



**Michigan City  
Area Schools**

Opportunity ★ Excellence ★ Pride

**Student/Parent Handbook &  
Code of Responsible Behavior  
Grades 7 – 8  
2025-2026 School Year**

June 2025

Dear Parents/Guardians of Michigan City Area Schools Students:

We are pleased to present to you a revised edition of the Michigan City Area Schools Code of Responsible Behavior for the 2025-26 School Year. In keeping with our Michigan City Area Schools Mission Statement, our focus is on the positive behaviors students should exhibit every day. Through each school's Positive Behavior Supports plan, these behaviors will be acknowledged and rewarded. Using this approach, students will learn responsibility and gain an understanding of how their behavior affects their success.

Our discipline is administered through a "level" system that assigns different consequences to behaviors based on the severity and frequency of the infraction. Our goal is to help students understand how their behaviors impact themselves and others.

It is our hope that students will see value in behaving responsibly in classrooms, hallways, and in the school setting in general. Through this Code of Responsible Behavior, we believe students will be given the opportunity to learn and grow. Our aim is for students to contribute positively to society through a system that has clear goals and high expectations.

Thank you for your continued partnership with us as we work together to ensure success for all students!

Sincerely,

Dr. Wendel McCollum  
Superintendent  
Michigan City Area Schools

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## **Equal Opportunity**

The Michigan City Area Schools does not discriminate on the basis of the Protected Classes of race, color, national origin, sex (including transgender status, sexual orientation and gender identity), disability, age, religion, military status, ancestry, or genetic information, which are classes protected by Federal and/or State law (collectively, "Protected Classes"). This includes the Corporation's employment opportunities, programs, and/or activities, or, if initially occurring off Corporation grounds or outside the Corporation's employment opportunities, programs and activities, affecting the Corporation's environment. For further information, clarification, or complaint, please contact the MCAS School Administration, 408 S. Carroll Avenue, Michigan City, Indiana 46360 at (219) 873-2000 for Title IX (gender equity related issues); or Special Education Department, 408 S. Carroll Avenue, Michigan City, Indiana 46360 at (219) 873-2000 for Section 504 (non-discrimination/ disability issues and Americans with Disabilities). Any other information concerning the above policies may be obtained by contacting the Administration Office, 408 S. Carroll Ave., Michigan City, Indiana 46360 at (219) 873-2000.

# **Michigan City Area Schools Middle School Student/Parent Handbook**

## **WELCOME**

Welcome to our school! On behalf of the faculty and staff, the administration wants to extend to you best wishes for the coming school year. We hope that you will have a great year full of academic growth and personal fulfillment.

We believe that our school is a great place to learn and work. Our school is a school that embraces student individuality and diversity while encouraging excellence and commitment. Our goal is to create a positive learning environment in which students gain knowledge and develop the skills and attitudes necessary for success.

Success depends upon all of us working together to accomplish our goals. You are a vital part of our school team. Together, students, parents, and teachers can achieve great things for our school and community.

## **MICHIGAN CITY AREA SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT**

### **MISSION**

We are a diverse community of families, students, and staff who take pride in our schools, contribute positively to society, and prepare students for lifelong success.

### **VISION**

Michigan City Area Schools: High expectations. Supported students. Innovative paths to success

## **VALUES AND BELIEF STATEMENTS**

### **TRUST**

We believe in promoting a culture of integrity so that all members of our community experience deep trust and partnership with the district.

### **DIVERSITY**

We believe in celebrating diversity and empowering all members of our community.

### **GROWTH**

We believe in continuously growing, learning, and improving, so that all of our students experience academic and personal success.

### **PRIDE**

We believe in cultivating pride in our schools.

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY**

The middle school philosophy is based on the unique needs and characteristics of the young adolescent. Students, teachers, administrators, and parents are drawn together in aiding the students to gain an understanding of themselves and the world around them. Educators are specially trained to work with middle-level students and are committed to the education of the young adolescent. They

have knowledge of needs and characteristics of the age and have mastered varied teaching strategies that promote active rather than passive activities. A middle school provides a structured, sequential program for each student's ability and achievement levels. A middle school can provide flexibility in the following ways:

- Develop critical thinking and self-inquiry for each student.
- Develop a student's ability to adapt to a constantly changing environment both in and out of school.
- Provide an opportunity for a student to explore a wide variety of experiences and interests.
- Promote the student's self-concept and nurture creativity.
- Encourage self-discipline, responsibility, and accountability.
- Develop a program, which helps to expand a student's potential.
- Improve effective evaluation skills.
- Through many experiences, students develop pride, dignity, and worth as individual differences are recognized. The adolescent has a unique opportunity and responsibility to utilize the available experiences and to develop into a productive and contributing member of our society.

### **DESIRED LEARNER OUTCOMES**

1. Students are Lifelong Learners who set and pursue their goals for personal growth.
2. Students Communicate effectively through their development of speaking, reading, and writing skills.
3. Students are Critical Thinkers who are capable of solving problems using a variety of tools.
4. Students work Collaboratively using effective leadership and group skills within diverse settings.
5. Students are Ethical and Moral Citizens who consistently demonstrate self-discipline, courage, honesty, compassion, and appreciation for diversity.
6. Students Contribute to their Community, volunteering energies and talents to improve the quality of life within their community.
7. Students are Health-Conscious Individuals whose lifestyle reflects a concern for the health, safety, and well-being of themselves and others.
8. Students accept Responsibility for their actions.
9. Students apply Academic Skills to life situations.

### **HELP YOUR CHILD BECOME SUCCESSFUL IN MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Good teaching starts in the home because the parent is the first teacher of the student. It is your privilege and obligation to teach by example and to develop in your child the good habits of behavior as well as a positive attitude toward school. To help your child's progress in Middle School, you should:

- Monitor your child's attendance and academic progress. (Online Parent Access to this information is available. Contact the school office for a password and instructions.)
- Read the Student/Parent Handbook to familiarize yourself with the procedures used in the Michigan City Area Schools.
- Recognize that the teacher takes the place of the parent while your child is at school.
- Teach and require your child to have respect for the law, for authority, for the rights of others, and for private and public property.
- Become an active part of the school by volunteering time, attending school activities, checking on your child regularly with their teachers, counselor, or an administrator, and by serving on various school committees.

- Talk with your child about school activities and show an active interest in report cards and the daily progress of your child. Ask your child daily what was learned.
- Encourage and demand prompt and regular school attendance and comply with attendance rules and procedures.
- Safeguard the physical and mental health of your child and be responsible for periodic health examinations.
- Attend individual or group parent conferences. Request conferences as you see a need.
- Attend special school programs.
- Arrange for a time and a place at home for homework assignments, supervise your child, and check the work.
- Monitor your child's Student Planner on a regular basis.
- Work with the middle school in carrying out recommendations made in the best interest of your child.
- Know your child's friends. Encourage and guide wholesome friendships, interests, and activities.
- Understand and comply with the rules of the school concerning student conduct and cooperate with the school in carrying out disciplinary action.
- Call the school with your concerns or compliments.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Through this handbook, the school administration wishes to acquaint you with the services provided by the school and familiarize you with the regulations, rights, and responsibilities that apply to all middle school students. In the event of a conflict between individual school procedures and guidelines, and Michigan City Area Schools policies and guidelines, Michigan City Area Schools policies and guidelines shall govern.

### **Address and/or Telephone Change**

If a change in the student's or family's address, email, or telephone number occurs, please notify the office of this change immediately. It is important that the school has all emergency numbers to contact the parent/legal guardian.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504**

The Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act requires the Michigan City Area Schools to ensure that no individual will be discriminated against on the basis of a disability. This protection applies to students, staff, and all individuals that have access to the School Corporation's programs and facilities.

Students who have disabilities who do not qualify for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) may be served within the regular education program with an accommodation plan developed through an interactive dialogue between the school, the student, and the student's parents. Parents who believe that their child may have a disability that interferes substantially with the child's ability to function in school should contact the building principal.

### **Athletics**

The middle school provides a well-balanced sports program. To be eligible for participation and to maintain one's participation on a school team, a student athlete must:

- demonstrate scholastic ability by maintaining a minimum 1.5 grade point average (G.P.A.).
- demonstrate appropriate behavior demanded of a student athlete.
- meet the standards set by the administration, faculty, and coach.
- have a current physical form on file.

**Please see Appendix C for the Middle School Athletic Handbook.**

The sports currently offered are:

Basketball	Cross Country	Football	
Golf	Soccer	Swimming	Tennis
Track	Volleyball	Wrestling	

### **Attendance**

Any student not present at the designated school of enrollment for **any reason** other than defined exemptions will be reported as absent per the guidelines/procedures of the MCAS Attendance Policy and the Indiana Department of Education. It is the student's responsibility to gather, complete, and return classroom assignments in a timely manner upon return to school to their respective teacher(s). In general, a student has the same number of days to make up classroom assignments as the number of days they were absent from school.

**The following are exempt student absences per IC 20-33-2-14 through 17.8 and do not count toward sanctions under the Attendance Policy:**

- Serving as a page or honoree of the Indiana General Assembly
- Serving on the precinct election board or as a helper to a political candidate on the day of a municipal, primary, or general election
- Subpoenaed to testify in court
- Serving as an active duty member of the armed forces for at least 15 days in a school year
- Serving with the Civil Air Patrol for up to 5 days
- Approved for an educationally-related, non-classroom activity
- Exhibits or participates in the Indiana State Fair for educational purposes
- Participates in a scheduled competition, exhibition, or event offered by the National FFA Organization, Indiana FFA Association, or 4-H Club

Additionally, excused absences/non exception (exempt) as defined in Board Policy 5220 will not be used to designate a student as having "excessive absences."

### **Reporting of Student Absences:**

- The student's parent/legal guardian must call the school of the student's enrollment no later than 9:00 a.m. indicating the reason for the student's absence; otherwise after 3 days the student will be considered truant from school.
- Upon the student's return to school, the parent/legal guardian may be requested to provide a written statement and/or a doctor's statement indicating the reason for the student's absence.
- In cases where the student's absence has been extensive, a written Consent to Release Pertinent Medical Information (completed by the parent/legal guardian) and a Letter of Incapacity (completed by both the parent/legal guardian and physician) must be provided to the school if requested.

**Planned Absences:**

- The student's parent/legal guardian must provide the building principal with a written explanation prior to the student's anticipated absence.
- It is the student's responsibility to gather all makeup work prior to a planned absence. Work is due to the student's teacher(s) immediately upon their return to school.
- **Absences resulting from approved planned absences are considered excused by the Michigan City Area Schools and the Indiana Department of Education.**

**Excessive Absences:**

An excessive absence equates to any student who is below a 95% attendance rate in a given school year.

- It is important to note that any student's unexcused absence for reason of illness is calculated in the student's 95% daily attendance rate.
- In addition to student daily absences, excessive absences for secondary students may also include routine absences from a specific class period.
- Students' failure to attend class may be considered an act of academic misconduct, which may result in loss of a daily grade or credit for missed class period(s).

**Early Dismissal Due to Appointments:**

- It is strongly encouraged that professional appointments for students be scheduled outside of the school day. In cases where this is not possible, it is suggested that appointments be made either early or late in the school day, so that the student may benefit from classroom instruction with as little interruption as possible.
- Prior notification from the student's parent/legal guardian informing the school of the student's professional appointment is required BEFORE the student may be released from school.
- When a parent/legal guardian finds it necessary for a student to leave during the school day, the student must report to the office at the start of school day with a note from a parent/legal guardian. The student will be given an Early Dismissal Pass. The parent/legal guardian must meet the student in the main office and sign them out of the building. Failure to follow the sign-out procedure may constitute truancy and may result in appropriate disciplinary action. The school may request proof of identification when signing out the student.

