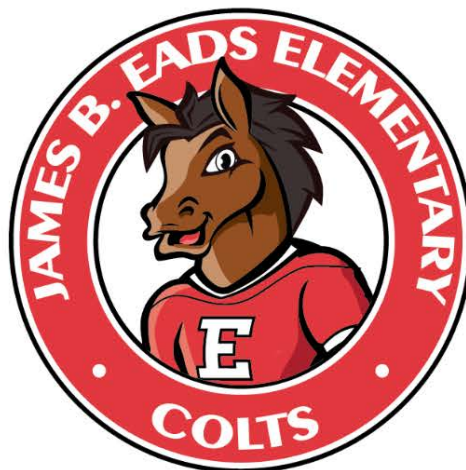


2025-2026



H A N D B O O K

## **EDUCATIONAL LEADERS**

### **BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES**

John Castro—773-531-4797  
Amy Sinder-219-487-9806  
Kyle Dempsey-219-384-3939  
Ingrid Schwarz Wolf—219-718-8283  
Kristen Smith-219-746-5288

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE**

836-9111

Superintendent of Schools  
Dr. Matthew Hicks

Assistant Superintendent  
Mrs. Colleen Bergren

Assistant Superintendent  
Mr. Steve Tripenfeldas

Director of Exceptional Needs  
Mrs. Colleen Bergren

Director of Computer Systems  
Mr. Jarek Pozdza

### **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OFFICES**

Eads Elementary School - 836-8635  
Mrs. Linda Bevil, Principal

Elliott Elementary School - 838-5250  
Jennifer Herold, Principal

Frank H. Hammond Elementary School - 838-2060  
Ms. Kelly Boersma, Principal

The School Town of Munster District Goals can be found at:

<https://www.munster.us/our-district/goals>

# **GENERAL INFORMATION**

## **SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES**

### **Eads Elementary School**

8000 Jackson Avenue

Munster IN 46321

All Munster residences West of Calumet Avenue.

### **Elliott Elementary School**

8718 White Oak Avenue

Munster IN 46321

All Munster residences East of Calumet Avenue and North of (including) Melbrook Drive.

### **Frank H. Hammond Elementary School**

1301 Fran-Lin Parkway

Munster IN 46321

All Munster residences East of Calumet Avenue and South of (including) Tulip Lane. (Also, all streets South of Hart Ditch.)

## **SCHOOL HOURS**

Mon, Tues, Wed, & Fri.

8:40 a.m.                      Students may enter the building

9:00 a.m.                      Classes begin

3:30 p.m.                      Classes end

Thursday

9:10 a.m.                      Students may enter the building

9:30 a.m.                      Classes begin

3:30 p.m.                      Classes end

## STATEMENT OF ATTENDANCE POLICY

A student's attendance is essential to learning. Learning includes factual subject matter and also social responsibility reinforced through attendance habits, work habits, attitudes and ideals. Every absence whether excused or not, interrupts the student's understanding of the material being presented and weakens his/her interest in the continuing program. Extensive research shows that educational achievement is directly related to attendance.

Students may be excused from school attendance for the following valid reasons:

- Illness verified by parent/guardian
- Illness verified by note from Physician
- Death in the Family
- Required Religious Observance (students will not be excused for religious services held during school if such services are held at other times of the day.)
- Quarantine
- Military Connected Families (e.g. absences related to deployment and return)
- Exposure to Contagious Disease
- Any absences for reason other than those stated above must have prior approval by the principal or assistant principals.

To ensure more students are attending school to maximize their future opportunities, SEA 282 (2024) requires the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) to establish guidance regarding truancy policies to be adopted by schools in an effort to deter absenteeism and promote regular school attendance.

Pursuant to (IC) 20-33-2-3.2, "attend" means to be physically present: (1) in a school; or (2) at another location where the school's educational program is being conducted (e.g. a work-based learning opportunity occurring outside the four walls of the classroom.) SEA 282 defines a "truancy prevention measure" as an action designed to address truancy before a child becomes a habitual truant and minimize the need for referrals to a voluntary truancy prevention program or reports to a juvenile court. School corporations locally define "excused" and "unexcused" absences, and this guidance serves to assist schools in defining and reporting attendance data and absences in accordance with new legislation. The following information delineates IDOE recommendations for defining these terms, legislative requirements, and guidance regarding Indiana's attendance reporting requirements.

Habitual Absence: IC 20-33-2-25 requires the Superintendent or attendance officer to report a student who is habitually absent from school to an intake officer of the juvenile court or the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS). SEA 282 includes the responsibility for Superintendents/attendance officers to report a child's habitual truancy to the prosecuting attorney. Prosecuting attorneys must notify parents if an affidavit of habitual truancy is filed with their office.

IC 20-33-2-14 (b) requires the governing body of each school corporation to have a policy outlining the conditions for excused and unexcused absences. The policy must include the grounds for excused absences required by Sections 15 through 17.5 of this chapter or another law. Any absence that results in a student not attending at least 180 days in a school year must be in accordance with the governing body's policy to qualify as an excused absence.

IC 20-2-6.5 defines habitual truancy to include students absent from school for 10 or more days within a school year without being excused or being absent under a parental request filed with the school. IDOE defines chronic absenteeism as students absent from school for 10 percent or more of a school year for any reason.

**Legislative Requirements:** SEA 282 (IC 20-18-2-26.5): This legislation requires public school, including charter school, attendance officers to:

- Implement truancy prevention measures required under IC 20-33-2.5;
- Meet at least once annually with DCS and the intake officer for the juvenile court to discuss the effectiveness of truancy prevention measures (IC 20-33-2-39);
- Meet once annually with the State Attendance Officer (IC 20-33-2-39); and
- Establish a local truancy prevention policy (IC 20-33-2.5) that defines an “absent student” as a student who:  
Is enrolled in kindergarten through grade six, and  
• Is absent five days from school within a 10-week period without being excused (IC 20-33-2.5).
- The policy must also specify that schools will notify absentee students’ parents of their responsibilities regarding their child’s attendance and participation in an attendance conference.

**Excused Absences:** Excused absences are defined as absences that the school corporation regards as legitimate reasons for being out of school, as included in the local attendance policy.

These reasons could include:

- Illness verified by note from parent/guardian;
- Illness verified by note from a healthcare provider;
- Family funeral; and/or
- Absences related to deployment and return for military-connected families.

**Exempt Absences:** Under certain circumstances, schools are legally required to authorize the absence and excuse of a student who is: serving as a page or honoree of the Indiana General Assembly (IC 20-33-2-14 ); serving on the precinct election board or as a helper to a political candidate or party on the day of a municipal, primary, or general election (IC 20-33-2-15); subpoenaed to testify in court (IC 20-33-2-16); serving with the National Guard for at least 15 days in a school year (IC 20-33-2-17); serving with the Civil Air Patrol for up to five days (IC 20-33-2-17.2); approved for an educationally-related, non-classroom activity (IC 20-33-2-17.5); and/or exhibits or participates (or a member of the student’s household exhibits or participates) in the Indiana State Fair for educational purposes (IC 20-33-2-17.7).

In each of these circumstances, the student is excused from school and should not be recorded as absent or penalized in any way. To review this statute in its entirety, refer to Indiana’s compulsory school attendance law (IC 20-33-2).

**Unexcused Absences:** An unexcused absence is any absence not covered under the definition of excused or exempt absences outlined above.

**Providing Education for Students with Long-Term Medical Conditions:** A long-term provider note is necessary when a student has been injured or suffers from an illness and is anticipated to be absent for a minimum of 20 instructional days over the course of the school year. 511 Indiana Administrative Code (IAC) 4-1.5-9 requires a school to provide instruction to students under these circumstances if the parent provides documentation from a licensed healthcare provider with prescriptive authority indicating the student will meet the 20-day criteria due to a medical condition. This long-term medical documentation provides the information necessary for a school to create a plan for meeting the student’s educational needs during these absences. Further consultation with the licensed healthcare provider may be necessary to determine the student’s ability to engage in educational activities and instruction during these absences. If the student is also a student with a disability, the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) case conference committee will determine services during these absences.

**ABSENCE PROCEDURES**

When a student is going to be absent, the PARENT must call the main office by 9:00 A.M. on each day of the absence. If the parent explains on the student's first day of absence that the student will be gone for an extended time (hospital stay, long illness, etc.), then the parent need not call back every day.

If the student is returning to school from a verified absence, he or she must bring documentation verifying the absence excuse to the main office within 5 school days from the day they return. If the documentation is a note from a professional, it should contain the student's name, date(s) of absence, reason for absence, and a signature and be on the office stationary.

