA/PTO, Boosters, Clubs) may submit flyers at any time. The Flyer Submission Form will be available on the MCSS website.

The program/activity must be considered appropriate for approval as determined by the Superintendent or Communications Department. Flyers will be viewable on the Community Bulletin Board on the MCSS website and distributed via email to the appropriate school or schools each Friday.

**[Refer to the MCSS website > Departments & Information > Communications](#)**  
**[For more information and link to submit form](#)**

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A COMPLIANCE STATEMENTS

### Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)

The MCSS Board of Education recruits and selects for employment the best-qualified applicants without regard to race, color, creed, or national origin: nor shall any person be denied employment solely because of age, sex, marital status, or disability except as provided by law or policy.

[Refer to MCBOE Policy 5.2.2](#)

### Madison County School System Nondiscrimination Statement

The Madison County School System does not discriminate in admission, treatment, or access to programs or activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, religious preference, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship, non-English speaking ability, or homeless status. Students with disabilities will be provided with the same needed supports and services for extracurricular programs and activities that are provided during the school day unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of the program and activity.

To report incidents of discrimination contact Dr. Rachel Ballard at: [rballard@mcssk12.org](mailto:rballard@mcssk12.org)/256.852.2557

### Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Board complies with and adheres to the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, including changes made by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-325), which became effective on January 1, 2009.

The Madison County School System does not discriminate in admission, treatment, or access to program or activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, religious preference, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship, non-English speaking ability, or homeless status. Students with disabilities will be provided with the same needed supports and services for extracurricular programs and activities that are provided during the school day, unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of the program and activity.

For more specific information concerning ADA and its provisions, please contact the ADA Coordinator for the Madison County Board of Education: Mrs. Jennifer Whitt, Supervisor of Student Services; 1275 F Jordan Road, Building B; Huntsville, AL 35811; 256.852.2557 (61715)/Facsimile: 256.852.1038/ Email address: [jdwhitt@mcssk12.org](mailto:jdwhitt@mcssk12.org).

## **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving federal financial assistance. Section 504 defines a person with a disability as anyone who:

- Has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (major life activities include activities such as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing eating, and working, etc.)
- Has a record of such an impairment
- Is regarded as having such impairment

In order to fulfill its obligation under Section 504, the Board recognizes the responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and students. No discrimination against any person with a disability will knowingly be permitted in any programs and practices regarding its personnel and students. No discrimination against any person with a disability will knowingly be permitted in any programs and practices of the school system.

The Board has specific responsibilities under the Act, which includes the responsibility to identify, evaluate, determine eligibility, and afford appropriate educational services if a student is determined eligible.

For more specific information concerning Section 504 or its provisions, contact the 504 Coordinator of the Madison County Board of Education: Mrs. Jennifer Whitt, Supervisor of Student Services; 1275 F Jordan Road, Building B; Huntsville, AL 35811; Telephone: 256.852.2557 extension 61715; Facsimile: 256.852.1038; Email address: [jdwhitt@mcssk12.org](mailto:jdwhitt@mcssk12.org).

The Madison County Board of Education has an established Grievance Policy related to Section 504 and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

## **Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)**

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) applies to the programs and activities of a state education agency (SEA), local education agency (LEA), or other recipient of funds under any program funded by the U.S. Department of Education. It governs the administration to students of a survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns one or more of the following eight protected areas:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
- Sex behavior or attitudes
- Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
- Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships

- Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent
- Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program)

PPRA also concerns marketing surveys and other areas of student privacy, parental access to information, and the administration of certain physical examinations to minors. The rights under PPRA transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under state law.

## **Title IX**

Title IX is a federal statute that prohibits sex discrimination in any educational program or activity receiving federal funds. Title IX states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

Title IX protects students, employees and applicants for employment, and other persons from all forms of sex discrimination, including discrimination based on gender identity or failure to address stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity. All students (as well as other persons) at institutions /districts that receive federal funds are protected by Title IX - regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, race, or national origin – in all aspects of a recipient's educational programs and activities (OCR Title IX Resource Guide).

Examples of Title IX Concerns:

- Gender Discrimination
- Domestic and/or Dating Violence
- Sexual Harassment
- Sexual Assault
- Sexual Misconduct (inappropriate touching, comments, text messages)
- Gender Identification Discrimination
- Teasing or Bullying/Cyberbullying because of gender/gender identification

***For more information visit the [Office of Civil Rights](#)***

## **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federally funded statute whose purpose is to provide financial aid to states in their efforts to ensure adequate and appropriate services for school-aged children who fall within one of the following specific disability categories, and who because of the disability, need special education (specially designed instruction).