**Truancy Prevention Procedures**

Per Indiana Code 20-33-2.5-4, the following procedures apply to students enrolled in Kindergarten through Grade 12 who have five (5) unexcused absences in a 10-week period:

The school shall upon the student's fifth unexcused absence in the 10-week period immediately provide a written notice to the parents. Such written notice shall include:

- the student is an absent student based upon having five unexcused absences within a 10-week period;
- the parent is responsible for monitoring the school attendance of the student and ensuring the student attends school;
- the school will be initiating truancy prevention measures in regards to the absent student;
- the parent is required to attend an attendance conference concerning the truancy measures the school will be implementing and such conference will be held not more than five instructional days after the fifth unexcused absence occurred; and



- the superintendent, attendance office representative, or administrator is required to report if the student is a habitual truant to juvenile court or the Department of Child Services, wherein the juvenile court may determine the student is committing a delinquent act under state law and the parent may be prosecuted for educational neglect.

The school shall hold an attendance conference to discuss the student's absences and establish an attendance plan. The conference will be with the following people:

- School Administrator
- A teacher, counselor, or success coach
- The parent of the student
- Parent's Representative if the parent gives 48 hours' notice of the representative's attendance and the name of the representative

At the conclusion of the conference, the school shall establish an attendance plan that includes:

- Wraparound services to ensure school attendance for the student.
- A description of the behavior required and/or prohibited for the student.
- The effective time period for the plan, but not to exceed 45 instructional days.
- Disciplinary actions the school will take if the student does not comply with the plan.
- A referral to counseling, mentoring, or other services for the student as appropriate.
- Whether the parent is required or expected to attend the services assigned to the student.
- The signature of the student and the parent agreeing to the plan.

### **Bags**

Book bags, backpacks, large tote bags, carry-all bags, etc. make the aisles in classrooms unsafe and are sometimes used to conceal inappropriate items that may be brought to class for the purpose of creating disruptions. Therefore, these bags (including purses in some schools) may not be carried from class to class during the school day. Such bags are to be stored in the student's locker. Before purchasing a book bag (e.g. those with wheels), make sure it will fit in the school locker.

### **Before and After School Procedures**

In order to assure a safe and orderly environment, students must follow procedures before the instructional day begins and after the instructional day ends. The following procedures are not all inclusive.

- Arrive and depart promptly (within 10 minutes of the start and end of the school day). School begins at 7:25 A.M. and ends at 2:15 P.M.
- Students in the building before or after school must be in an adult-supervised activity or location.
- Remain outside until admitted into the building.
- Ride, park, and lock bicycles in the designated areas only.
- No throwing of objects or snow.
- Remain on cemented areas or sidewalks.
- No horseplay.
- Students are not to ride or operate motorized vehicles on school property.
- Students must leave the school building within 10 minutes of school's dismissal unless they are attending a school-sponsored activity.
- Students whose rides do not arrive in a timely manner at the conclusion of a school-sponsored activity may not be allowed to attend future activities.

- Once students leave the building after attending a school-sponsored activity, students may not re-enter the building and must leave the school grounds.

### **Picking up and Dropping off Students**

For the safety of all students, parents must follow the procedures for dropping off and picking up their child from school. Parents should use the designated parking areas to wait for their child to leave the school. No cars should park in No Parking zones or in the areas designated for buses.

### **Bicycle Regulations**

Students may ride bicycles to the middle schools. Students are not allowed to ride their bicycles on the sidewalks in front of the school. Bicycles should be parked and locked in bicycle racks. The administration advises students to register their bicycles with the police. A good-quality locking system should be used. Bicycles should be locked at all times. The school assumes no responsibility for the loss or operation of any bicycle. Students are not permitted to drive or ride motorized personal vehicles to school.

### **Book Use Guidelines**

- **Libraries 360:** All students will have access to LaPorte County Public Library resources. Accounts will be generated at the beginning of the school year. Students will maintain a "student limited" Libraries360 account. Students will have access to youth and young adult books in both print and digital formats. Any materials checked out through Libraries 360 shall be considered MCAS materials and will be subject to all MCAS library policies and procedures. Students are welcome to utilize the Library 360 account personally with parent supervision.
- **Lost or Damaged Books:** Students are responsible for maintaining textbooks/library books. Teachers record the book number and condition of the textbook when it is issued to the student. Students must return the textbook(s) issued to them at the end of the course unmarked, and without unreasonable wear and tear. Students will pay for lost or damaged books.

### **Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation**

Our schools take bullying, harassment and intimidation very seriously. Students should report bullying, harassment or intimidation promptly to a teacher or staff member. Please see the Code of Responsible Behavior for a definition of Bullying.

### **Bus Transportation**

Bus transportation is provided to students who do not live within walking distance of the school. While commuting on school transportation, traveling to and from the bus stop, or waiting at the bus stop, students are expected to conduct themselves according to established school rules and follow the directions of the bus driver. **Please see Appendix A for Michigan City Area Schools' Transportation Guidelines.**

### **Cellphones/Electronic Devices**

Per IC 20-26-5-40.7 - The use of wireless communication devices, including but not limited to cellular telephones, tablet computers, laptop computers, gaming devices, smartwatches, etc. is strictly prohibited during academic class periods unless explicitly authorized by the teacher for educational purposes.

Students are permitted to use a wireless communication device in the event of a health or safety emergency or to manage health care as specifically defined in the student's Individualized Health Plan (IHP), Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and/or Section 504 Plan.

A wireless communication device is defined by Indiana law as any portable wireless device that has the capability to provide voice, messaging, or other data communication between two (2) or more parties.

### **Conferences (Student-Led Conferences)**

Michigan City Area Schools conducts Student-Led Conferences (SLCs) for all students in grades K-8. Unlike traditional parent-teacher conferences, these meetings are completely student-led. During the SLC, students present a portfolio to family members and teachers (or Crew leaders), reflecting on their successes, challenges, and growth. Student-led conferences will be held in the first and third quarters of the school year. If you would like additional conferences, please make arrangements with the teacher by calling the teacher and/or the school counselor. Parent visits to a classroom require a 24 hour advance notice.

For more information about Student-Led Conferences, visit <http://educateMC.net/slc>.

### **Counselors and Social Workers (School Counseling Services)**

All students have the opportunity to talk with their grade-level counselor and/or school social workers regarding such issues as personal problems, concerns, interests, educational planning, and testing. Students may be assured that information shared will be held in the strictest confidence unless a statement indicating unethical, immoral, or illegal activity or a matter concerning someone's safety is reported. Students may request an appointment to see their counselor and/or social workers. The counselor will respond to a student's request at their earliest convenience.

### **Dress Code**

Students must dress appropriately for school. The following dress code rules will apply:

1. Clothing signifying gang-related activities, slogans, colors, etc. is prohibited.
2. T-shirts, other attire, or jewelry that advertise or promote alcoholic beverages, drugs, cigarettes, vaping, profanity, or the disregard for others are unacceptable.
3. Hats, bandanas, and other headgear are not to be worn in the building. This includes extracurricular activities.
4. Mesh tops, see-through tops, spaghetti tops, or tank tops with enlarged sleeve openings are prohibited.
5. Hoodies are acceptable but must be worn with hoods down.
6. Skirts and shorts shall be no less than mid-thigh length.
7. Jackets, coats, gloves, or other forms of outerwear are not to be worn in the classroom.
8. Shoes must be worn at all times. No open toes, flip flops, slides, heels above 2", slippers.
9. Beachwear and pajamas are prohibited.
10. All pants must be worn at the waistline.
11. Leggings are not acceptable as pants unless worn with a long shirt or dress.
12. Straps that are unbuckled and belts that are unfastened or anything dangling from the waist or pockets such as chains, ropes, rags, etc are prohibited.
13. Tops and pants that reveal the midriff or undergarments are prohibited.
14. Any clothing or appearance that is disruptive to the educational process is prohibited.

Violations of the dress code will result in disciplinary action as outlined in the Code of Responsible Behavior.

### **Early Release Days**

Michigan City Area Schools will utilize Early Release days to allow teachers and staff to participate in professional development. Students will receive assignments to complete at home during the afternoon. Early dismissal dates will be noted on school calendars and on the Michigan City Area Schools web site. Early dismissal times are as follows:  
Middle and High School students: 11:00 a.m.  
Elementary students: 12:00 noon

### **eLearning**

The eLearning Day Program allows schools to continue instructional programming away from the school building when the weather or other circumstances prevent school from being in session. For more information visit <http://educateMC.net/eLearning>.

### **Emergency School Closings and Delays**

Student safety is a primary goal of the Michigan City Area Schools. At all times, weather conditions are monitored to ensure that students can be safely delivered to schools and returned home. Parents are strongly encouraged to make arrangements for the welfare of their children due to school closings or delays and ensure that their children are appropriately dressed for weather conditions.

### **General Procedures:**

Weather and road conditions are monitored by the Director of Transportation on a daily basis. Between 4:30 a.m. and 5:00 a.m., the Director of Transportation will make a recommendation to the Superintendent to close or delay schools.

When weather conditions, such as severe cold or heavy snow, can be predicted before 4:30 a.m., the Director of Transportation will recommend closing or a delay of start the night before.

Once the recommendation to close is accepted by the Superintendent, the media is notified no later than 5:30 a.m. (except in extreme conditions) and parents are informed via the news media, Internet and other available means.

School closing and delay information is available on the MCAS website ([www.EducateMC.net](http://www.EducateMC.net)) or by calling the MCAS Delay and Cancellation Information Line at **(219) 873-2000 (press option “2”)**. In addition, in the event of a delay or closing, the following media will be notified. (Many of these media outlets also have smartphone apps and Facebook pages that announce closings/delays.)

**Radio:** WEFM (95.9 FM); WCOE (96.7 FM); WIMS (AM1420 and 95.1FM); WLOI (1540 AM); Adams Radio Group (Z-107.1 FM, Indiana 105.5FM)

**Television:** ABC57 - Channel 57; WNDU - Channel 16; WSBT - Channel 22

Parents are encouraged to register for text alerts from MCAS about closings and delays, at <http://educateMC.net/texts>. Closings and delays will also be shared using the MCAS smartphone app.

Parents are also encouraged to stay tuned to local media and to check for updated text messages, particularly in the case of a school delay. On rare occasions a decision may be made to move from a delay status to a closed status.

If school is closed for the entire day, after school activities, Adult Basic Education courses and Safe Harbor and Boys and Girls Club are all canceled. High School athletic activities are considered on an individual basis.

### **Hazardous Road Conditions**

Decisions to close or delay school due to hazardous road conditions are determined by the Director of Transportation and the Superintendent of Schools based on the ability to successfully navigate buses both within the city limits and the county areas. Weather conditions across the district can vary greatly due to the potential of lake effect snow. The conditions of the parking lots and the temperature and wind chill factor as well as the safety of children who walk to school are considered.

### **Wind Chill**

As a general rule, a wind chill factor of -19 degrees will be the determining factor as to whether to close or delay school. Frostbite can occur on exposed skin in a relatively short time for children out in extreme temperatures. Parents are encouraged to ensure that students are appropriately dressed for these conditions while waiting at the bus stop or walking to and from school.

Decisions to close or delay school will take into consideration the current conditions as well as the duration of the wind chill factor predictions.

### **Fog**

As in the case of hazardous road conditions, fog conditions can vary greatly across the district. Consideration to delay the start of school for fog conditions will be determined by 5:00 a.m.