For an early dismissal, the parent will send a note stating the time and reason for the early dismissal. A parent or guardian is required to sign a student out of school. If the student returns to school that day, he/she will report to the office before going to class.

**PARTICIPATION OF SCHOOL SPONSORED ACTIVITIES**

All students participating in school sponsored after school activities (Math Bowl, Music Program, etc) must be in attendance for half the school day on days of practice and/or competition in order to participate in that day's activities.

# Understanding Absences

Verified Excused vs. Unverified Excused vs. Unexcused

State of Indiana Attendance Expectation: 94% (10 or fewer days missed per year)



## Verified Excused

### Definition:

- A verbal or written excuse for absence from school may be approved for one (1) or more of the reasons contained in Policy 5200. It will be recorded as a verified or unverified absence according to Policy 5200.

### Examples:

- illness verified by a note from a physician
- contagious disease or quarantine
- required court attendance
- professional appointments – Parents are encouraged to schedule medical, dental, legal, and other necessary appointments other than during school hours. When appointments are necessary during the school day, the student shall report back to school immediately after the appointment with a signed statement from the doctor, dentist, lawyer, counselor, etc.
- death in the immediate family or of a relative
- observation or celebration of a bona fide religious holiday in accordance with Policy 5223
- maternity
- military connected families' absences related to deployment and return
- such other good cause as may be acceptable to the Superintendent or permitted by law

## Unverified Excused

### Examples:

- illness confirmed by a note or phone call from a parent
- prearranged absences including vacations

## Unexcused

### Definition:

- Shall mean any absence not covered under the definition of excused absence or an exception to compulsory attendance as stated above. An out-of-school suspension shall not be considered an unexcused absence.
- Repeated instances of unexcused absences may result in disciplinary action up to suspension or expulsion of a student.

### Example:

- Parent does not call or a send a note to the school

\*Middle school students are marked as unexcused if they are more than 5 minutes tardy to class.

In addition to all building provisions in the student handbook: Schools will send notifications to parents at 3 unexcused absences, 5 unexcused absences, 7 unexcused absences. Additionally, after 7 unverified excused absences, schools will code any additional absence as unexcused.

If a student has 5 unexcused absences within a 10-week period, a truancy meeting with the parent/guardian will take place and a prevention plan will be put in place for the student as required by law.

| 3 Days Unexcused                                                | 5 Days Unexcused                                                                                                                                                                          | 7 Days Unexcused                                                                                                          | 10 Days Unexcused                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> letter sent home and documented in PowerSchool. | Parent phone call and letter sent home. Mandatory parent conference with school team and creation of attendance intervention plan. This will be documented in PowerSchool as a Log Entry. | The school will contact the family and a letter will be sent home. This will be documented in PowerSchool as a Log Entry. | School administrator will contact DCS for educational neglect. |

## MAKE-UP WORK

Make-up-work is a student's responsibility. When a student returns to school, he/she will make up the work within the same number of days as the absence. For example, if a student is absent two days, he/she has two days in which to make up the material. Any time extensions are at each teacher's discretion.

If a student is suspended from school, he/she will be allowed to make up the class work for credit. If a test is given during a suspension, students will take the test the day of return to school or shortly thereafter at the teacher's discretion.

If a student is absent for 3 days or more, a parent may contact the guidance office (middle school) or main office (elementary schools) to request books and assignments that a parent can arrange to pick up.

### **TRUANCY**

Truancy is an unauthorized/unexcused absence. A student is truant if he/she does not show up to school and a parent does not confirm the absence.

Regular attendance at school is required by Indiana state law. Frequent absences of pupils from classroom learning experiences disrupt the continuity of the instructional process. Students whose families insist on regular attendance reinforce the idea that school is an important part of their lives. Parents are urged to make certain that their children are in school each day as the students' health permits. Please remember that student attendance significantly impacts our compliance with The No Child Left Behind legislation.

### **TARDINESS**

Students who have not reported to their classroom by the tardy bell are considered tardy. **Parents must accompany tardy students to the office** to check in to school before students report to class. Habitual tardiness has a negative impact on the beginning of the day for your child as well as their classmates. Every effort should be made to assist children in learning the responsibility of reporting to the classroom on time each day.

Tardy consequences at the elementary schools are as follows:

- At the 7<sup>th</sup> tardy, a letter will be sent home with the child
- At the 15<sup>th</sup> Tardy, parent will be contacted

### **BICYCLES**

When a rider arrives at school property, he/she must dismount and walk his/her bicycle directly to the bicycle rack. The bicycle must be securely locked in the bicycle rack.

### **DRESS GUIDELINES**

Students will be expected to be appropriately dressed. Elementary students should be dressed for indoor comfort and be prepared for outdoor play.

1. Garments that have pictures and/or writing that is vulgar, suggestive, indecent, or otherwise offensive are not permitted. Garments with pictures and/or allusions to drugs, alcoholic drinks, and/or threatening weapons are not allowed.
2. Clothing that permits display of the midriff, navel, or undergarments of any type is not permitted. This includes but is not limited to cut-off T-shirts, halters, and tube tops.
3. Eccentric apparel or grooming that could cause distraction or interference with school purposes is not permitted.
4. Clothing should not be flimsy or transparent. Strapless or spaghetti strap blouses are inappropriate. Clothing should not be split up the sides, or be excessively short or tight.
5. Hats and head coverings, such as bandanas, are not to be worn in the building except when preparing for recess or dismissal. Religious garb, including head coverings worn as part of sincerely held religious beliefs, is permitted in school in accordance with applicable laws and district policy.
6. Shoes such as flip flops and crocs have proven to be unsafe both in the school and on the playground. Students may be eliminated from certain activities if the shoes pose a safety hazard.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are regarded as part of the educational program of the school. These trips ordinarily require bus transportation. Such trips require the permission of the parent or guardian. School rules are in effect during all school related activities, and as such all negative behavior may be referred to the principal.

All field trips are under the supervision of the regular classroom teacher. Parent volunteers are utilized on many trips which require additional supervision. These volunteers must follow the various rules and regulations guiding each trip and may be required to submit to a background check. \*(also see Volunteer Parents).

These trips are an extension of the instructional program. Students are expected to participate. If for some reason a child cannot attend, that child is required to report to school that day(s). Schoolwork will be provided.

### **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Families may qualify for assistance in obtaining school lunches and school books.. All information remains confidential and is based on the National School Lunch financial guidelines. All students have a bar coded ID card to use at lunch which allows computers to know automatically if students receive assistance therefore keeping information private. To apply, complete an application and return it to the school or directly to the Food Service Director. You will be notified of the results by mail. ONLY ONE application per household is needed. Please list all students and household members. The application must be signed in two places and fully completed to be processed. Details concerning guidelines and application procedures should be directed to the Food Service Office located at Munster High School.

### **FILMING**

Students may not use any device to photograph or record the activities (audio or video) of other students or district personnel while on school property or a school-sponsored activity unless expressly authorized in advance by the building principal or designee and with the consent of the individual(s) being recorded. Students may not clandestinely photograph or record anyone or distribute captured content that violates school policies and/or causes harm. Students who violate this policy will face appropriate disciplinary consequences, including suspension and expulsion.

### **HARASSMENT/BULLYING**

It is the policy of the School Town of Munster to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment based on age, race, color, religion, handicapping conditions or national origin. Students who harass and/or bully other students, with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, or harm the other student or staff may be subject to suspension and/or expulsion.

(a) Bullying is prohibited by schools within the School Town of Munster. Students who commit any acts of bullying are subject to discipline including but not limited to suspension, expulsion, arrest, and/or prosecution.

(b) Definition: "Bullying" is defined as 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 committed by a student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the targeted student, creating for the targeted student an objectively hostile school environment that:

1. places the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or property;
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 targeted student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school.

Bullying does not include, and should not be interpreted to impose any burden or sanction on, the following:

- participating in a religious event;

- acting in an emergency involving the protection of a person or property from an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or substantial danger;
- participating in an activity consisting of the exercise of a student's freedom of speech rights;
- participating in an activity conducted by a nonprofit or governmental entity that provides recreation, education, training, or other care under the supervision of one (1) or more adults;
- participating in an activity undertaken at the prior written direction of the student's parent; or
- engaging in interstate or international travel from a location outside Indiana to another location outside Indiana.

(c) Applicability: The School Town of Munster prohibits bullying in all forms. This policy may be applied regardless of the physical location in which the bullying behavior occurred, whenever the individual committing the bullying behavior and any of the intended targets of the bullying behavior are students attending a school within the school district and disciplinary action is reasonably necessary to avoid substantial interference with school discipline or prevent an unreasonable threat to the rights of others to a safe and peaceful learning environment. Munster Elementary Schools prohibits bullying through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through any computer, computer system, or computer network.