Disabilities include:

- Intellectual Disability
- Autism
- Deaf/Blindness
- Orthopedic Impairments
- Speech or Language Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Emotional Disturbance
- Visual Impairments (including blindness)
- Multiple Disabilities
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Hearing Impairments (including deafness)
- Developmental Delay
- Specific Learning Disabilities

Disabled students are those (ages 3-21) with one or more disabilities who need special education and related services to meet their unique needs and to receive a free, appropriate public education. All individuals who are disabled under IDEA are protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. For more specific information concerning IDEA and its provisions, contact the Director of Special Education at the Madison County Board of Education, Ms. Mary Stump, at 256-852-7073 extension 62257; or to make a referral, please contact the Child-Find Coordinator at 256-852-7073.

[Refer to the U.S. Department of Education IDEA website](#)

## **RESPONSE TO INSTRUCTION**

Response to Instruction (RtI) integrates core instruction, assessment, and intervention within a multi-tiered system to maximize student achievement and reduce behavior problems. Through the implementation of RtI, schools identify and monitor students at risk, use problem-solving and data-based decision making to provide research-based interventions and adjust the intensity of interventions based on the student's response.

Response to Instruction done well at the classroom level will provide data from which educators can make instructional decisions for individuals and groups of students. Given high-quality decisions, RtI shows promise in supporting all students, especially those at risk of failing to achieve state performance standards. For further information, please contact your child's school.



## **APPENDIX B FORMS**

- Mental Health Opt-In Form- Must be submitted annually, update at any time
- Acceptable Use Agreement form- Must be submitted annually during enrollment
- Student Code of Conduct form- Must be submitted annually during enrollment
- Student Handbook form- Must be submitted annually during enrollment
- Media Opt-Out form- Must be submitted annually during enrollment, update at any time

## APPENDIX C CONTACT INFORMATION

### MCSS Schools

School	Principal	Address	Contact Information
Buckhorn High	Principal: Mr.Lavell Everett	4123 Winchester Road New Market, AL 35761	256.851.3300 bhswebmail@mcssk12.org
Buckhorn Middle	Principal: Ms. Justina Wills	185 Winchester Road New Market, AL 35761	256.851.3230 bmswebmail@mcssk12.org
Central School	Principal: Ms. Susan Hancock	990 Ryland Pike Huntsville, AL 35811	256.851.4670 cswebmail@mcssk12.org
Endeavor Elementary	Principal: Ms. Dana Cooper	1997 Old Railroad Bed Harvest, AL 35749	256.851.4620 eeswebmail@mcssk12.org
Harvest Elementary	Principal: Ms. Jerry Anne Screws	845 Wall Triana Highway Harvest, AL 35749	256.851.4590 heswebmail@mcssk12.org
Hazel Green Elementary	Principal: Ms. Angela Toyebo	14250 Hwy 231-431 N Hazel Green, AL 35750	256.851.4540 hgewebmail@mcssk12.org
Hazel Green High	Principal: Dr. Quinn Headen	14380 Hwy 231-431 N HazelGreen, AL 35750	256.851.3220 hghwebmail@mcssk12.org
Legacy Elementary	Principal: Ms. Catherine Rogers	165 Pine Grove Road Madison, AL 35757	256.851.4630 leswebmail@mcssk12.org
Lynn Fanning Elementary	Principal: Ms. Wynetta Ford	8861 Moores Mill Road Meridianville, AL 35759	256.851.4680 lfswebmail@mcssk12.org
Madison County Career Tech Center	Principal: Mr. Michael Romine	1275 Jordan Road Huntsville, AL 35811	256.852.2170 mcctcwebmail@mcssk12.org
Madison County Elementary	Principal: Ms. Ginger Henshaw	173 Wood Street Gurley, AL 35748	256.851.3290 mcewebmail@mcssk12.org
Madison County High	Principal: Mr. Jeremy Lowry	174 Brock Road Gurley, AL 35748	256.851.3270 mchwebmail@mcssk12.org
Madison County Virtual Academy	Principal: Ms. Scott McMickin	275 Jordan Road Huntsville, AL 35811	256.852.7415 mcvawebmail@mcssk12.org
Madison Cross Roads Elementary	Principal: Ms. Karen Fischer	11548 Pulaski Pike Toney, AL 35773	256.851.4600 mxrwebmail@mcssk12.org
Meridianville Middle	Principal: Mr. Matthew Parkin	12975 Hwy 231-431 N Hazel Green, AL 35750	256.851.4550 mvmwebmail@mcssk12.org