### **Tornado Warnings**

Our bus drivers are trained to know how and where to seek safety for children in the event of a tornado. Drivers also are instructed by the Transportation Department, which will be monitoring weather alert warnings. Individual buses or the fleet may be ordered back to the school(s) to unload students at the buildings or to the nearest school site to safely unload students.

### **Two-Hour Delay Schedule**

If the notice is given that school will be delayed **two hours**, middle and high schools will start at 9:25 a.m. (doors open at 9:15 a.m.) Buses arrive at the designated bus stop two hours later than on a normal school day. There is no breakfast served on a two-hour delay schedule. Please note that a two-hour delay can change to a cancellation of school if weather conditions warrant.

### **Early Dismissal Due to Weather Conditions**

On rare occasions, weather conditions may necessitate closing school early. The same media will be contacted in the event that this is necessary, and parents should have child-care arrangements in place

should this occur. On these rare occasions, usually all secondary schools will be dismissed first and then elementary schools will be dismissed approximately one hour later.

### **Enrollment Procedures**

Students enrolling in the Michigan City Area Schools in any grade must provide the following information, along with a completed MCAS Student Enrollment Form:

- The name and address of the school the student last attended (if any).
- The student's birth certificate, issued by a State Board of Health (hospital certificates are not acceptable).
- Parent/Legal Guardian's proof of residency consisting of a utility bill, deed, rental agreement, or public assistance documentation.
- Parent/guardian's driver's license or state picture identification card, which must be presented for the school to photocopy.
- An updated record of the student's immunizations, as Indiana law requires all students to have their immunizations up to date. If a student's immunizations are not up to date, the school has the authority to exclude the student from school until immunizations are up to date.
- Updated emergency contact and student medical information.

In the event that a student is not living with both biological or adoptive parents, parents/legal guardians may be asked to provide legal documentation confirming legal residency/guardianship of the student, in addition to completed Legal Settlement Forms required by the Indiana Department of Education. If there are legal reasons why a non-custodial parent may not have access to their natural child's academic records, it is the custodial parent's responsibility to provide proof to the school.

New students who are in the process of expulsion/suspension or who are expelled or suspended at their current school of enrollment may not be accepted for enrollment in MCAS.

### **Events**

When school-sponsored events are held, students must display their student identification card to gain admittance. There will be no pass-outs during the events. Anyone leaving the event will not be permitted to return.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

All students are encouraged to join and participate in school-sponsored clubs and activities after school hours. Students should listen to the daily announcements for sign-up times and meeting dates. Examples of clubs and organizations include Academic Teams, Yearbook, Student Council, Chess Club, Green Team, and Newspaper. Students may not be in the building after school unless they are staying for a sponsored activity. Students must report to the designated area within five minutes of school dismissal. In all cases, students who stay after school must be under the direct supervision of a staff member. A minimum grade point average of 1.5 is required for extracurricular participation, and students must be in good standing regarding behavior.

Parents and student supporters are encouraged to attend extracurricular activities and events. They must comply with the same rules of sportsmanship and appropriate behavior expected from students. The individual supervising events will have the final decision to exclude disruptive participants.

### **Field Trips**

Students who wish to participate in field trip activities must have a completed permission slip signed by a parent/legal guardian which is kept on file for the school year. Additional criteria may be established as needed for specific field trips. The permission slip must be on file with the class sponsor or teacher prior to the student's participation. Class assignments for work missed while the student is on the field trip are the responsibility of the student. The School Corporation does not sponsor overseas trips or out-of-state trips (with the exception of the Chicago area and Southwest Michigan). Field trip chaperones will be subject to the volunteer background check procedures described in this handbook.

### **Food Services**

#### **Cafeteria**

MCAS provides free breakfast and lunch to all students under the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). A la Carte options, such as snacks and beverages, are available for purchase. All MCAS Cafeterias are cashless, which helps ensure speed and efficiency. Each student has a cafeteria account, which is accessed by the student's unique identification number. To add funds into a student's account, create a free account on LINQ Connect by visiting <https://linqconnect.com/>.

Creating an account is easy and gives you access to view your child's daily meal activity and deposit funds instantly. You can link all your children's accounts into one. For further information, including menus, nutrition information, and other information, please visit [www.mcas.k12.in.us/food](http://www.mcas.k12.in.us/food) or call (219) 873-2131.

#### **Cafeteria Procedures**

Each middle school will establish procedures for the cafeteria. General procedures may include the following: Be on time, use low-level voices, keep your area clean, keep hands and feet to yourself, and stay seated unless permission is given by an adult.

#### **Food Allergies**

For students with food allergies, a Dietary Prescription Form and a Food Allergy Action plan must be completed with the school nurse. Forms are available at the school and on the website at <http://www.mcas.k12.in.us/food>.

#### **Free and Reduced-Price Meals**

Michigan City Area Schools participates in the community eligibility program. Thus, all middle school students are eligible for free lunch and breakfast. However, we encourage eligible families to complete the Household Application for Assistance Form each year, which could enable families to qualify for educational benefits.

If you have any questions, please call (219) 873-2131 for assistance.

#### **Meal Charge Policy**

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) requires school food authorities to establish written administrative guidelines and policy for meal charges. Michigan City Area Schools will adhere to the following meal charge policy.

## **High School, Middle Schools and Elementary Schools**

1. Michigan City Area Schools will not allow any charging through the meal program.
2. Michigan City Area Schools will be providing meals at no charge under the Community Eligibility Program (CEP).
3. All students are required to have money in their account to purchase a milk or a la carte items. They will not be able to make a purchase without funds available in their account.
4. All staff are required to have money in their account to purchase a meal or a la carte items.

## **All Accounts**

Students who graduate or withdraw from the district and have \$2.00 or more in their food service account will be notified by mail by the district Food and Nutrition Department office at the end of the school year and given an option to transfer the funds to another account or to receive a refund. If no response is received in 30 days the student's food service account will be closed and the funds will no longer be available. Staff who leave the district will need to notify the Food Service Department for a refund.

## **Nutrition**

Information regarding nutrition, calorie counts, and healthy eating guides are available at <http://www.EducateMC.net/food>.

## **Hall Passes**

If a student is out of a scheduled classroom or in the halls for any reason during a scheduled activity, the student must have his/her planner or pre-printed pass with the date, time, and signature or initials of a staff member.

## **Hallway Procedures**

Each middle school will establish procedures for hallway behavior using a Positive Behavior Supports framework. General procedures may include walking at all times, using the most direct route to class and speaking in low-level voices. Ample time is provided for passage to and from classes and to attend to personal needs. When asked, students must identify themselves to any staff member.

## **Harassment**

It is the policy of the School Board to maintain an education and work environment which is free from all forms of unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment. This commitment applies to all School Corporation operations, programs, and activities. All students, parents, administrators, teachers, staff, and all other school personnel share responsibility for avoiding, discouraging, and reporting any form of unlawful harassment. The Corporation will not retaliate against any person who makes a report or files a complaint alleging harassment or a violation of this policy. This policy applies to unlawful conduct occurring on school property, or at another location if such conduct occurs during an activity sponsored by the Board.

The Board will vigorously enforce its prohibition against harassment based on sex, race, color, national origin, religion, disability, or any other unlawful basis, and encourages those within the School Corporation community as well as third parties who feel aggrieved to seek assistance to rectify the problems. The Board will investigate all allegations of harassment and in those cases where unlawful harassment is substantiated,



the Board will take immediate steps to end the harassment. Individuals who are found to have engaged in unlawful harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including but not limited to 1.) Suspension or expulsion of a student; 2.) Suspension or termination of an employee.

All reports of harassment should be reported to Associate Superintendent, Dr. Wendel McCollum, Complaint Coordinator.

Office: 408 S. Carroll Ave., Michigan City, IN 46360  
Telephone: (219) 873-2000, extension 8357  
Email: [wmccollum@mcas.k12.in.us](mailto:wmccollum@mcas.k12.in.us)

### **Sexual Harassment**

Pursuant to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, "sexual harassment" is defined as: Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when:

- A. Submission to such conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, or status in a class, educational program, or activity.
- B. Submission or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or educational decisions affecting such individual.
- C. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's work or educational performance; of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working, and/or learning environment; or of interfering with one's ability to participate in or benefit from a class or an educational program or activity.

"School Corporation community" means students, parents, administrators, teachers, staff, and all other school personnel, including Board members, agents, volunteers, contractors, or other persons subject to the control and supervision of the Board.

"Third parties" include, but are not limited to, guests and/or visitors on School Corporation property (e.g., visiting speakers, participants on opposing athletic teams, parents), vendors doing business with, or seeking to do business with, the Board, and other individuals who come in contact with members of the School Corporation community at school-related events/activities (whether on or off School Corporation property).

The Board will also take immediate steps to impose disciplinary action on individuals engaging in any of the following prohibited acts:

- A. Retaliating against a person who has made a report or filed a complaint alleging harassment, or who has participated as a witness in a harassment investigation.
- B. Filing a malicious or knowingly false report or complaint of harassment.
- C. Disregarding, failing to investigate adequately, or delaying investigation of allegations of harassment when responsibility for reporting and/or investigating harassment charges comprises part of one's supervisory duties.

Members of the School Corporation community and third parties are encouraged to promptly report incidents of harassing conduct to an administrator, supervisor or other School Corporation official so that the Board may address the conduct before it becomes severe, pervasive, or persistent.

When a Complainant believes criminal activity may have occurred the Complainant has the option to pursue a criminal complaint with an appropriate law enforcement agency, to pursue a harassment complaint under the Corporation's complaint procedures, or to pursue both processes simultaneously.

Members of the School Corporation community or third parties who believe they have been unlawfully harassed by another member of the School Corporation community or a third party are entitled to utilize the Board's informal and/or formal investigation and complaint processes. Initiating a complaint, whether formally or informally, will not adversely affect the complaining individual's participation in educational or extra-curricular programs. Individuals should make every effort to file an informal or a formal complaint as soon as possible after the conduct occurs while the facts are known and potential witnesses are available.

The School Corporation will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the Board's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations. All records generated under the terms of this policy and its related administrative guidelines shall be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law.

Although certain cases may require additional time, either the Complaint Coordinator or a designee will attempt to complete an investigation into the allegations of harassment or retaliation within fifteen (15) business days of receiving either an informal or a formal complaint pursuant to the Board's policy.

The Board encourages everyone to read through the Board's policy on anti-harassment which can be found online on the Corporation's website or by requesting a copy from the central office. The current Complaint Coordinator is Associate Superintendent, Dr. Wendel McCollum, and his contact information is provided above.

Additionally, any inquiries concerning the application of Title IX and its implementing regulation may be referred the Complaint Coordinator or to the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. The OCR Office for Indiana is located at:

Chicago Office  
Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education  
Citigroup Center  
500 W. Madison Street, Suite 1475  
Chicago, IL 60661-4544  
Telephone: (312) 730-1560  
TDD: 800-877-8339  
Email: [OCR.Chicago@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Chicago@ed.gov)

### **Head Gear**

Head coverings other than for religious reasons are prohibited in the building. All persons are expected to remove head coverings upon entry into the building and are expected to leave them off until they have reached the building exit. Objects such as combs, picks, pencils, *etc.* are to be removed.

### **Health Services**

The school nurse provides health services to the students by assessing illness and injuries, providing interventions, administering medications, and monitoring immunization requirements. School nurses are not equipped to diagnose or treat many illnesses and injuries. Whenever a student is seen in the office for anything other than a minor issue, the nurse will notify the parent/guardian that the child was seen and it will be the parent/guardian's responsibility to pursue further diagnosis and treatment.