(d) Education: Social Workers will provide training and/or instruction on anti-bullying prevention and policy to all students as well as staff, in accordance with Indiana law.

(e) Reporting: Anyone who believes that a student has possibly been or is the victim of bullying is encouraged to immediately report the situation to an appropriate staff member such as a teacher, school social worker, or administrator (including the school district lead administrator). All staff, volunteers, and contracted service providers who observe or receive a report of suspected bullying shall notify a designated school administrator in charge of receiving reports of suspected bullying within the same day. If a staff member does not know who to make a report to, he or she should report directly to the building principal or school district lead administrator. Bullying reports to the Department of Child Services and/or law enforcement must be made as required by law, such as when a staff member believes that a student is the victim of abuse or neglect. Any person who makes a report of bullying and requests to remain anonymous will not be personally identified as the reporter or complainant to extent permitted by law. The School Town of Munster will act appropriately to discipline staff members, volunteers, or contracted service providers who receive a report of bullying and fail to initiate or conduct an investigation of a bullying incident and for persons who falsely report an incident of bullying. The school district will act appropriately to discipline students, staff members, visitors, or volunteers who make false reports of bullying.

(f) Investigation: Once a report of suspected bullying is received by the designated school administrator, an expedited investigation shall follow. The investigation should be facilitated by the designated school administrator or other appropriate school staff. Information relating to the investigation will be gathered using means including, but not limited to: witness interviews, request for written witness statements, record identification and review, and an assessment of whether bullying occurred. The investigation will be initiated within five (5) days of the report to the designated school administrator and will ordinarily be completed within fifteen (15) school days.

(g) Intervention/Responses: If a report of suspected bullying is substantiated through an investigation, then the school district shall take appropriate intervention and responses as consistent with policy and procedure. Our school will take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to stop the bullying, remedy the bullying, and prevent the bullying from recurring. Interventions and responses include, but are not limited to: separating the bully and the target; follow-up school counseling for the target; bullying education for the bully; and prompt disciplinary action against the bully. These steps should not penalize the target of the bullying. Disciplinary actions against the bully may include, but are not limited to suspension and expulsion. Also, if the acts of bullying rise to the level of serious criminal offense, the matter may be referred to law enforcement. Administration/Social Worker shall inform the parents of all students involved in alleged incidents, and, as appropriate, may discuss the availability of counseling and other intervention services.

(h) Parental Involvement: Parents are encouraged to be involved in the process of minimizing bullying. Parents should report suspected acts of bullying to an appropriate school official. In addition, parents of students suspected of bullying will be notified with a phone call or through other appropriate means of communication. Conversely, parents of students suspected of being the target of acts of bullying will also be notified with a phone call or through other means of appropriate communication. Parent notifications will occur in an expedited manner. Parents of students who are disciplined for acts of bullying will be involved in the disciplinary process consistent with the law and school district policy.

(i) Administration will notify the parents of the involved students that the school is investigating a possible incident of bullying or similar misconduct before the end of the next school day after the school becomes aware of the possible incident.

(j.) Reporting to IDOE: Each school within the school district will record and report to the district lead administrator or his or her designee the frequency of bullying incidents in the following categories: verbal bullying, physical bullying, social/relational bullying, and electronic/written communication bullying (or a combination of two or more of the above categories). The corporation lead administrator or his or her designee shall report the number of bullying incidents by category for each school and the entire corporation for each school term to the Indiana Department of Education by July 1.

### **HOMEWORK**

Homework is an out-of-school assignment that contributes to the educational process of the student. Homework shall be viewed as an extension of class work and related to the objectives of the curriculum.

### **KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION**

Each year in the spring, kindergarten registration is conducted in the elementary schools. At the time of registration, parents must present the child's original birth certificate. Please refer to the School Town of Munster website for more information.

Students must be five years old on or before August 1 in order to begin kindergarten classes in the fall of that year.

### **LEAVING SCHOOL DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

If a student must leave school during the school day, the parent should send a note to the school explaining the reason for leaving, who will be picking the student up, and specifying the time of dismissal. Students will remain in the classroom until parents come to the school to pick them up. At this time, the parent will sign the student out, and school personnel will call the student from the classroom and will give custody of the child directly to the parent or designee.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

Each school has a system for handling articles lost or found. All valuable articles lost or found should be reported or brought to the school office.

### **LOST OR DAMAGED BOOKS/ EQUIPMENT**

Students are responsible for maintaining textbooks, devices, workbooks, and library books in a reasonable fashion. If an item is lost or damaged while in the custody of a student, that student will be required to reimburse the school in full for the lost or damaged item.

### **LUNCH FACILITIES**

Pupils may purchase hot lunches at school or they may bring lunches from home. Parents cannot bring fast food from restaurants for lunch. The Food Service Department follows the guidelines of the National School Lunch Program. Hot lunches are served each day. Lunch menus are posted on the School Town's webpage *NUTRITION & FOOD SERVICE* TAB. Milk, string cheese, ice cream and occasional snacks are available to purchases on a limited basis.

#### **Elementary Prepaid Lunch Accounting System**

- All students receive an I.D. card issued from school pictures each year.
- Prepaid lunch checks (*made out to the school*) should be sent in an envelope marked with the child's full name, homeroom, and labeled "Lunch Money"

- If sending one check for two or more students, please write this information for each child.
- All money will be applied to the student's lunch account. No change will be returned.
- Parents may create a secure online account where they can pay for lunch via a charge card. Visit: [www.MySchoolBucks.com](http://www.MySchoolBucks.com) for information. An internet convenience fee is charged for each transaction and is displayed separately when you process a transaction.
- The computerized lunch system is for all food and drink items.
- It is a parent's responsibility to provide lunch money or pack a lunch for students.
- All lunch charges must be paid before the last day of school.

### **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Parent-Teacher Conferences – Formal Parent-Teacher conferences will be scheduled in the Fall and listed on the STM calendar. However, parents are encouraged to contact teachers whenever necessary.

Some tips for successful conferences include:

- Be prepared. Make a list of things you want to tell or ask the teacher. Items on the list may include homework policy, test results, and the child's attitude.
- If possible, leave your children at home when you attend a conference. Before meeting with the teacher, ask the student if there is anything he would like you to speak with the teacher about.
- Make notes of the teacher's comments throughout the conference and review the key points that will help you help the child.
- Talk with your child about the conference and stress the positive points brought out by the teacher. Discuss some suggestions for improvement and the setting of new goals.

### **PERSONAL ITEMS AT SCHOOL**

The instructional process is often delayed or interrupted when students bring personal items to school. Items such as, but not restricted to, cell phones, smart watches, radios, audio/video players, electronic games, tablets, toys, etc. are not allowed to be used during school hours. The school assumes no responsibility for the safekeeping of personal items such as these.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The elementary physical education program concentrates on games of both high and low organization, physical fitness testing, and calisthenics. Children are to have loose-fitting clothing appropriate for freedom of movement and modesty (slacks or shorts) available to wear during this period of the day. Each child is required to have clean gym shoes ready for class. Injured students: Students will not be able to miss more than two classes without a verified excuse by a doctor.

### **POWER PARENT**

Power Parent allows parents to have internet access to pertinent information about their child's attendance, grades, homework assignments, discipline, health records and much more. Passwords are distributed to parents at the start of the year. Web ID access will be distributed to all new students.

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF PUPILS**

The principal of the school is empowered to make the final decision concerning the student's grade placement usually in concert with the child's former teacher(s). There are many factors which are discussed and weighed when making such an important decision, e.g. chronological age, test results, teacher recommendations, parent recommendations, etc.

## **RECESSES**

With the exception of inclement weather, students have scheduled recess periods throughout the day. Please dress your children warmly and appropriately for the weather. Appropriate shoes should be worn for outdoor play. Please label all clothing with your child's name. Temperature guidelines for indoor recess: Below 20° F and/or wind chill below 10° F. During warm weather students will stay indoors during recess when the heat index is 90 or above.

## **REQUIREMENTS OF NEW STUDENTS**

Students new to the Munster Schools must present the following:

Four proofs of residence in the school district

Proof of proper immunization

A completed physical examination form

Proof that age requirements for attendance are met (original birth certificate)

Parents must complete online Student Enrollment Gateway

New students are asked to present a report card from the previous school to facilitate temporary classification

For students who have attended school in another location, records from the previous school must be obtainable.

For students who have attended school in another location, a record request form must be signed by the parent/guardian upon enrollment.

## **SAFETY DRILLS**

### **DISASTER/LOCK DOWN PLANS AND DRILLS**

Each school building has developed a disaster plan to deal with emergency situations. Disaster drills must be conducted twice a year. Lock Down/other safety drills are conducted throughout the year.