<b>Monrovia Elementary</b>	Principal: Dr. Reneé Headen	1030 Jeff Road Huntsville, AL 35806	256.851.4570 meswebmail@mcssk12.org
<b>Monrovia Middle</b>	Principal: Mr. Keith Trawick	1216 Jeff Road Huntsville, AL 35806	256.851.4580 mmswebmail@mcssk12.org
<b>Moore's Mill Intermediate</b>	Principal: Ms. Kim Britton	1210 Walker Lane New Market, AL 35761	256.851.4700 mmiswebmail@mcssk12.org
<b>Mt. Carmel Elementary</b>	Principal: Dr. Julie Norden	35 Homer Nance Road Huntsville, AL 35811	256.851.4660 mtcwebmail@mcssk12.org
<b>New Hope Elementary</b>	Principal: Dr. Jamie Burton	300 Main Drive New Hope, AL 35760	256.851.3260 nhewebmail@mcssk12.org
<b>New Hope High</b>	Principal: Mr. David Manning	5216 Main Drive New Hope, AL 35760	256.851.3280 nhhwebmail@mcssk12.org
<b>New Market Elementary</b>	Principal: Ms. Keri Smith	155 College Street New Market, AL 35761	256.851.3250 nmswebmail@mcssk12.org
<b>Owens Cross Roads Elementary</b>	Principal: Mr. Adam Hampton	161 Wilson Mann Road Owens Cross Roads, AL 35763	256.851.3240 oxrwebmail@mcssk12.org
<b>Riverton Elementary</b>	Principal: Dr. Andrea Datson	2615 Winchester Road Huntsville, AL 35811	256.851.4650 reswebmail@mcssk12.org
<b>Riverton Intermediate</b>	Principal: Ms. April McCutcheon	399 Homer Nance Road Huntsville, AL 35811	256.852.4640 riswebmail@mcssk12.org
<b>Sparkman High</b>	Principal: Mr. Todd Dreifort	2616 Jeff Road Harvest, AL 35749	256.837.0331 shswebmail@mcssk12.org
<b>Sparkman Middle</b>	Principal: Dr. Kellen Conaway	2697 Carters Gin Road Toney, AL 35773	256.837.7673 smswebmail@mcssk12.org
<b>Sparkman Ninth Grade</b>	Principal: Ms. Marcia McCants	2680 Jeff Road Harvest, AL 35773	256.851.4560 s9gwebmail@mcssk12.org
<b>Walnut Grove Elementary</b>	Principal: Ms. Yolanda Wright	1961 Joe Quick Road New Market, AL 35761	256.851.4690 wgswebmail@mcssk12.org

## Central Office Departments

Athletics

Athletics Administrator- Mr. Matt Rogers

Child Nutrition

Child Nutrition Supervisor- Ms. Danielle Mitchell

Communications/PR

Director of PR- Mr. Carter Watkins

Community Engagement	Community Involvement Coordinator- Ms.Aleta Stender
Equity & Innovation	Director of Equity & Innovation- Dr. Rachel Ballard
Federal Programs	Director of Federal Programs- Ms. Kerrie Bass
Finance	Chief School Finance Officer- Ms. Karen O'Bannon
Health Services	Health Services Supervisor- Ms.Megan Imsand
Information & Technology	Director of IT- Ms. Nikki Rodman
Instruction	Assistant Superintendent of Instruction- Mr. Alex Hughes
Instruction- Elementary	Instruction Coordinator- Ms. Haley James
Instruction- 6-8	Instruction Coordinator-
Instruction- High	Instruction Coordinator- Ms. Jennifer Fanning
Operations/Maintenance	Director of Operations- Mr. Joseph Cuzzort
Payroll & Insurance	Payroll Manager- Ms. Dawn McCord
Personnel	Personnel Manager- Ms. Jennifer Brunsmann
Special Services	Director of Special Education- Ms. Mary Stump
Student Services	Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services- Mr. Allen Perkins
Student Services	Student Services Coordinator- Ms. Jennifer Whitt
Transportation	Director of Transportation- Mr. Daniel Spears

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## **Updates to Handbook**

**July 17, 2023- [APPENDIX C Contact Information](#) updated with new administrators**