### **Immunizations**

Indiana law requires all students to have their immunizations up-to-date. If a student's immunizations are not up-to-date, the school has the authority to exclude the student from school until such time that immunizations are up-to-date. The nurse maintains these files. The nurse has information about clinics where immunizations can be provided free or at a reduced cost. For more information concerning the state of Indiana's immunization requirements or about clinics, contact your school or visit the MCAS website for health services at <http://www.EducateMC.net/health>.

### **Medication**

A student who requires prescription or over-the-counter medications must have the appropriate forms on file in the nurse's office. For prescription medication, an **Authorization to Administer Prescription Medication form 241** must be completed by a physician and parent. Also, the prescription medication must be given to the nurse in the original container dispensed by a registered pharmacist. For over-the-counter medication a **Parental Permission to Administer Non-prescription Medication form 239** must be completed by the parent and the medicine must be given to the nurse in its original container. This includes pain relievers, cough syrup, throat lozenges, etc. Both forms may be obtained in the school office or on the MCAS website at <http://www.EducateMC.net/health>. The school cannot accept any medications until these forms are completed.

### **Nurse's Office Procedures**

The following procedures will be in place when interacting with the nurse or the nurse's office:

1. Students who become ill while at school should report to their teacher and obtain a pass before going to the nurse.
2. All students with a personal injury, other than one of an emergency nature, must have a pass to the nurse from their teacher.
3. No student will be sent home unless the nurse contacts a parent/legal guardian.
4. Students must be fever/vomit/diarrhea-free for 24 hours before returning to school. It is the parent's responsibility to arrange transportation home for a sick child.
5. The school nurse (or appropriate designee) will dispense all prescription and over-the-counter medications.

### **Homework**

Homework is an extension of classwork and is related to the objectives of the curriculum. Homework fulfills the following objectives:

1. To review, reinforce, or extend classroom learning by providing practice and application of knowledge.
2. To teach students responsibility and organizational skills.
3. To promote wise and orderly use of time.
4. To provide opportunities for enrichment activities.

It is the student's responsibility to complete all homework assignments. Failure to complete or submit homework assignments on time may affect the student's overall class grade. If a student is absent from school, the student should approach their teachers and request the missed assignment(s). Upon returning to school following an absence, the student will have the same number of days that they were absent to complete assignments missed. If a student is to be absent for an extended period of time, the

parent/legal guardian may contact the School Counseling Office and request information pertaining to homework assignments. The amount and type of homework should vary according to the age and developmental needs of the students. Parents are encouraged to provide a quiet place at home and to review the student's assignments.

### **Honor Roll and Recognition**

The Principal's Honor Roll requires all "A's" in all subjects. The Academic Honor Roll requires a 3.2 or higher grade point average in all subjects. The following is a list of Recognition Programs provided in the middle schools (this list may not be all inclusive)

Academic Competitions	Athletic Team Awards	Citizenship Honor Roll
National Junior Honor Society	Reading Awards	Grade-Level Team Awards
PBIS Awards	Students of Week/Month	End-of-Year Awards

### **Lockers**

- Each student is assigned a locker. According to Indiana State Law, school lockers remain the property of the school and the school authorities have a responsibility and a right to examine the contents of those lockers for reasons of health, safety, and security. Any contraband found may be turned over to the local authorities and lead to disciplinary action. Acceptance on the part of the student of a locker is acknowledgment of this right.
- Students are not to share lockers or lock combinations.
- Only those locks issued by the school may be used on lockers.
- When a locker does not open properly, the student should go to class and ask for a pass to go the main office to report the problem.
- Any person caught tampering, opening, or removing items from any locker other than their own without proper authorization will face strong disciplinary action.
- Never leave your locker without checking to see that you have locked it. Do not preset your locker combination.
- You need to keep your locker clean and neat. Do not place any item on or in your locker that cannot be removed. Do not kick or force your locker to open or close.
- You must have your signed planner or obtain a written pass to be at your locker during the lunch period.
- Lockers should contain only coats, sweaters, caps, PE uniforms, personal grooming items, lunches, and books.
- The school is not responsible for loss or damage of a student's personal property. Locker combinations are strictly private information and must not be given out to anyone.

### **Mandatory Reporting**

Under Indiana Code 31-33-5 an individual who has reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect shall make a report to the proper authorities. School personnel will make reports to the Department of Child Services or law enforcement as required under this statute. School personnel are prohibited by law from investigating claims prior to making a report.

### **Media Center**

The Media Center is an important information hub within our middle schools. When using the Media Center or its services, it is important to remember the following:

- Return all books promptly, as others may be waiting for them. Notices for overdue books are sent to you in your Language Arts or Homeroom class.
- Appropriate behavior in the Media Center is essential and expected at all times.
- A pass from your classroom teacher is necessary if you wish to use the Media Center during class time.
- Students are responsible for the cost of replacing lost library books.

### **Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS)**

Michigan City Area Schools is committed to educating the whole child and maximizing the success of all students. The multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework is the umbrella for other support systems. MTSS encompasses academic, behavioral, and social emotional support for all students in the areas of Response To Intervention (RTI), Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS). Students in general education and those receiving special education and related services participate in MTSS. Each school has an established MTSS Team that designs, implements, and monitors individual student intervention plans.

### **Power School/Progress Reports**

The Power School student information system permits parents/legal guardians to obtain information about students' progress, attendance, discipline, and book rental information in a timely manner. The Power School parent portal is available via the MCAS website, at <http://www.EducateMC.net>. You are encouraged to visit the Power School parent portal regularly and to discuss your child's progress with them and to contact the teacher or team for a conference if there are concerns about academic progress. If you are unable to access the MCAS website to reach Power School, please notify your school and arrangements will be made to assist you in obtaining the information. Contact your school office for information and a password to gain access to this site.

### **Police Involvement**

Cooperation between schools and law enforcement agencies is vital to school safety and the administration of justice. To these ends, schools and law enforcement agencies cooperate with each other, within the confines of the law and consistent with their respective legal responsibilities. When in the estimation of school personnel, law enforcement is called to investigate or assist in an investigation of school related matters, the school will inform parents prior to an interview being conducted unless extenuating circumstances exist that would necessitate the investigation proceeding without parent notification.

### **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**

All Michigan City Area Schools have established school-wide behavior expectations and procedures in all settings using a framework called Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS is the application of a behaviorally based approach to allow schools, families, and communities to design an effective environment for teaching and learning.

### **Response to Instruction (RTI)**

Michigan City Area Schools utilizes Response to Instruction, a process that provides systematic, research-based instruction and tiered interventions for at-risk learners. It assumes that the Instruction/interventions are matched to student needs and that the monitoring of progress is continuous

and reviewed/revised as needed. RTI is considered a general education service, but can be applied to special education settings.

## **Safety**

### **Metal Detectors:**

In an effort to provide a safe and secure learning environment for students and employees, the Michigan City Area Schools believes it is necessary to periodically conduct searches of students and their property using corporation owned metal detectors. Only school personnel who have received training in the use of metal detectors will conduct searches. Searches will be conducted by employees who are the same gender as students, and all searches will be supervised by school or district administrators. For more information on specific procedures, please visit <http://educateMC.net\safety>.

### **Safety Drills:**

Michigan City Area Schools uses the "Standard Response Protocol" (SRP) for emergency situations. The SRP is used by schools and institutions across the nation, giving students, staff, parents, communities, and first responders a common language and course of action. MCAS follows all drill requirements per Indiana Code (20-34-3-20) including monthly fire drills, one severe weather drill per semester, and one armed intruder drill during the first semester.

### **School Hours (First Bell and Last Bell)**

All middle schools (grades 7-8) begin classes at 7:25 a.m. and dismiss for the day at 2:15 p.m.

### **Seclusion and Restraints**

Consistent with State Law. Local school corporations are required to develop a Seclusion and Restraint policy and Plan. Michigan City Area Schools Policy 5630.1, Use of Seclusion and Restraint with Students, complies with this requirement and directs the Special Education Director to develop a "Seclusion and Restraint Plan."

As a part of the emergency procedures in place in our schools, no student will be placed in seclusion and/or restrained by school staff unless the student's behavior poses an imminent risk of injury to themselves or others. However, significant violations of the law including assaults on students and staff will be reported to the police. As soon as possible after any such use of restraint and/or seclusion, the parents or guardian will be informed when any of these actions have occurred and will be provided with a detailed account of the incident including the circumstances that led to the use of seclusion and or restraint.

Additionally, all incidents involving seclusion or restraints must be reported to the district's CPI coordinator using the appropriate forms.

### **Solicitation or Sale of Items**

There is to be no selling of any items for the benefit of an out-of-school organization or for personal gain.

### **Special Education Services**

The school provides a variety of special education programs and a continuum of services for students identified as having a disability as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement

Act (IDEIA). A student may be eligible for special education services only after the proper evaluation and placement procedure. Parent involvement in this procedure is required. The school encourages the parent to be an active participant in the education of their child. To inquire about special education services and the procedure that needs to be followed to access those services, a parent should contact the building principal.

### **Student Records and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act**

Many student records are kept by teachers, counselors, and administrative staff. There are two basic kinds of records: Directory Records and Confidential Records.

**Directory Records** or Directory information can be given to any person or organization for nonprofit making purposes when requested, unless the parents of the student request in writing to the principal that their child's directory information be restricted. Directory information includes the student's name, address, and listed or published telephone number.

**Confidential Records** contain educational and behavioral information that has restricted access based upon the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This information can only be released with the written consent of the parents, the adult student, or a surrogate. The only exception to this is a request for confidential records made by an organization to comply with State and Federal laws that may require release without consent. Included in confidential records may be test scores, psychological reports, behavioral data, disciplinary actions, and communications with the family and outside service providers.

The school must have a parent's written consent to obtain records from an outside professional or agency. Parents may also provide the school with copies of records made by non-school professionals or outside agencies.

Students and parents have the right to review all educational records generated by the School Corporation, request amendment to these records, insert addendum to the records, and obtain copies of such records. If a review of records is required, please contact the building principal, in writing, stating the records desired. The records will then be collected and an appointment will be made with the appropriate persons present to answer any questions.

The Family Policy Compliance Office in the United States Department of Education administers FERPA. Parents and students who feel that their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4650

For more information or assistance with the review of records, please contact the school principal.

### **Teen Court**

Teen Court is a program of the Youth Service Bureau Big Brothers Big Sisters of LaPorte County. Students may be referred to Teen Court, with the consent of the student and parent(s), as an alternative to arrest. The decision to refer a student to Teen Court will be made by a school official and/or by a law enforcement officer. A hearing is held and constructive sanctions are determined by a jury of the

students' peers. Failure to successfully complete sanctions imposed by Teen Court could result in additional consequences at school and/or arrest for the offense.

In addition to Teen Court, a student may face appropriate disciplinary consequences administered by school personnel.

### **Telephone Use**

Telephones are off-limits during school hours and are not to be used until after school, unless a staff member grants permission. If the call is for an emergency, students must check with their classroom teacher for assistance before requesting a pass to the office.

**Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Violations** involve the possession or use of tobacco products, e-cigarettes, or paraphernalia (such as lighters) by students. This policy applies when students are at school or at any school-related activity or event, or while traveling to or from school or any school-related activity or event. Prohibited products include cigarettes, e-cigarettes and other vaping devices, cigars, or tobacco in any other form, including smokeless tobacco that is loose, cut, shredded, ground, powdered, compressed, or leaf tobacco.