### **FIRE DRILLS**

Each school is required to hold a fire drill at least once each month.

## **SCHOOL PARTIES**

Three parties are held annually in each elementary school classroom.

Halloween: Parade and parties will be held in the afternoon following the regular lunchroom schedule. Costumes that depict violence, including those that are bloody, gory, or make use of weapons are prohibited at school. Any weapons, even pretend are not allowed at school.

Winter Holiday: Classroom parties before the December Winter Break

Valentine's Day: Exchange of valentines is customary

### **Party Food Guidelines/Enforcement (these guidelines apply only to school-hour celebrations):**

- Bottled water or juice along with a maximum of two food treats (at least one health food item should be considered).
- All treats need to be individually prepackaged and factory sealed, with the ingredient label visible on the individual/original packaging (no homemade treats permitted).
- All items must be peanut and tree nut free. Any allergies specific to the classroom must also be adhered to.

### **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Due to the wellness of our students, if you feel you would like to celebrate your child's birthday at school, please only use non-food items for birthday treats. Pencils, stickers, pens, bookmarks etc. make great individual gifts for all of the students in the classroom. No outside birthday planning, sending of invitations or other arrangements may be made during the school day. (Invitations may be sent only if the entire class is invited or if a girl is inviting all the girls in the class or a boy is inviting all of the boys in the class.)

### **STAFF GIFTS**

School Board Policies 3214 and 4214 discourage the presentation of gifts to staff members by students and their parents because it could embarrass students with limited means and gives the appearance of currying favor. It is the policy of the Board that no staff member should expect gifts for carrying out the terms of his/her teaching contract or assigned job.

### **SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

Grades K-5 supply lists are available in the school office or on the Munster website.

### **SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT POLICY**

A student will not be subject to seclusion or restraint unless the student's behavior poses an imminent risk or injury to the student 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 use of seclusion or restraint, the student's parent or guardian will be informed and provided with a detailed account of the incident, including the circumstances that led to the use of the seclusion or restraint.

### **SMOKING IN THE SCHOOLS**

By action of the Board of School Trustees, all Munster schools are smoke-free. This means that smoking and vaping is not permitted in school buildings, on school grounds or buses, or at school events away from the school location including all field trips.

### **STANDARDIZED TESTING PROGRAM**

Students in Grade 2 and 3 are tested each year on the IREAD 3. This assessment is administered in March.

Students in Grade 3, 4, & 5 will be administered the ILEARN assessment. These tests are administered according to a schedule prescribed by the State.

Students in Kindergarten, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade will be assessed using the CoGAT assessment.

School Town of Munster administers the NWEA assessment three times a year as a progress-monitoring tool for instruction (August, November, March).

### **STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

Munster elementary students are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly, civil manner at all times. Students will not be allowed to disrupt the classroom learning of their classmates. Any habitual or insubordinate problems will be dealt with and the parents contacted to achieve a cooperative resolution of the problems.

The School Town of Munster has adopted "Rules and Standards of Conduct of Students of the School Town of Munster" and the "School Town of Munster Elementary Behavior Rules." A copy of these documents is included as an appendix to this handbook.

### **STUDENT INSURANCE**

Student insurance is made available as a service of the schools. Information concerning the plan will be available during registration each fall. Parents are required to indicate acceptance or rejection of the student insurance plan.

### **STUDENT TRANSFERS**

Parents of children leaving Munster must notify the school in advance of the date the children are leaving in order to complete the transfer process.

### **SUMMER SCHOOL**

Summer school classes for elementary students are by invitation only. Students will be identified for summer classes based on their district/state assessments.

### **TECHNOLOGY**

The School Town of Munster laptop initiative has become an outstanding resource for students to use that enhances their understanding of concepts and content. It is necessary that actions be taken to safeguard our school computers and other technological tools from various kinds of abuse.

Physically damaging technological equipment, tampering with essential files, creating computer viruses, inappropriately using the Internet or Email, and other behaviors that constitute attempts to destroy, abuse, distort, or misuse technological equipment will result in disciplinary action. Students may be prohibited from taking school devices home.

Students who engage in repeated misuse of technological equipment could face suspension and/or recommendation for expulsion. Students who repeatedly misuse technological equipment, including laptops, will be issued fines and could be recommended to local police authorities. For additional clarification refer to the district's 1:1 Laptop Agreement and acceptable Use Policy.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

School bus drivers are to have control of all school children conveyed between the homes of the children and the school house, and return. The driver shall keep order, maintain discipline among the children while in the bus or along the route, shall treat all the children in a civil manner, shall see that no child is imposed upon or mistreated while in his charge, and shall use every care for the safety of the children under his/her charge. School bus drivers shall assure that the following regulations are observed by all pupil passengers:

1. Bus transportation is available for students living outside one mile radius from home school.
2. All students who wish to ride the bus must sign up for bus service at registration or at their school.
1. All riders will be assigned a bus, and they will only be allowed to ride the bus that has been assigned to them.
2. Students are not allowed to bring guests home on their bus, even if the guest is registered for bus service.
3. The student must be waiting at the bus stop when the bus arrives. As a bus schedule can vary slightly from day to day depending on passenger load, it is recommended that the student be at the bus stop several minutes prior to the scheduled arrival time.
4. Riders must stay seated. No pupil shall stand or move from place to place during the trip.
5. Riders are not allowed to display any objectionable behavior. Loud, boisterous, disruptive and unsafe behavior, profane language, or indecent conduct will not be tolerated.
6. Upon the recommendation of the bus driver, school authorities may deny the privilege of riding the school bus to any pupil who refuses to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner.

7. No windows or doors will be opened or closed except by permission of the bus driver.
8. No pupils shall enter or leave the bus until it has come to a complete stop and the door has been opened by the driver.
9. A student may bring a musical instrument onto the bus as long as the instrument will fit on the student's lap. Instruments should not be placed on the floor or on the seat.
10. All rules and standards concerning the Code of Conduct in the School Town of Munster Administrative Guidelines 5600 apply to all pupil transportation.

### **IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION**

1. Never cross close to the front of the bus – make sure the driver can see you.
2. Never pick up anything you drop close to or under the bus – ask the driver what to do.
3. Never run after a bus or bang on the side.
4. If you must cross the street in front of the bus, follow the driver's directions, and stop and look before you cross.
5. Never run across a street, it's better to miss the bus than rush and risk being hit by a car.
6. Stay away from the rear and sides of the bus – always be in a safe place where the driver can see you.

### **USE OF SCHOOL TELEPHONES**

School telephones may be used by students only at the discretion of school personnel.

### **USE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY**

Upon written application to the School Town of Munster, facilities will be made available whenever possible to school affiliated groups and other organizations and persons who meet the rules and regulations listed on the permit. Building use forms are available at all school offices and should be submitted to the principal upon completion.

### **VISITORS**

All parents or other adult visitors must report to the school office and follow individual building check-in procedures. All visitors must present identification. No visitors will be allowed into classrooms before, during, or after school without prior approval from the teacher and/or principal. Upon approval, a visitor's badge will be issued. Office personnel may request that a student report to the office to meet with a parent or other authorized adult. Except in the case of emergencies, all calls to teachers will be placed into voice mail during instructional time.

### **VOLUNTEER PARENTS**

Volunteer Parents assist with classroom parties, field trips, special projects, and other activities when extra help is needed. \*Volunteer parents must accept the responsibility of supervising students in order to facilitate learning and enhance safety during the assigned activities. These activities may require a background check.

### **VOLUNTEER SERVICES**

Valuable services are rendered by volunteer helpers in school libraries, offices, and cafeterias. Any parent who would like to donate time for these services may contact the local school principal, teacher, or appropriate parent-teacher organization. These activities may require a background check.

## **STUDENT SERVICES**

### **HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION**

If a student will be absent because of illness or injury for a period exceeding four weeks, that child may be eligible for homebound instruction. Contact the principal of your elementary school for additional information concerning this service.

### **PROGRAM FOR THE HIGH ABILITY EXCEPTIONAL LEARNER**

Munster provides a differentiated program composed of several options to facilitate high ability exceptional learner students' development to the highest levels of ability, self-concept, motivation, and creativity.

The process for identification and selection of high ability exceptional learner students utilizes broad-based, multi-dimensional, and bias-free procedures. This process is repeated yearly to identify additional participants. Please review this process from our School Town of Munster website.

Additional questions may be answered by the Assistant Superintendent at 836-9111 ext. 1021.

### **PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES**

Psychological Services:

Psychological testing services are provided by the School Town of Munster Exceptional Needs Department. These services are available for any student who may be a student with a disability. Referrals may be made by teachers, parents, or the building principal.