### **Transfers**

Transfers may be requested (using Form 131, Elementary/Middle School Transfer Request) by parents/legal guardians whose school or work obligations require sitter supervision of their child or for students who have specific academic or emotional reasons to request enrollment at a school other than their neighborhood attendance school. Approvals are for one year only and the parent/legal guardian must complete a new application for the following school year. Parents will be notified when a decision has been made regarding the transfer. Transportation may be provided when a route exists that can accommodate the transfer. Otherwise, transportation must be provided by the parent/guardian.

### **Twenty-first Century Scholars**

The Twenty-first Century Scholars Program began in 1990 as Indiana's way of raising the educational aspirations of low and moderate-income families. The program aims to ensure that all Indiana families can afford a college education for their children. Students can sign up for the program in seventh, or eighth grade. Students who qualify can receive up to four years of undergraduate college tuition to attend an eligible Indiana public or private college, university, or proprietary institution.

For more information or an application, please contact the middle school counseling office or <https://scholars.in.gov>.

### **Visitors**

The Michigan City Area Schools welcomes parents and visitors during school hours. In order to ensure the safety of our students, the corporation screens individuals entering the building.

Visitors/Parents must enter through the front doors of the school. All other outside doors are locked during the school day. Michigan City Area Schools uses the Raptor Visitor Management System in all schools to improve security for students and staff. The Raptor system tracks who is in school buildings, and allows MCAS to screen visitors, contractors, and volunteers. Upon entering a school, all visitors are asked to present an ID such as a Driver's License, which can either be scanned or manually entered into the system. If a parent or guardian for any reason does not have a US government-issued ID, the school



staff member can use any form of identification and manually enter the person's name into the Raptor system. The Raptor system checks the visitor's name and date of birth for comparison with a national database of registered sex offenders. The registered sex offender database is the only official database checked by the Raptor system. No other data from the ID is gathered or recorded and the information is not shared with any outside agency. Once entry is approved, Raptor issues a badge that identifies the visitor, the date, and the purpose of their visit. Upon leaving the school, the visitor should again report to the school office, and will be checked out of the system. A visitor's badge will not be necessary for those who visit our schools simply to drop off an item in the office or pick up paperwork. In addition, MCAS does not use this system for large events open to the public, such as school awards programs or performances.

Visitors may be denied access to the building if, in the judgment of a principal, the visitor presents a physical risk or a substantial disruption to the educational process. At times, principals may issue "no trespass" letters to individuals who fulfill these criteria.

### **Volunteers**

MCAS values the many contributions of school volunteers. For the safety of all students, all volunteers must complete a Volunteer Application and undergo a criminal background check. This includes chaperones for field trips. Volunteer Applications are available in the school office.

### **Withdrawal / Transfer Procedures**

Compulsory education is mandatory until age 18. Per IC 20-33-2-28.5, a student of at least 16 years of age but less than 18 years of age who is seeking to withdraw from school prior to graduation must make a request to the school in writing. Students must also provide written parental consent to the withdrawal, complete an exit interview, receive written consent from the school principal, and meet all other Indiana statutory requirements.

Parents who are seeking to transfer their child outside the MCAS district must complete a Student Withdrawal Form.

Parents who are seeking to transfer their child within the MCAS district must complete Form 131, the Elementary/Middle School Transfer Request form.

# **MIDDLE SCHOOL CODE OF RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR**

## **Philosophy**

The primary focus of the Michigan City Area Schools is to create and maintain safe and caring schools that promote high expectations for behavior and learning, responsible choices, and success for all.

As students mature from childhood to adolescence to young adulthood, our practice will be to initially teach children to understand how their actions affect themselves and others, and that expectations for acceptable behavior are based on our culture and civilization. We will guide children to assume increasing responsibility for making decisions for their individual behavior based upon the laws and rules of our community and society.

Through our actions with students, we will demonstrate and model compassion, kindness, and integrity so that our children learn how to make good decisions, resolve conflicts peacefully, and work together cooperatively. We believe that students have a right to attend school without fear and should be able to express themselves in their words and actions as individuals. However, this right to express oneself cannot be harmful, disrespectful, or disruptive to others or to the educational process.

## **Rights and Responsibilities**

When a student fails to meet expectations or makes inappropriate choices, the student will be subject to a series of interventions and/or consequences with the goal of improving future behaviors. Behaviors that occur outside of school but that have the effect of disrupting the educational process are subject to the consequences covered in this handbook.

At each school, the staff, using Positive Behavior Supports, and through the Response to Instruction Team, will develop and implement a series of interventions for the general population and individual students as needed to promote the goals of this Code.

When a student engages in actions considered irresponsible, the following process will occur:

Students will be afforded Minimum Due Process, which is defined as:

- The student will be informed of the alleged violation of this Code of Responsible Behavior;
- The student will have an opportunity to respond to the accusation;
- The student will be informed of the consequences for this action.

In assessing the consequence for the student, the age of the student, the frequency of the misbehavior, and the seriousness of the situation will all be taken into account.

Parents/guardians will be informed of the administration of student due process. The school will work together with the parent/guardian to monitor and correct irresponsible and inappropriate actions.

Schools will follow due process in instances of suspension (whereby a student is separated from school attendance for a period of not more than ten school days) and expulsion (a denial of the right of a student to take part in any school function for any period greater than ten school days).

Any student recommended for expulsion shall be entitled to Formal Due Process as provided by law. Formal Due Process requires a written statement and notification to parent that the school intends to seek expulsion and the parent/guardian has a right to a due process hearing with a Hearing Examiner.

The disciplinary interventions and/or consequences for Special Needs students will take into account the unique circumstances of their Individual Educational Plan and any behavior intervention plan and will be subject to procedural safeguards in accordance with state and federal regulations including Indiana's Article 7 and the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

### **Consequences for Irresponsible Actions**

The following is a list of actions subject to disciplinary action. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive, but is a general list of actions that do not meet expectations for responsible behaviors, or are highly disruptive or illegal. While the **Levels of Behavior** are designed to follow a logical progression, the final determination of these responses rests with the building administration, who will take into consideration the results of any investigation and all relevant facts. Responses for an irresponsible action will always involve consequences and may involve other interventions as well.

Generally, Level One behaviors are behaviors that do not require administrator intervention and can be resolved at the point of contact between staff and students. Level Two and Three behaviors require a disciplinary referral. At that point, resolution rests with the administrator assigned to the behavior subject to all applicable due process requirements and within the general framework of possible consequences and responses.

**(continued next page)**

## Level One Behaviors

<i><b>Definition</b></i>	<i><b>Examples</b></i>	<i><b>Possible Response(s)</b></i>	<i><b>Possible Consequences</b></i>
<b>Behaviors that:</b>  <u><b>do not</b></u> <b>significantly</b> <b>violate the rights</b> <b>of others</b>  <i><b>and</b></i>  <u><b>do not</b></u> <b>endanger</b> <b>the safety of self</b> <b>or others</b>  <i><b>and</b></i>  <u><b>do not</b></u> <b>appear to</b> <b>be chronic</b>  <i><b>and</b></i>  <u><b>do not</b></u> <b>require</b> <b>administrator</b> <b>involvement</b>	<b>procedure violation</b> <i><b>(an isolated incident)</b></i> <b>academic dishonesty</b> <b>classroom disruption</b> <b>dishonesty</b> <b>dress code violation</b> <b>horseplay</b> <b>inappropriate use of</b> <b>equipment</b> <b>(technology)</b> <b>inappropriate use of</b> <b>lockers</b> <b>littering</b> <b>loitering</b> <b>possession of electronic</b> <b>equipment</b> <b>refusing to follow</b> <b>directives</b> <b>tardy to class</b> <b>unauthorized presence</b> <b>in unsupervised area</b> <b>using inappropriate</b> <b>language</b>	<b>Inform student of</b> <b>violation</b>  <b>Additional practice of</b> <b>correct behavior</b>  <b>Closer</b> <b>monitoring/proximity</b>  <b>Contact parent if</b> <b>necessary</b>  <b>Acknowledge</b> <b>appropriate</b> <b>behavior</b>  <b>Nonverbal/verbal cue</b> <b>to correct behavior</b>  <b>Refer to counselor</b>  <b>Review/reteach</b> <b>expected behavior</b>  <b>Seat change</b>  <b>Teacher conference</b> <b>with student</b>	<b>After-school detention</b>  <b>Class time-out</b>  <b>In-class time-out</b>  <b>Loss of privileges</b>  <b>Lunch detention</b>  <b>Parent Contact</b>  <b>Redirection</b>  <b>Required</b> <b>Parent/Student/Team</b> <b>conference</b>  <b>Restitution</b>

## Level Two Behaviors

<i>Definition</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Possible Response(s)</i>	<i>Possible Consequences</i>
<p><b>Behaviors that:</b></p> <p><b><u>are chronic</u> Level One behaviors</b></p> <p><b><i>or</i></b></p> <p><b><u>violate</u> the rights of others</b></p> <p><b><i>or</i></b></p> <p><b><u>may</u> endanger the safety of self or others</b></p> <p><b><i>and</i></b></p> <p><b><u>require</u> administrator involvement</b></p>	<p>all Level One behaviors when considered chronic</p> <p>electronic equipment at school</p> <p>excessive absences</p> <p>extortion</p> <p>fight instigation/provocation</p> <p>forgery and/or deception</p> <p>gambling</p> <p>inappropriate language to peers</p> <p>libel/slander</p> <p>missed detentions</p> <p>obscenity</p> <p>insubordination/disrespect</p> <p>public displays of affection</p> <p>tobacco/vaping violations</p> <p>truancy</p> <p>vandalism/theft: minor</p>	<p>Inform student of violation</p> <p>Reteach appropriate behavior with practice</p> <p>Contact local agencies that can provide support, may include police contact or Teen Court referral</p> <p>Complete appropriate documentation</p> <p>Parent contact</p> <p>Refer to MTSS Team</p> <p>Refer to counselor</p> <p>Responsible Behavior Plan</p>	<p>Academic Alternative for class period/white slip</p> <p>Academic Alternative for full day/discipline referral</p> <p>After-school detention</p> <p>Loss of privileges</p> <p>Lunch detention</p> <p>Restitution</p> <p>Required Parent/Team/Student conference</p> <p>Required Parent/Administration/Student conference</p> <p>Out-of-School suspension</p> <p>Social probation</p>

### Level Three Behaviors

<i>Definition</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Possible Response(s)</i>	<i>Possible Consequences</i>
<p><b>Behaviors that: <u>are chronic</u> Level Two behaviors</b></p> <p><i>or</i></p> <p><b><u>violate</u> district or state policies or laws</b></p> <p><i>or</i></p> <p><b><u>endanger</u> safety of self or others</b></p> <p><i>and</i></p> <p><b><u>require</u> administrator involvement and possible external assistance</b></p>	<p>arson</p> <p>bomb threats</p> <p>bullying/intimidation/ harassment/hazing</p> <p>drugs/alcohol violation</p> <p>drug paraphernalia</p> <p>false alarms</p> <p>fighting/assault/physic al aggression</p> <p>gang-related activity</p> <p>harassment: sexual, ethnic, racial, gender, or religious</p> <p>inappropriate language to staff</p> <p>threat against or attack on others</p> <p>sexual harassment</p> <p>technology-related offenses/cyberbullying/ digital images/sexting</p> <p>unlawful activity</p> <p>vandalism/theft: major</p> <p>weapon/explosive devices</p>	<p>Crisis screening</p> <p>Complete appropriate documentation</p> <p>Office referral</p> <p>Contact local agencies that can provide support, may include police contact or Teen Court referral</p> <p>Contact parent/ guardian</p> <p>Refer to MTSS team</p> <p>Refer to counselor</p> <p>Responsible Behavior Plan developed</p> <p>Required Parent/ Administration conference</p>	<p>Academic Alternative</p> <p>Day Reporting</p> <p>SCALE</p> <p>Expulsion (<i>requires all aspects of formal due process</i>)</p> <p>Loss of privileges</p> <p>Out-of-school suspension</p> <p>Restitution</p> <p>Student conference</p> <p>Social probation</p>

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Academic Alternative (AA)** is an alternative placement for students who impede the learning of others or who are behaviorally at risk. Students in AA maintain classroom assignments and remain in school but are isolated from other school activities. The building principal has oversight responsibilities for the program. AA is staffed with a qualified person who supervises and serves as a supportive resource for students. Students may be sent to the AA location as a class “time-out” or a student may spend a longer period of time in AA. Frequent referrals to AA will also result in referral to the school counselor and/or the MTSS team.