Social Worker/Social Service Providers:

A full-time social worker/social service provider is available to consult with pupils, parents, and teachers to help pupils meet their social needs and to resolve school and social problems.

Speech Therapy:

A speech pathologist/assistant serves each of the schools on a regular basis. Referral to this specialist for evaluation to determine a need for services may be made by parents or teachers.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Children in need of special education are given individual consideration in planning an educational program.

The Director of the School Town of Munster Exceptional Needs Department may be reached at 838-7256.

## **HEALTH INFORMATION**

Nursing services are available at all three elementary schools on a daily basis. They deal with a variety of school health areas, including: screening tests, maintenance of health records, health records, health education, individual student health problems, emergency first aid, conferring with parents, and consultation with staff members. The nurse is not responsible for providing care for injuries that did not occur at school and should not be used in place of the family physician.

### **ADMINISTERING MEDICATION DURING SCHOOL HOURS**

Medication should be given at school only if **ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY**.

Medication will be administered by the school nurse upon receipt of:

1. A written order from a physician which includes the following:
  - a. name of the student and the medication, dosage,
  - b. time schedule for administering the medication,
  - c. dates during which the order is in effect.
2. A written request from the parent/guardian.
3. The medication must be in a container with a pharmacist's label containing not more than four week's supply.
4. Only one type of medication may be stored in each bottle.

Any other medication must be given personally by the parents.

All medication is stored in a locked cabinet in the nurse's office. **NO STUDENT IS PERMITTED TO HAVE ANY MEDICATION IN THEIR POSSESSION DURING THE SCHOOL DAY UNLESS AUTHORIZED IN WRITING BY HIS/HER PHYSICIAN.** These rules are for the safety of all students.

Nonprescription medication, such as Tylenol or cough drops may be given by the school nurse upon receipt of parental written authorization following the same procedure as prescription medication.

The required forms for giving medications at school are available from the school office or the nurse.

Medication shall be administered in accordance with the parent's written statement (in the case of nonprescription medicine) or the physician's order (in the case of prescription medicine) only by a school nurse or other employee(s) designated in writing by the school principal. Nonprescription medication, however, will only be administered according to package directions. Any doses larger than recommended will require a doctor's note. All administration of medicine shall be documented in writing. Any designated employee who is responsible for administering injectable insulin or a blood glucose test by finger prick shall receive proper training from a practitioner or a registered nurse and such training shall be documented in writing by the practitioner or registered nurse and kept on file in the school building office.

### **FIRST AID FOR STUDENTS**

The school attempts to provide an environment in which the child will be safe from accidents. If an accident occurs, first aid will be administered, and if necessary the school nurse will be called. Parents will be notified at the nurse's discretion. No care beyond first aid, defined as the immediate, temporary care given in the case of an accident or sudden illness, will be given by the nurse or other authorized person.

It is extremely important that parents keep the school informed concerning emergency telephone numbers which will enable the school to reach them in emergency situations.

### **MENINGITIS INFORMATION**

Indiana State Law IC 20-30-5-18 requires that school systems provide important information to parents and guardians of students about meningococcal disease and the vaccines available to prevent this serious illness at the beginning of each school year.

Meningococcal disease is caused by the bacterium *Neisseria meningitis* and generally affects children and young adults in two ways:

- meningitis (an inflammation of the tissues covering the brain and or spinal cord)
- bloodstream infection (that usually leads to bleeding under the skin)

Symptoms of meningococcal disease can include a sudden onset of fever, headache, stiff neck, nausea, and confusion and in blood stream infections a rash will develop. This disease progresses rapidly and often results in permanent hearing loss, intellectual disability, limb amputations and even death. The bacteria spread through air droplets or by means of direct contact with an infected person's saliva.

The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends routine vaccination with the meningococcal conjugate vaccine (Menactra) for all students 11-12 years of age, or 13 –18 years of age if not previously vaccinated. Children ages 2-10, who have a disorder of the immune system or whose spleen has been removed should also receive the Menactra vaccine as they are at higher risk for contracting this disease.

Many local health departments and private healthcare providers offer this vaccine. Please

talk with your child's healthcare provider about meningococcal vaccine and immunization.

Additional resources for families to obtain information about meningococcal disease include the following websites:

The Indiana State Department of Health  
<http://www.in.gov/isdh/22121.htm>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/mening/default.htm>

The Indiana Department of Education Student Services, School Health  
<http://www.doe.in.gov/sservices/sn.htm>

### **PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS AND IMMUNIZATIONS**

Parents are required to obtain a physical examination by a physician for the following students:

- All kindergarten, sixth, and ninth grade students.
- All students new to the Munster schools.
- All participants in athletics grades 6-12.

Parents should obtain a physical examination form from the school prior to taking the student for a physical examination. The form specifies what items the doctor must include in the examination.

Parents must provide a medical history of the child on the physical examination form.

Failure to complete both sides of the physical examination form and to provide proof of the required immunizations will delay acceptance of the child into regular attendance. No student shall be permitted to attend school for more than 20 days without providing proof from a physician that he/she has received the proper immunizations. Any parent/guardian who has a religious or medical reasons not to immunize their child will need to submit their objection in writing to the school nurse. This will need to be updated yearly.

# Required and Recommended School Immunizations, Indiana 2025-2026



Updated 11.12.2024

| Grade        | Required                                                               |                                                                                                | Recommended                                                                   |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Pre-K</b> | 3 Hepatitis B<br>4 DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis)<br>3 Polio | 1 Varicella (Chickenpox)<br>1 MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella)<br>2 Hepatitis A                | Annual influenza<br>COVID-19Haemophilus influenza B<br>Pneumococcal conjugate |
| <b>K-5</b>   | 3 Hepatitis B<br>5 DTaP<br>4 Polio                                     | 2 Varicella<br>2 MMR<br>2 Hepatitis A                                                          | Annual influenza<br>COVID-19                                                  |
| <b>6-11</b>  | 3 Hepatitis B<br>5 DTaP<br>4 Polio<br>2 Varicella                      | 2 MMR<br>2 Hepatitis A<br>1 MCV4 (Meningococcal)<br>1 Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis) | Annual influenza<br>2 or 3 HPV (Human papillomavirus)<br>COVID-19             |
| <b>12</b>    | 3 Hepatitis B<br>5 DTaP<br>4 Polio<br>2 Varicella                      | 2 MMR<br>2 Hepatitis A<br>2 MCV4<br>1 Tdap                                                     | Annual influenza<br>2 or 3 HPV<br>2 MenB (Meningococcal)<br>COVID-19          |

**HepB:** The minimum age for the third dose of Hepatitis B is 24 weeks of age.

**DTaP:** Four doses of DTaP/DTP/DT are acceptable if fourth dose was administered on or after the fourth birthday.

**Polio:** Three doses of Polio are acceptable for all grade levels if the third dose was given on or after the fourth birthday and at least six months after the previous dose.

\*For students in grades K-12, the final dose must be administered on or after the fourth birthday and be administered at least six months after the previous dose.

**Varicella:** Physician documentation of disease history, including month and year, is proof of immunity for children entering preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Parent report of disease history is not acceptable.

**Tdap:** There is no minimum interval from the last Td dose.

**MCV4:** Individuals who receive their first dose on or after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday only need one dose of MCV4.

**Hepatitis A:** The minimum interval between first and second dose is six calendar months. Two doses are required for all grade levels.

For additional immunization information, visit: [in.gov/health/immunization](https://in.gov/health/immunization) or call **1 (800) 701-0704** during normal business hours.

## RULES FOR CONTROL OF DISEASES

If you have any questions please call the school nurse for the information contained in the Indiana State Department of Health Communicable Diseases Reference Guide for School Personnel, 2002.

### **Disease**

### **School Exclusion Period**

|                    |                                                           |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Chicken Pox        | Until all vesicles formed scabs or crusts.                |
| Conjunctivitis     | Until eyes are clear or until a doctor releases to return |
| Impetigo           | Until lesions are no longer draining.                     |
| Pediculosis (lice) | Until free of all lice.                                   |

In any of the above cases a child must check with the school nurse prior to re-admittance.

Eads Elementary School Nurse 836-8635

Elliott Elementary School Nurse 838-5250

Frank H. Hammond Elementary School Nurse 838-2060

## SICK DAY GUIDELINES

In order to reduce the spread of germs which can cause colds, flu, etc., please use the following guidelines when determining whether to keep you child home:

- 1) If your child has a temperature of 100 degrees F or greater, the child should stay home and remain home until he/she has been without fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication.
- 2) If your child has been vomiting or has diarrhea, keep your child home for 24 hours past the last episode.
- 3) If your child has drainage from an ear or eye, which may indicate infection.
- 4) If your child has a severe cough that is uncontrollable.

Please contact your child's doctor promptly if there is any doubt about the condition of your child.

## **SCREENING TESTS**

Screening tests in the areas of vision and hearing are available at any time upon request of the parent, teacher, or student. In addition, the following routine screening tests are scheduled:

- VISUAL:** Visual screening tests are given to all students in grades 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup>, all new students, and all students suspected of vision problems. A modified clinical technique vision screening is performed by an optometrist is administered to 1<sup>st</sup> graders.
- HEARING:** Hearing tests are given to all students in grades 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, to all new students, and to all students with known defects.

## **PUPIL CONDUCT**

A pupil's conduct is the mirror that reflects to others the kind of individual he or she is. There are acceptable ways of acting on the school ground, in the halls, in the classrooms, while on the way to and from school, and in all other places. Students will be expected to conduct themselves as young ladies and gentlemen, keeping in mind the safety and well-being of themselves as well as others. Good citizens learn to discipline themselves and think before they act. Listed below are some rules dealing with conduct in the elementary schools. Violations of these rules may result in action ranging from a conference to expulsion, depending upon the severity and/or frequency of the violation.

### **Unacceptable Language, Acts and Gestures, or Harassment**

- The use or possession of profane or obscene materials, acts, gestures, or language which could or do create a nuisance is strictly prohibited. Physical or verbal harassment of other students is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Threats and intimidation of another student for any reason will not be permitted. Students are encouraged to seek help from their teachers or principal to resolve conflicts.

### **Dishonesty**

- Cheating on tests, assignments or any other form of dishonesty is considered a serious offense. This includes, but is not limited to, lying and theft.

### **Fighting**

- Fighting in the school building, on the school grounds, in route to and from school and at school-sponsored activities is prohibited.
- Individuals who promote and instigate fights are subject to the same corrective actions as the participants.

### **Bullying**

- Bullying will not be tolerated and is defined as "overt, repeated acts or gestures, including verbal or written communications transmitted; physical act committed; or any other behaviors committed by student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, or harm the other student".

## 1:1 Laptop Computer Student Guidelines/Agreement

### Introduction

The vision of School Town of Munster is that all of its students function successfully in an ever-changing world of technology. Therefore, technological tools are provided for educational purposes and are intended to support the learning objectives of the School Town of Munster.

All devices issued to students in all grades are the property of the School Town of Munster. The devices are on loan to the student and must be used in accordance with the policies and procedures of the School Town of Munster's Acceptable Use Policy. The use of computers, as well as access to the computer network, the Internet, and e-mail are privileges, not rights.

### Computer Use at School

Students are responsible for bringing their laptops, fully charged, to school each day.

Laptops are to be used in the classrooms as directed by teachers.

Laptops and batteries are assigned to an individual student. The laptops and batteries should be in the student's possession or secured properly at all times. Students should never "swap" or "share" their computers or batteries with another student.

Students must never share their passwords with other students. Passwords must always be kept confidential.

Students are responsible for saving or backing up their documents to the server, the computer hard drive, or a portable flash drive.

Students participating in activities that are not conducive to using their laptops (i.e., field trip, assembly, etc.), are required to leave the laptops in their locker or other designated secure location.

As Chromebooks were purchased through a grant, there is no repair budget to cover the costs of damages. Any damages to Chromebooks must be paid for by the parent.

### Computer Use at Home

Each time students change their passwords they should pass this information on to their parents/guardians.

Students are responsible for recharging the laptop at home on a daily basis to be prepared for school.

If the computer is damaged or not working properly, students should report to the school Media Center Student Help Desk.

If the computer is lost or stolen, parents/guardians should immediately report the loss or theft to the local police, the designated school Help Desk, and administration.

### Computer Use on the Internet, E-mail and Network

- Computer usage is monitored by the School Town of Munster at school and at home.
- The sole purpose of email is for educationally-related activities and not social networking.
- Students and parents/guardians should understand that the School Town of Munster does not have control over information found on the Internet. While every attempt is made to block access to inappropriate material while the student is at school, the district is not able to monitor completely student usage of the computer while at home. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to supervise the information that a student is accessing from the Internet while at home.
- Students are responsible for their behavior and communication on the Internet. Students must always be respectful to others and never use obscene, profane, vulgar, sexually explicit, defamatory or abusive language in their messages.
- Students must understand that distribution of sexually explicit photos to minors from minors is a serious offense punishable by state and federal laws and school discipline. All such incidents will be reported to the Munster Police Department.
- Students must never intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, data or passwords belonging to other users, or misrepresent themselves or other users on the network or the internet.
- Students must never use the computer to harass an individual or any particular group. Cyber Bullying is a serious offense and will be treated as such through disciplinary and or legal actions.

- Students must never “hack” into any computer system, access proxy servers, bypass filters, elevate privileges or engage in unauthorized use of the network.
- Students should not use chat rooms, instant messaging or social networking sites unapproved by the School Town of Munster.
- Students must not use copyrighted materials that exceed fair use guidelines without written permission of the author.
- Students should never share personal information about themselves or others while using the Internet or e-mail. This includes a student’s name, age, address, phone number or school name as well as photos.
- Students should be aware that Internet access and e-mail, and other media that are accessed, created or stored on their computers are the sole property of the School Town of Munster. All communications and information accessed via the network is public property. The School Town of Munster has the right to review these items for appropriateness, and to limit or revoke a student’s access to them at any time, and for any reason.
- Academic Dishonesty is monitored through the School Town of Munster filtering system. See school handbooks for consequences associated with Academic Dishonesty.

### **General Use and Care of the Computer**

- Students are expected to treat their laptops with care and respect. The computer is the property of the School Town of Munster and should be kept clean and free of marks at all times. Placing stickers, writing or drawing on, engraving or otherwise defacing the laptop are not allowed and will result in loss of privileges.
- Students should not use their laptops while walking, on the bus, or otherwise being transported. Laptops should only be used while they are on a flat, stable surface such as a table. Laptops can be easily damaged when mishandled.
- Students should protect laptops from extreme heat or cold. Laptops should never be left in a car, even if the car is locked.
- Computers should be protected from the weather, water or other liquid, food, and pets. Students should never eat or drink while using their laptops, or use their laptops near others who are eating and drinking.
- When transporting their laptops to and from school, students should always be sure they are placed in an approved backpack, fully closed without the power cord or other peripherals attached.
- Laptops should be placed inside approved backpacks in the padded laptop section. The laptop should be separated from books or heavy objects. No heavy objects should be placed or stacked on top of the laptop.
- Students are encouraged to help each other in learning to operate their computers. However, such help should be provided with voices and not hands. Students should operate their own computers at all times.
- Students are not allowed to download or install any software or other materials without the permission of the STM Technology Department.
- Students should use care when plugging in or disconnecting their power cords. Always remember to pull on the plug itself, not the cord.
- Students must use only the provided power cords. Others may damage the computers.
- Computers must be shut down before being placed in the cases or school bags.
- Computers should not be placed on or under soft items such as pillows, chairs, sofa cushions, or blankets. This will cause the computer to overheat, and will result in damage to the computer.
- Cleaning of laptop screens and keyboards must be done with approved cleaners only or by the Help Desk staff.
- Malicious, negligent or repetitive damages to the laptops is prohibited.
- Anyone observing inappropriate or careless use of a computer should report to a teacher or other staff member immediately.

### **Consequences of Inappropriate Use**

The use of any School Town of Munster technology **is a privilege and not a right**. Students are expected to use their computers in accordance with these 1:1 Student Guidelines, the District Acceptable Use Policy, and any applicable laws. Failure to use these computers appropriately will result in the following consequences, as determined by the staff and administration of the School Town of Munster:

- Limit student use or access privileges.
- Loss of the privilege of using the computer at home.
- Financial restitution.
- Suspension from school.
- Expulsion from school.
- Civil or criminal liability under applicable laws.

**RULES AND STANDARDS CONCERNING THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENTS IN THE SCHOOL TOWN OF MUNSTER**

**PREAMBLE**

The rules and standards of conduct hereinafter set forth are considered by the School Town of Munster to be reasonably necessary to (1) carry out any educational function or school purposes; (2) prevent any interference with the carrying out of any educational function or school purposes; and (3) assure an orderly and efficient educational system for all students.

The rules and standards adopted by the Board of School Trustees shall be applicable to each and every student enrolled in the School Town of Munster.

The Board of School Trustees reserves the right to alter or amend these rules and standards from time to time provided, however, no rule or standard (except those concerning the movement of students, motor vehicles, daily instruction, operation and schedule of classes or other standards relating to the manner in which an educational function is carried out) shall be applicable to any student until a written copy thereof is made available or delivered to the student or his parent, or is otherwise given general publicity within all of the school buildings.