**Academic Dishonesty** includes the following behaviors:

- Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any assignment or exam.
- Using external assistance on an “in class” or “take home” examination, unless the instructor has authorized such assistance. This includes (but is not limited to) the use of tutors, books, notes, the Internet, calculators, and electronic devices.
- Submitting substantial portions of the same academic work for credit more than once without permission of the teacher.
- Allowing others to conduct research or to prepare work without authorization from the instructor. This includes (but is not limited to) commercial term-paper companies, web sites, and past papers/work of other students.
- Collaborating with other students on a single project and turning in multiple copies that are represented as individual work.
- Falsifying or inventing information or citations in an assignment or exam.
- Plagiarism. A student must not adopt or reproduce the ideas, words, photographs, illustrations, or statements of another person without acknowledgment. A student must give credit whenever quoting another person’s words; using another person’s idea, opinion, or theory; or borrowing facts, statistics, or other illustrative material — unless the information is common knowledge.
- Stealing, changing, destroying, or impeding another student’s work. Impeding another student’s work includes (but is not limited to) the theft or destruction of common resources to deprive others of the information they contain.
- Helping or attempting to help another student to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

**Arson** is the act of setting fire to the school or any part of the school or school premises.

**Bomb Threat** includes any act that indicates the presence of a bomb or other destructive material when in fact there is none.

### **Bullying and Intimidation**

**Under Indiana Law**, “bullying” means overt, unwanted, repeated acts or gestures, including verbal or written communications or images transmitted in any manner (including digitally or electronically), physical acts committed, aggression, or any other behaviors, that are committed by a student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the targeted student and create for the targeted student an objectively hostile school environment that:

- (1) Places the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to the targeted student’s academic performance; or
- (2) Has a substantially detrimental effect on the targeted student’s physical or mental health;
- (3) Has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student’s academic performance; or
- (4) Has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeting student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, and privileges provided by the school

School staff will comply with the reporting and investigation requirements in Indiana Law. Consistent with Indiana Law, every school will enable an anonymous reporting procedure. Witnesses to the bullying or intimidation of another student are required to report it to a staff member. Failure to report bullying and/or intimidation may be cause for disciplinary action.

**Class Disruption** is any combination of actions that interfere with, interrupt, or create disorder to the extent that instruction cannot take place.

**Cyberbullying** – See “Bullying” and “Technology-Related Offenses.”

**Day Reporting** is a program conducted in conjunction with the LaPorte County Juvenile Services Center and the Juvenile Court system. Day Reporting provides an alternative setting for students with discipline infractions that would merit expulsion. The program offers therapeutic and academic services for students in a secure setting.

**Dishonesty** includes those occasions in which students choose to be untruthful or fail to disclose information.

**Dress Code Violations** involve attire that does not follow the dress code outlined in the Student Handbook section of this document. Dress code violations also involve attire or accessories that disrupt the educational environment, are destructive to school property, or are a threat to safety and health.

**Drug and Alcohol Violations** involve selling, purchasing, possessing, consuming, or distributing alcohol, illegal drugs, or controlled substances. Participating in a plan to sell, purchase, process, possess, consume, or distribute these substances is also prohibited – including prescription medication prescribed for someone else. Being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or any controlled substance or any prescription medication prescribed for someone else is prohibited. The possession of look-alike drugs is also prohibited. These rules apply on school property or at any school-related activity or event, or while traveling to or from school or any school-related activity or event.

**Drug Paraphernalia Violations** involve selling, purchasing, possessing, distributing, or participating in a plan to sell, purchase, possess, or distribute drug paraphernalia. This includes items associated with illegal drugs such as rolling papers, pipes, clips, razor blades, lighters, and hypodermic needles. Possession of these items at school or at any school-related activity or event, or while traveling to or from a school-related activity or event, is prohibited.

**Excessive Absences** - See the Handbook section of this document.

**Extortion** occurs when a student forces another student to give him or her something, including but not limited to money, through force or threats.

**False Alarms** are the actions of setting off an alarm or sprinkler system when there is no fire or emergency.

**Fight Instigation** includes instances in which a student or students motivate, encourage, or plan to fight or motivate/encourage others to fight.

**Fighting** includes instances in which harmful or offensive contact occurs with another person. Fighting can include but is not limited to assault, battery, and bruising.

**Fighting (Verbal)** - See “Provocation.”

**Forgery** is the alteration or falsification of documents (i.e., passes or permission slips) or signatures.

**Gambling** involves playing any games in which money or items of value can be won or lost.

**Gang-Related Activity** includes involvement in gangs or gang-related activities. No student on or near school property or at any school activity may show, wear, possess, use, display, or sell any clothing, jewelry,



emblem, image, symbol, or sign that may be viewed as evidence of membership in or affiliation with any gang. This includes any badge, symbol, or sign that may be present in anything in the student's possession while on school grounds or at a school-related activity. No student may commit any act or use any speech, either verbal or nonverbal (gestures, handshakes, etc.) showing membership or affiliation in a gang. No student shall use any speech or commit any act promoting the interests of any gang or gang activity, including but not limited to: recruiting others for membership in a gang; requesting any person to pay for protection or otherwise intimidating or threatening; inciting others to physical violence; or committing any other illegal act or violation of school policies.

### **Harassment: Sexual, Ethnic, Racial, Gender, or Religious**

**Sexual Harassment** consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other inappropriate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature by any student to another student, or by a student to a staff member. This includes conduct of a sexual nature that may include verbal or physical sexual advances and/or comments of a sexual nature regarding physical or personality characteristics. Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when the allegedly harassed student has indicated, by his or her conduct or verbal objection, that such conduct is unwelcome.

**Note: A student who has initially welcomed such conduct by active participation must give specific notice to the alleged harasser that such conduct is no longer welcome in order for subsequent conduct to be deemed unwelcome.**

**Sexual harassment** may include but is not limited to the following:

- Verbal harassment or abuse.
- Repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications.
- Unwelcome touching.
- Pressure for sexual activity.
- Suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, job, or promotion.

**Ethnic, racial, gender, or religious harassment** may include but is not limited to:

- Written or oral innuendos, comments, jokes, insults, threats, or disparaging remarks concerning a person's gender, race, national origin, religious beliefs, or disabilities directed toward a fellow student, staff member, or other person associated with the school corporation; or conducting a "campaign of silence" toward a fellow student, staff member, or other person associated with the corporation.
- Placing objects, pictures, or graphic commentaries in the school environment or making insulting or threatening gestures toward a fellow student, staff member, or other person associated with the school corporation.
- Any intimidating or disparaging action such as hitting, hissing, or spitting on a fellow student, staff member, or other person associated with the corporation.

### **False Reporting of Harassment**

Students who knowingly file false charges against an employee or a student in an attempt to demean, harass, abuse or embarrass that individual shall be subject to disciplinary action.

**Hazing** is an abusive, often humiliating form of initiation into or affiliation with a group (such as organizations, clubs, and athletic teams). It includes any willful action taken or situation created that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health of another. Urging or encouraging hazing is also prohibited.

**Horseplay** involves such actions as pretend/play fighting, tapping, poking, smacking or pinching, pulling on others' clothing, or placing hands or feet on others.

**Inappropriate Language or Gestures** includes behaviors and actions directed toward students/staff that are reasonably considered profane, vulgar, lewd, or obscene.

**Insubordination and/or Disrespect** includes those behaviors by which students refuse to respond to or follow the directions of staff members and/or act disrespectfully toward staff members. Examples of this kind of behavior include but are not limited to leaving a classroom without permission or obstructing staff in the performance of their duties.

**Libel and Slander** are two forms of defamation. **Libel** consists of printed communication, whereas slander consists of oral communication. The actions of **Libel** and **Slander** consist of a false statement that is printed or broadcast about an individual that brings that person into public ridicule, contempt, or hatred, or inflicts injury. (Also see Technology-Related Offenses.)

**Littering** includes behavior that causes an area to be in disorder or in an unsanitary, unhealthy condition.

**Lockers (Inappropriate Use).** Students should not misuse or abuse their lockers, as it will be considered an act of vandalism. Students should not share their lockers or give their locker combinations to others.

**Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS)** is the umbrella for other support systems. MTSS encompasses academic, behavioral, and social emotional support for all students in the areas of Response To Intervention (RTI), Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS). Students in general education and those receiving special education and related services participate in MTSS. Each school has an established MTSS Team that designs, implements, and monitors individual student intervention plans.

**Obscenity** includes those items or behaviors that an average person, when viewing the material or behavior and applying community standards for children of a relevant age, would find offensive and lacking in serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

**Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)** is a school-wide approach to teaching and reinforcing school expectations. PBIS allows the school to develop and maintain a positive atmosphere that fosters social and academic success for all students. For additional information, see the Handbook section of this document.

**Portable Electronic Equipment** includes cellphones, pagers, laser pointers, iPods, or any other electronic device. (See Technology-Related Offenses.)

**Procedure Violation** is any behavior or action that does not follow established school-wide expectations.

**Provocation** includes verbal confrontations with a student or staff member, fight instigation, and other aggressive gestures and behaviors.

**Public Displays of Affection** (other than the holding of hands) are not appropriate for the school environment. Students should not, while on school grounds or at school functions, show affection to one another in a manner that is immodest and/or draws undue attention to themselves.

**Responsible Behavior Plan** is an individualized plan that helps students set goals for positive behaviors. This plan is created in conjunction with the school counselor, teacher and/or MTSS team and is shared with parents.

**SCALE (Student-Centered Alternative Learning Environment)** is an alternative learning program based at the Elston Building. This program may serve as an alternative to expulsion for some some students.

**Sexting** - See “Technology-Related Offenses.”

**Social Probation** is the limiting of privileges for student participation in/attendance at school-related activities and events. Students may be placed on social probation for a period of time not to exceed the remainder of the school year. While on social probation, students are not to participate in or attend any extracurricular activities and are only to be on Michigan City Area Schools property during school hours. Reasons for being placed on social probation include, but are not limited to:

- Academic failure (Failing two or more classes in a nine-week period)
- Excessive absences (Failing two or more classes in a grading period due to excessive absences)
- Truancy
- Excessive tardiness
- Excessive behavioral referrals
- Actions that lead to suspension, Day Reporting, or expulsion
- Misbehavior at an extracurricular activity

Students who violate their social probation will be subject to disciplinary action including suspension, Day Reporting, and/or expulsion.

**Tardiness to Class** is the act of not being in the assigned classroom when the class begins. Excessive tardiness to class will result in disciplinary action, which may include detention, social probation, AA, suspension, Day Reporting, and/or expulsion.

#### **Technology-Related Offenses:**

Please refer to the Michigan City Area Schools Technology Acceptable Use/Email Guidelines (Appendix B) for expectations and descriptions surrounding the use of MCAS technology. In addition, the behaviors below are subject to Leveled Responses under the MCAS Code of Responsible Behavior.