The provisions of the Indiana Code Section 20-8.1-1-1 to 20-8.1-5-17 including the definitions contained therein have been made a part hereof by Resolution of the Board of School Trustees. The Indiana code definitions specifically include, but are not limited to, the definitions of School Purposes (I.C. 20-8.1-1-8), Educational Function (I.C. 20-8.1-1-9), Expulsion (I.C. 20-8.1-1-10), and Suspensions (I.C. 20-8.1-1-11). A full and complete copy of the Indiana Code is available for inspection at the Superintendent's office during regular business hours.

**A. STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

1. Each teacher and any of the other school personnel (including, but not limited to, student teachers, bus drivers, teacher's aides, and secretaries) shall, when students are under his charge, have the right to take any action which is then reasonably necessary to carry out, or to prevent an interference with the educational function of which he is then in charge. Teachers and other school personnel may not suspend or remove a student from school or from any educational function within the supervision of a teacher or any of the other school personnel for a period of more than one day unless the removal is treated as a suspension under Paragraph B thereof.
2. The superintendent, principal, administrative personnel and teachers are authorized to take any action in connection with the student behavior, in addition to the actions specifically provided in Paragraphs B, C, and D, which is reasonably necessary to help any student, to further school purposes, or to carry out or prevent interference with an educational function or school purposes. Such action may include, but is not limited to:
  - A. Counseling with a student or group of students
  - B. Conferences with a parent or group of parents
  - C. Assigning students additional work
  - D. Rearranging class schedules
  - E. Requiring a student to remain in school after regular hours to do additional work or for counseling
  - F. Removing a student from athletic activities, non-credit school activities, or school-provided transportation
  - G. Restricting extra-curricular activities of a student

## **B. SUSPENSION**

1. Any student who violates any one or more of the following rules and standards of behavior may be suspended for a period of no more than ten (10) school days except as provided in Paragraph C.1.:
  - A. Failing to attend school for one or more designated periods during any school day for any reason other than illness or death in the immediate family without the express permission of the school administration
  - B. Leaving school property for any reason during any school day without the express permission of the school administration
  - C. Being late to the assigned school buildings or classroom
  - D. Smoking or possessing tobacco
  - E. Possessing, using or transmitting any substance which looks like (i.e., the so-called look-alike drugs) any form of marijuana, any stimulant, any intoxicant, any narcotic, any depressant, or any hallucinogenic drug (Use of medication by a student prescribed by a medical doctor, a dentist, other health care provider authorized by law to prescribe medication for that student shall not constitute violation of rules. Any student who is unsure if possession, use or providing another person with any particular medicine or substance would violate these rules should consult the building principal or assistant principal before possessing, using or providing the medication or substance.)
  - F. Possessing or providing to any person anything used or designed to be used primarily for the storage, processing, delivery or consumption of controlled substances (See Paragraph C.1.g.). Examples of these drug-related paraphernalia which are not to be possessed or provided to another person are:
    - a. Pipes
    - b. Clips
    - c. Rolling papers
    - d. Needles
    - e. Syringes, etc.
  - G. Tampering with or misusing the firefighting equipment and fire alarm system of the School Corporation
  - H. Parking a vehicle on school property during any school day without the express permission of the school administration
  - I. Using cards, dice or other instrument for the purpose of gambling and/or gambling
  - J. Lack of personal cleanliness
  - K. Wearing articles of clothing that are distracting, unclean, cause maintenance problems, or are inappropriate for school activity
  - L. Wearing clothing and/or hair styles that could cause bodily injury in such activities as shop, lab work, physical education, and art
  - M. Failing to wear shoes, sandals, boots, or appropriate footwear in the school building
  - N. Using the school facilities or the school grounds for advertising or promoting any interest of any group, person, firm, corporation, agency, organization, or cause without the prior written consent of the school administration
  - O. Cheating, plagiarism, or dishonesty of any kind with respect to any assigned work, paper, or examination
  - P. Fighting
  - Q. Participating in conduct constituting grounds for expulsion or suspension as set forth in paragraph C below
  - R. Violating any other rule or standard of behavior adopted by the School Board
2. The grounds for suspension in Section B.1 apply when a student is:
  - A. On school grounds immediately before, during, and immediately after school hours and at any other time when the school is being used by a school group; or when summer school is in session.

- B. Off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event, or;
  - C. Traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event.
3. In addition to the grounds for suspension under Paragraph B.1, a student may be suspended 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.

### **C. SUSPENSION PROCEDURES**

1. A suspension may be imposed upon a student only after the principal or designee has made an investigation of the alleged misconduct and a determination has been made that the suspension is necessary to help the student or to prevent interference with an educational function or school purposes. However, a student may be suspended by a hearing examiner until the date of the expulsion hearing if the hearing examiner determines that such suspension is necessary.
2. Suspension may not be made without first affording the student an opportunity for a meeting at which time the student will be given a written or oral statement of the charges against him or her, a summary of the evidence against the student if he or she denies the charges, and an opportunity for the student to explain his or her conduct.
3. The meeting shall precede suspension of the student except where the nature of the misconduct requires immediate removal. In such a situation, the notice and informal hearing shall follow as soon as reasonably possible after the suspension.
4. Following such suspension, the principal shall send a written statement to the student's parent describing the student's conduct, misconduct or violation and the reasons for the action taken. The principal shall make a reasonable effort to hold a conference with the parent before or at the time the student returns to school. Failure of the parent to participate in a conference with the principal will not justify extending the period of the student's suspension.

### **D. EXPULSION**

1. The superintendent may (a) separate a student from school attendance for a period of more than ten (10) days; (b) separate a student from school attendance in accordance with Paragraph D, below, unless a student is permitted to complete required examinations in order to receive credit for courses taken in the then current semester or current year; or (c) impose some other type of penalty upon the student which automatically prevents him from completing within the normal time his overall course of study in any school if the student violates any one or more of the following rules and standards of behavior:
  - A. Use of violence, force, noise, coercion, threat, intimidation, fear, passive resistance or other comparable conduct, constituting an interference with school purposes, or urging other students to engage in such conduct. The following enumeration is illustrative of the type of conduct prohibited by this subsection: (1) occupying any school building, school grounds, or part thereof with intent to deprive others of its use; (2) blocking the entrance or exits of any school building or corridor or room therein with intent to deprive others of lawful access to or from, or use of the building or corridor or room; (3) setting fire to or substantially damaging any school building or property or attempting to set fire or cause damage to any school building or property; (4) firing, displaying, or threatening use of firearms, explosives, or other weapons on the school premises for any unlawful purpose. This includes the use of attempted use of pipe bombs, Molotov cocktails, or other explosive or incendiary devices; (5) prevention of or attempting to prevent by physical act the convening or continued functioning of any school or educational function, or of any lawful meeting or assembly on

- school property or at a school-related activity, including the making of a false report of a bomb, fire or uncommon disease-producing organism, as well as triggering a false alarm or delivering or sending an actual or look-alike uncommon disease-producing substance to any school property, vehicle, or activity; (6) continuously and intentionally making noise or acting in any manner so as to interfere seriously with the ability of any teacher or any of the other school personnel to conduct the educational function under his supervision. This subsection shall not, however, be construed to make any particular student conduct a ground for expulsion where such conduct is constitutionally protected as an exercise of free speech or assembly or other right under the Constitution of Indiana or the United States; and (7) through any means of communication, including gestures, symbols, or signals, placing any student, teacher, employee or other person in fear of harm to one's self, a family member, or personal property. This includes such conduct as threatening to get the person, creating a hit list of persons who are to be put in fear of harm, or warning the person that a family member could get hurt or one's car or other property damaged.
- B. Causing or attempting to cause damage to school property, stealing or attempting to steal school property, or repeatedly damaging or stealing school property.
  - C. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause damage to private property, stealing or attempting to steal private property, or repeatedly damaging or stealing private property.
  - D. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical injury or intentionally behaving in such a way as could reasonably cause physical injury to any person. Self-defense or reasonable action undertaken on the reasonable belief that it was necessary to protect some other person does not, however, constitute a violation of this provision.
  - E. Threatening or intimidating any person for any purpose including obtaining money or anything of value from such student.
  - F. Knowingly possessing, handling or transmitting a knife or any object that can reasonably be considered a weapon, provided, however, that a student who must use a knife as part of an organized activity held by an organization that has been approved by the principal of the school is exempt from the application of this Subparagraph f. so long as the knife is used as part of or in accordance with the approved organized activity.
  - G. Knowingly possessing, using, transmitting or being under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind. Use of a drug authorized by a medical prescription from a physician is not a violation of this rule.
    - a. Exception to Rule G: a student with a chronic disease or medical condition may possess and self-administer prescribed medication for the disease or condition if the student's parent has filed a written authorization with the building principal. The written authorization must be filed annually and must include the following information:
      - A. Physician's statement that the student has an acute or chronic disease of medical condition for which medication has been prescribed.
      - B. The nature of the disease or medical condition requires emergency administration of the prescribed medication.
      - C. The student has been instructed in how to self-administer the prescribed medication.
      - D. The student is authorized to possess and self-administer the prescribed medication.
  - H. Engaging in the unlawful selling of a controlled substance or engaging in a criminal law violation that constitutes a danger to other students, or constitutes an interference with school purposes or an educational function.
  - I. Falsely accusing any person of sexual harassment, or of violating a school rule, and/or a state or federal law.