**Electronic Devices:** Middle school students must turn cellphones and other portable electronic devices to the “off” position and must keep them in their lockers until after the conclusion of their school day. Electronic devices used during the school day will be confiscated. Students are not permitted to use cellphones on the school bus.

**Digital Images:** Electronic devices capable of taking and/or transmitting digital photographic images can create a risk factor in locker rooms, restrooms, private areas, and other locations where students and/or staff have a reasonable expectation of privacy. In addition, because of their capacity to be used to carry out acts of academic dishonesty, use of electronic devices for the purposes of taking digital photographic images in the school is strictly prohibited.

**Cyberbullying** occurs when a student harasses, mistreats, or makes fun of another person online or while using a personal communication device or other electronic device. Violations off campus that cause a disruption of the school environment are subject to appropriate school discipline.

**Sexting** is sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually suggestive nude or nearly-nude photos or sexually suggestive messages through any personal communication device or electronic equipment.

**Threat or Attack Against Others** involves any display of aggressive or negative gestures toward another individual. Written, verbal, or physical behavior that places another person in reasonable fear of harm is prohibited. Actions that have the effect of threatening, insulting, demeaning, or intimidating in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school and the school environment are also prohibited. Violations off campus that cause a disruption of the school environment are subject to appropriate school discipline.

**Teen Court** is a program of the Youth Service Bureau Big Brothers Big Sisters of LaPorte County. Students may be referred to Teen Court, with the consent of the student and parent(s), as an alternative to arrest.

**Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Violations** involve the possession or use of tobacco products, e-cigarettes or paraphernalia (such as lighters) by students. This policy applies when students are at school or at any school-related activity or event, or while traveling to or from school or any school-related activity or event. Prohibited products include cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and other vaping devices, cigars, or tobacco in any other form, including smokeless tobacco that is loose, cut, shredded, ground, powdered, compressed, or leaf tobacco.

**Truancy** is a student's absence from school or class without a parent/legal guardian's or the school's knowledge. Any absence that is not phoned in or verified by a parent or legal guardian within three (3) days of the student's return will be labeled as truant. Truancies accumulate throughout the school year. Should a student be found truant from school, the child's parent will be contacted and relevant legal authorities, such as Project Attend, may be notified. Students who are truant may be subject to disciplinary action.

**Unauthorized Presence in Unsupervised Areas** is defined as being in an area without prior authorization from staff. Examples include but are not limited to athletic facilities, locker rooms, auditoriums, science labs, computer labs, resource centers, and classrooms.

**Unlawful Activity** includes any activity or behavior that violates the laws of the State of Indiana, or conviction under the laws of any other state in the United States, that takes place either while school is in session or on weekends, holidays, school breaks, and the summer period when a student may not be attending classes or other school functions. A student may be suspended or expelled for engaging in unlawful activity on or off school grounds if the unlawful activity may reasonably be considered to be an interference with school purposes or an educational function, or the student's removal is necessary to restore order to protect persons on school property. Note: **Trespassing** is considered an unlawful activity; students who have been suspended or expelled are not permitted on school grounds.

**Vandalism/Theft** includes behaviors such as theft, destruction of school property, and possession or sale of stolen materials. Note: Vandalism that causes a loss of more than \$300 is considered **major vandalism**. Vandalism that causes a loss of less than \$300 is considered **minor vandalism**.

**Weapons/Explosive Devices:** No student shall possess, handle, or transmit any weapon or destructive device while on school property. The following devices, while not a complete list, are considered weapons or explosive devices:

1. any weapon that will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or forced air;
2. any destructive device that is an explosive, incendiary, or poison gas bomb, grenade, or rocket having a propellant charge of more than 4 ounces;
3. any missile, rocket, or similar device having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one quarter ounce;
4. any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into a destructive device and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled;
5. any explosive, incendiary, or overpressure device that is configured as a bomb, a grenade, a rocket with a propellant charge of more than 4 ounces, a missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one quarter ounce, a mine, a Molotov cocktail, or any device that is substantially similar to any of these items;
6. any knife, taser, electronic stun gun, equipment, chemical substance, or other material that in the manner it is used, or could ordinarily be used, or is intended to be used, is readily capable of causing serious bodily injury;
7. bullets or gun ammunition of any kind.

8. any toy or look-alike weapon that, in the judgment of school staff, can be used to deceive others into believing the weapon is real.

## **Appendix A: Student Transportation Guidelines Michigan City Area Schools**

### **OVERVIEW**

It is recognized that excessive distances and extraordinary or excessive hazards to pedestrian safety can affect access to an equal educational opportunity for some children in the school district. Therefore, it shall be the practice of the Michigan City Area Schools to provide safe, economical transportation to those children affected by these conditions. The Board of School Trustees retains the right to eliminate all, or portions of, transportation should conditions warrant such an action.

The primary purpose of the transportation system is to provide transportation for eligible students (see “Eligibility” below) from the vicinity of their homes to the school they attend. Use of transportation equipment for field trips, extracurricular activities, and other authorized educational, cultural, and recreational activities is permitted when it does not conflict with the primary purpose of transportation.

In organizing and operating the transportation system, all applicable statutes and rules and regulations of the State of Indiana, or its agencies, shall be strictly adhered to and all recommendations and suggestions shall be considered carefully.

In all cases, the primary consideration shall be to provide safe transportation to eligible students. Careful consideration shall also be given to efficiency and economy of operation.

Since school bus transportation is provided only for certain eligible students, **it shall be considered a privilege to be enjoyed only as long as they accept responsibility for their own conduct.** The student is to carefully follow all rules and regulations and promptly respond to the directions and requests of the bus driver. Most students will find it necessary to walk some distance to the designated bus stop.

School transportation equipment shall be used only for the transportation of students to and from school, extracurricular school activities, or for other purposes specifically authorized by the Board of School Trustees.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

Any elementary students living one and one-half (1½) miles, more or less, from the school they attend and secondary (middle school and high school) students living two (2) miles more or less from the school they attend, are eligible for transportation to and from school. However, the Transportation Director or their designee, with the approval of the Superintendent, may determine that transportation service should be extended to selected students within these stated distances.

A student identified with a disability in accordance with Article 7 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act may be provided special transportation as a related service. Accommodations for such transportation are specified within the student’s Individual Education Program (IEP).

Students with a temporary medical condition that necessitates the use of crutches, wheelchairs, or other aids must call the Transportation department so that temporary accommodations for transportation can be made.

Persons other than eligible students shall not be provided transportation. Exceptions to this rule will be made only by the Building Administrator or their designee.

## **TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES**

### **I. TRANSPORTATION SERVICE LIMITATIONS**

- A. Bus routes shall be planned to achieve maximum safety of operations with reasonable economy.
1. Bus routes will not be extended, or stops scheduled, unless an eligible elementary student would otherwise be required to walk in excess of one quarter ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) mile to a bus stop or a secondary student in excess of one-half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) mile to a bus stop.
  2. A bus will not make more than four (4) stops in any one mile unless safety requirements make additional stops necessary.
  3. In establishing routes in new or existing residential subdivisions, buses will be scheduled to use perimeter routes and/or main thoroughfares. Students will be required to walk to bus stops in accordance with Sections 1 and 2 above to the extent walking safely permits.
  4. In apartment complexes and trailer parks, bus service shall be provided off the public road onto the private property only in the interest of safety. Departure from the public road in such instances will be only to the extent of a turnaround or for a limited number of stops, where space permits.
  5. Buses will not be routed on dead-end roads. Exceptions will be student safety and availability of an adequate turnaround.
- B. Bus routes are to be designed to keep individual riding distance and time to a practical minimum.
- C. In setting up bus schedules, it shall be the objective to arrange for buses to arrive at school approximately ten (10) minutes prior to the scheduled time for the beginning of classes in the morning and to leave approximately five (5) minutes after the scheduled dismissal time.

### **II. SERVICE REDUCTIONS**

When conditions warrant, the Superintendent, along with the Transportation Director or their designee, shall develop a plan for reduction of transportation services subject to approval by the Board of School Trustees.

### **III. OPERATION OF THE SYSTEM**

- A. The measurement of the mileage to determine eligibility for transportation shall be the responsibility of the Director of Transportation or their designee. This measurement shall be accepted as conclusive evidence of eligibility for transportation.
- B. Each eligible student will be assigned to use a specific bus and bus stop. Any exceptions must be approved by the Director of Transportation or their designee.
- C. The scheduled number of students assigned to ride a standard bus will not exceed 100% of its rated passenger capacity. When circumstances result in overload, an adjustment in the routes and stops will be made.

D. The Director of Transportation or their designee may grant permission for a student to ride a different bus or use a different scheduled stop. Such permission may be granted for a specified period of time subject to the following conditions and limitations:

1. The receipt of a written request of a parent or guardian.
2. Upon authorization of the building Administrator.
3. The request for change may not result in the overcrowding of any bus, altering of any regular bus route, stop, or time schedule, or the creation of a new route.
4. The purpose of such special permission requested shall be:
  - a. To participate in a regularly organized group activity for children of school age that is educational in nature.
  - b. To relieve a temporary situation that would otherwise result in a severe hardship on a student in getting to and from school.
  - c. For other emergencies as shall be approved by the Director of Transportation or their designee.
5. Drivers are to transport only their regularly assigned passengers unless other authorization is received from the Director of Transportation or their designee.
6. In an emergency, written request may be waived. Such emergency requests should be made to the child's building administrator, who will be responsible for coordinating necessary actions with the Director of Transportation or their designee.

E. The Director of Transportation or their designee will maintain a comprehensive bus safety education program for students. The program includes, but is not limited to, instruction in rules of behavior when riding, boarding, and exiting the bus at stops, and emergency bus evacuation drills.

F. The safety of walking conditions for students ineligible for bus transportation will be reviewed by the Director of Transportation or their designee. Actions to alleviate unsafe walking conditions may include coordinated actions with local governments, provision of bus service, or other alternatives. The Director of Transportation or their designee will make recommendations to the Superintendent of Schools as specific problems arise.

## **V. BUS DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE**

Listed below are the expectations for students' behavior while they are being transported by school bus or any school vehicles. These rules apply to any trip under school sponsorship. Any violation of these rules will result in the driver proceeding with the steps listed under "Consequences" below.

Michigan City Area Schools believes parents must monitor and accept responsibility for student behavior at the bus stop.

### **Bus Rules**

A. Prior to loading (on the road and at the school) students are required to:

1. Be at their assigned bus stop at least five (5) minutes prior to the scheduled pick up time.



Note: Buses may arrive five minutes before OR after the scheduled pickup time, due to traffic conditions. The driver is responsible for keeping the bus on schedule and cannot wait if a student is not present.

2. Stay off the roadway or street while waiting for the bus. Bus riders are to conduct themselves in a safe manner while waiting.
3. Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop and the stop arm is extended before attempting to board.
4. Board in an orderly manner and immediately take their seats.
5. Practice rules of safe behavior as they go to and from their assigned bus stop.

B. While on the bus students are required to:

1. Keep all body parts and possessions inside the bus.
2. Assist in keeping the bus clean and sanitary. Trash goes in the waste container at the front of the bus.
3. Talk quietly and avoid acting in any manner that distracts the driver's attention away from driving. This includes but is not limited to teasing others, horseplay, throwing objects, etc.
4. Refrain from tampering with any bus equipment.
5. Keep books, lunches, and other articles in their possession.
6. Sit in the seat assigned by the driver. Students are to remain in their seats while the bus is in motion and will be held responsible for the condition of the assigned seats surrounding them.
7. Be **ABSOLUTELY** quiet while approaching a railroad crossing. Students will remain quiet until the bus has cleared all sets of railroad tracks.
8. In case of an emergency, remain in their assigned seat on the bus unless instructed by the driver to leave.
9. Refrain from eating or drinking, chewing gum or having any other objects in their mouths when on the bus. Glass bottles are not permitted on the bus.
10. Refrain from bringing live animals on the bus.
11. Turn off cellphones. Radios, iPods, and other electronic listening devices may be used with earphones.
11. Keep musical instruments on their laps or under their seats.
12. Refrain from the use of profanity or offensive language.
13. Board and get off at the regularly-assigned bus stop.
14. Use emergency bus exits **only** at the direction of the driver.
15. Close windows before getting off the bus.

C. After leaving the bus students are required to:

1. Cross the road by passing at least ten (10) feet in front of the school bus, only after looking in both directions to be sure no traffic is approaching.
2. **NEVER** cross behind the bus for any reason.
3. **NEVER** attempt to retrieve an item from under the bus for any reason.
4. Move immediately away from the bus and refrain from hitting or throwing things at the bus.

## **VI. DISCIPLINARY PROCESS**

Drivers will make every effort to maintain appropriate student behavior on the bus. When these efforts are no longer effective, the driver will submit a written referral to the Transportation Director.

- A. The first (1st) referral will result in parent contact in all but the most serious infractions.
- B. The second (2nd) referral will result in parent contact and a formal written warning in all but the most serious infractions.
- C. After the second (2nd) referral, a student who violates these rules shall be subject to disciplinary action that may include a meeting with the parents, loss of riding privileges for a period (determined by the severity of the infraction) or permanent loss of bus-riding privileges.

At any point in the disciplinary process, the Transportation Director may refer a disciplinary situation to the school principal. The principal and the director may work together to develop and enforce disciplinary consequences at school for bus-related behavior.

**Please note that suspension of bus privileges does not mean suspension from school. Parents are required to transport their children to school in the event of a bus suspension. Lack of school attendance will be considered truancy. However, bus-related behavior may lead to a school suspension. At that point, the attendance requirements for school suspensions apply.**

## **VII. SERIOUS IRRESPONSIBLE BEHAVIORS**

In cases of more serious irresponsible behavior, in addition to a meeting with the parents and possible loss of riding privileges, students shall be subject to disciplinary measures provided for in the Code of Responsible Behavior, including but not limited to suspension or expulsion from school. In cases where the law has been broken, penalties may further result in a report being filed with local law enforcement.

**Serious Irresponsible Behaviors** may include (but are not limited to):

- A. Possession of Fireworks
- B. Extortion and Intimidation
- C. Gambling

- D. Throwing Objects
- E. Damaging Personal Property
- F. Disorderly Conduct
- G. Vandalism (Student or parent will be financially responsible for damage to seats, windows, etc.)
- H. Insubordination
- I. False Alarm/Bomb Threat
- J. Possession of Weapons
- K. Fighting/Battery
- L. Tobacco, Drugs, or Alcohol

## **VIII. APPEAL PROCEDURES**

In any aspect of the application of the provisions of this policy, a parent, guardian, or adult student may appeal the decision of any school employee. A decision of a bus driver may be appealed to the Director of Transportation within five (5) working days. A decision of the Director of Transportation may be appealed to the Superintendent or their designee within five (5) working days and, if necessary, to the Board of School Trustees within ten (10) working days. The appellant should be prepared in every instance to both meet with the official involved and submit the specifics of the case in writing, if required. The response of such appeals at each level will be rendered within ten (10) working days.

## **Appendix B: Technology Acceptable Use/Email Guidelines Michigan City Area Schools**

Because of the ever-changing nature of technology, not all possible violations can be covered in this policy. Nevertheless, the Michigan City Area Schools is ready to take immediate action when individuals violate system integrity. **The use of computers is a privilege, not a right. *Violations may result in a loss of computer access as well as other disciplinary and/or legal action.***

Students accept personal responsibility for all activity while using a computer or other school owned equipment. ***The student and parents will be held accountable for damage and repair costs.***

**The activities listed below are not permitted:**

1. Damaging or defacing the network, hardware, and/or software.
2. Sharing your password, using another person's password, or allowing another person to use the computer under your login.
3. Setting, changing, or removing passwords on any district computer or wireless device.
4. Giving personal information, such as complete name, phone number, address or identifiable photo, without permission from teacher and parent or guardian.
5. Accessing "Gaming sites" or the playing of games, chat rooms, bulletin boards, or instant messaging, except use of resources that have been assigned by the teacher.
6. Using the network for cheating, plagiarism, fraud, financial gain, or commercial purposes
7. Installing or downloading software, shareware, or freeware on school-owned equipment.
8. Viewing, sending, displaying, or transmitting offensive materials such as those that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, unsolicited or potentially offensive to some people.
9. **Cyberbullying** - defined as overt, repeated acts or gestures, including verbal or written communications transmitted; or any other behaviors committed by individuals or groups of people against another with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the other. **Violations off campus (regardless of whether using school owned equipment) that cause a disruption of the school environment are also subject to appropriate school discipline and/or legal action.**
10. Violating federal, state, or local laws, copyright laws, and/or license agreements.
11. Accessing files, information, or any other resources (hardware or software) to which you have not been given the specific right of access.
12. Engage in any other activity deemed inappropriate by the administration, or discovered by any staff that may cause or tend to cause substantial disruption to school activities.

*This is an evolving document. All additions and changes will become effective immediately upon posting to the MCAS district technology website. All changes to this document will be made through the MCAS K-12 Technology Committee.*

## **Uses for MCAS Student Email**

Email can be a powerful tool for students, increasing communication and collaboration. For example, teachers may send email to their students to communicate reminders and course content, to pose questions related to classwork, and for other instructional purposes. Students may send email to their teachers with questions or comments regarding class or to turn in an assignment. Students are encouraged to check their email at least once per day.

### **General Email Guidelines for Students**

Email is to be used for school-related communication only. Student email is also covered by the student Acceptable Use Policy. These guidelines cannot possibly cover all unacceptable activities because of the ever-changing nature of technology. MCAS staff will take immediate action when individuals violate school rules or abuse the technology.

#### **The activities listed below are not permitted:**

- Sending harassing email messages or content.
- Sending offensive email messages or content.
- Sending spam email messages or content.
- Sending email containing a virus or other malicious content.
- Sending or reading email at inappropriate times, such as during class instruction.
- Sending email to share test answers or promote cheating in any way.
- Using another person's account.

### **Limits on Email Senders and Recipients**

The Gmail accounts provided to our students are only for use within the school district. This is to provide another way for students to communicate with their teachers. The following limits are set on email use:

- MCAS students can email all staff.
- MCAS students cannot email anyone outside of the MCAS domain.
- MCAS students cannot receive email from outside of the MCAS domain.

Because no email can come in from outside of the school district, students will not receive spam, unsolicited messages, or anything inappropriate from the outside world. Also, students cannot send messages to people who are not staff or students in our district. Monitoring and filtering of email that is sent within our district is monitored and filtered based upon content. All student email passes through Google's Message Security system. Rules/filters are setup to monitor student email for profanity, harassment, and other inappropriate content.

Student email that is identified as inappropriate will be blocked from delivery, and instead may be sent to the school administration for review.

### **Consequences of Misuse of Email**

Use of the computer network and/or Internet is an integral part of research and class work, but abuse of this technology can result in loss of privileges. Students could also face additional disciplinary or legal action.

*This is an evolving document. All additions and changes will become effective immediately upon posting to the MCAS district technology website. All changes to this document will be made through the MCAS K-12 Technology Committee.*

Revised: May 2016

## Appendix C: Middle School Athletic Handbook

### Michigan City Area Schools

Michigan City Area Schools believes that middle school athletic programs should provide each child the opportunity to compete, develop skills, and experience success regardless of their ability and experience.

Interscholastic athletics provides an opportunity for adolescents to develop skills and to build teamwork and self-confidence, while encouraging healthy athletic competition. As in the classroom, students are expected to strive for and to achieve high standards.

#### **Sports offered by MCAS at the middle-school level may include:**

Basketball  
Cheerleading  
Cross Country  
Football  
Golf  
Swimming and Diving  
Tennis  
Track  
Volleyball  
Wrestling

**Eligibility:** Students in grades 7 and 8 will be eligible to participate in athletics after completing the following:

- ✓ current IHSA Physical Examination form
- ✓ MCAS Emergency Medical Authorization Form
- ✓ signed Student/Parent Handbook form

**Weight Requirements:** Decisions on eligibility and playing time due to an athlete's size will be at the discretion of coaches and the Athletic Director. Every effort will be made to include all students as part of a team, in some capacity.

**Academic Requirements:** To be eligible, a student must have a minimum of a 1.5 grade point average. Eligibility is determined at the first progress report of the school year and at subsequent grading periods.

**Behavior:** Student-athletes are expected to represent our school in the best possible way. Their conduct shall, in and out of school, (1) not embarrass, display a poor image, or discredit the school or (2) not create a disruptive influence on discipline, good order, morale, or the educational environment. Generally, if a participant receives an **in-school suspension** for any reason, they will be benched one game per incident. If a participant receives an **out-of-school suspension**, they will be benched one game per day of suspension. At the principal's discretion, these guidelines may be adjusted to reflect the seriousness of the offense. Participation in practices will be at the principal and coach's discretion. **Please see "Expectations for Participants" below for additional behavior expectations.**

**Who Will Play:** The coach and/or Athletic Director will establish all teams. During the season, coaches are encouraged to use all of their players. Students who are not at practice the day before a game will not start and may not play. Students not at school by the beginning of the second period the day of a game may not

be present at the game. Playing time is determined by coaches and is not negotiable. Note: If a student is assigned to one grade-level basketball team and wants to play for two, they may play a total of four quarters.

**Level Selections:** All players will practice together for at least the first week. The coaches will make the selection of players based on skill level, knowledge of the sport, coach-ability, work ethic, grade point average, and citizenship.

**Practice:** Practices will be determined by and only open to the Athletic Director, coaches, and building administrators.

**Schedules:** Copies of the playing schedule will be distributed to all athletes, parents, coaches, building administrators, and plant planning facilities at the start of the season.

**Parental Support:** Parents are encouraged to play an active role in supporting their children in athletics. In order to maintain a productive experience for your child, we ask that parents act in a responsible manner at games and contests.

### **EXPECTATIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL SPORTS**

**Playing athletics is a privilege and school always comes first. All participants are expected to conduct themselves in a manner becoming a Michigan City Area Schools' middle school athlete at all times both in and out of school.**

1. Participants will respect others on and off the courts and playing fields. Unsportsmanlike actions including taunting, trash-talking, profanity, obscene gestures, berating officials, and other forms of verbal or physical misconduct will not be tolerated.
2. Participants will display good sportsmanship on and off the courts and playing fields.
3. Participants will attend all scheduled practices and games and arrive at the scheduled time. Prior approval for an absence **MUST** be made with a coach.
4. Participants will care for the sports equipment that is used during practices and games.
5. Participants will dress appropriately for practice and games.
6. All electronic devices, including cell phones, will be locked in the participant's locker (if available) and must remain off during practices and games.
7. Participants will remain in the designated area of the practice or game the entire time until they are dismissed.
8. Participants will make sure that their transportation arrives promptly.
9. Participants will abide by all regular school rules.

**Consequences for any violation of these expectations will be at the discretion of the team coach, Athletic Director and Principal. They may include communication with parents, extra practice, benching of the student for part or all of games, and removal from the team,**