- J. Violating any rules that are reasonably necessary in carrying out school purposes or an educational function, including, but not limited to:
  - a. Engaging in sexual behavior on school property;
  - b. Disobedience of administrative authority
  - c. Engaging in speech or conduct, including clothing, jewelry or hair style, which is profane, indecent, lewd, vulgar, or offensive to school purposes;
  - d. Failing to tell the truth about any matter under investigation by school personnel.
- K. Failing in a substantial number of instances to comply with directions of teachers or other school personnel during any period of time when he is properly under their supervision, where the failure constitutes an interference with school purposes or an educational function.
- L. Engaging in any activity forbidden by the laws of the State of Indiana which constitutes an interference with school purposes or an educational function.
- M. Violating or repeatedly violating any of the rules and standards of behavior adopted by the School Board.
- N. Possessing a firearm or bomb.
  - a. No student shall possess, handle or transmit any firearm or bomb on school property.
  - b. The following devices are considered to be a firearm under this rule:
    - A. Any weapon which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive
    - B. The frame or receiver of any weapon described above
    - C. Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer
    - D. Any destructive device which is an explosive, incendiary, or poison gas bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge, mine, or similar device.
    - E. Any weapon which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant.
    - F. Any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described in the two immediately preceding examples, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled
    - G. An antique firearm
    - H. A rifle or a shotgun which the owner intends to use solely for sporting, recreational, or cultural purposes
  - c. For purposes of this rule, a bomb is any explosive or incendiary device designed to release destructive materials or force or dangerous gases that is detonated by impact, proximity to an object, a timing mechanism, a chemical reaction, ignition, or other predetermined means. See, I.C. 35-41-1-4.3 for exception to this general definition.
  - d. The penalty for possession of a firearm: suspension up to 10 days and expulsion from school for at least one calendar year with the return of the student to be at the beginning of the first semester after the one year period. The length of the expulsion may be reduced by the superintendent if the circumstances warrant such reduction.
  - e. The superintendent shall notify the appropriate law enforcement agency when a student is expelled under this rule.
- O. Possessing a deadly weapon
  - a. No student shall possess, handle or transmit any deadly weapon on school property.
  - b. The following devices are considered to be deadly weapons as defined in I.C. 35-41-1-8:

- A. A weapon, taser or electronic stun weapon, 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.
  - B. An animal readily capable of causing serious bodily injury and used in the commission or attempted commission of a crime.
  - c. The penalty for possession of a deadly weapon: up to 10 days suspension and expulsion from school for a period of up to one calendar year.
  - d. The superintendent shall notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when a student is expelled under this rule.
- P. A student may be expelled if it is determined that the student's legal settlement is not in the attendance area of the school where the student is enrolled.
- a. Exception to Rule P: This rule does not apply to transfer tuition students.
2. The grounds for expulsion in Paragraph C.1 apply when a student is:
- A. On school grounds immediately before, during, and immediately after school hours and at any other time when the school is being used by a school group;
  - B. Off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event, or;
  - C. Traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event.
3. 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 or protect persons on school property. This includes any unlawful activity meeting the above criteria that takes place during weekends, holiday, other school breaks, and the summer period when a student may not be attending classes or other school functions.

#### **E. EXPULSION PROCEDURES**

1. When a principal (or designee) recommends to the superintendent (or designee) that a student be expelled from school, the following procedures will be followed:
- A. The superintendent (or designee) may conduct an expulsion meeting, or may appoint one of the following persons to conduct the expulsion meeting:
    - a. Legal counsel
    - b. A member of the administrative staff who did not expel the student during the current school year and was not involved in the events giving rise to the expulsion.
  - B. An expulsion will not take place until the student and the student's parent are given notice of their right to appear at an expulsion meeting conducted by the superintendent or the person designated above. Failure by a student or a student's parent to request and to appear at this meeting will be deemed a waiver of rights and administratively to contest the expulsion or to appeal it to the school board.
  - C. The notice of the right to an expulsion meeting will be in writing, delivered by a certified mail or by personal delivery, and contain the reasons for the expulsion and the procedure for requesting the meeting.
  - D. At the expulsion meeting, the principal (or designee), will present evidence to support charges against the student. The student or parent will have the opportunity to answer the charges against the student, and to present evidence to support the student's position.

- E. If an expulsion meeting is held, the person conducting the expulsion meeting will make a written summary of the evidence heard at the meeting, take any action found to be appropriate, and give notice of the action taken to the student and the student's parent.
2. The student or parent has the right to appeal the decision of the person conducting the expulsion meeting to the school board within ten (10) days of the receipt of notice of the action taken. The student or parent appeal to the school board must be in writing. If the board hears the appeal, it will consider the written summary of the expulsion meeting and the arguments of both the school administration and the student and/or the student's parent. The board will then take any action deemed appropriate.

**F. PERIOD OR TERM OF EXPULSION**

1. No expulsion of a student shall be for a longer period than the remainder of the school year in which it took effect if the misconduct occurs during the first semester; however, whenever the expulsion takes place during the second semester, the expulsion remains in effect for summer school and may remain in effect for the first semester of the following school year, unless otherwise modified or terminated by order of the Board of School Trustees. The Superintendent may require that a student, who is at least sixteen (16) years of age and who wishes to re-enroll after an expulsion, attend an alternative program.
2. Any expulsion taking effect more than three (3) weeks prior to the beginning of the second semester of any school year must be reviewed prior to the beginning of the second semester. The review shall be conducted by the hearing examiner after he or she has given notice of the review to the student and the student's parents. This review shall be limited to newly discovered evidence or evidence of changes in the student's circumstances occurring since the original hearing. This review may lead to a recommendation by the hearing examiner that the student be reinstated for the second semester.
3. Any expulsion that will remain in effect during the first semester of the following school year must be reviewed before the beginning of the school year. The review shall be conducted by the hearing examiner after the hearing examiner has given notice of the review to the student and to the student's parent. This review shall be limited to newly discovered evidence or evidence of changes in the student's circumstances occurring since the original hearing. This review may lead to a recommendation by the hearing examiner that the student be reinstated for the upcoming school year.

LEGAL REFERENCE: 20 U. S. C. 8921  
20 U. S. C. 8922  
I.C. 20-8.1-5.1-1 et seq.

## **DISCIPLINING SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS**

When the behavior of a student eligible under the IDEA 2004 is such to justify serious disciplinary action, the procedures adhered to will be those defined in the School Town of Munster Administrative Guidelines 2461-A. (full text is available online at: <http://www.neola.com/munster-in/>).

### **DISCIPLINING A 504 STUDENT**

If a student disabled under Section 504 violates the Code of Conduct and is subject to suspension of more than ten (10) days or expulsion, the procedures adhered to will be those defined in the School Town of Munster Administrative Guidelines 2461-B. (full text is available online at: <http://www.neola.com/munster-in/>).

### **COMPLIANCE PLAN for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

The Compliance Plan serves students, parents, employees, applicants for employment and programs within the School Town of Munster, hereinafter referred to as “Munster”.

1. Munster assures students, parents, applicants for employment, and employees that it will not discriminate against any individual.
2. The following are designated as Section 504 compliance coordinators:

Employee/Applicant Issues:

Assistant Superintendent  
School Town of Munster  
8616 Columbia Avenue  
Munster, Indiana 46321  
(219) 836-9111

Student/Parent Issues:

Director of Exceptional Achievers  
School Town of Munster  
8630 Columbia Avenue  
Dr. Vida Choucalas  
Munster, Indiana 46321  
(219) 836-7256

3. Parents are provided procedural safeguards which are included in the “Notice of Parent/Student Rights In Identification, Evaluation and Placement.
4. An impartial hearing and appeal are provided upon request. Procedures are detailed in the “Notice of Parent/Student Rights In Identification, Evaluation and Placement.”
5. Notice to students, parents, employees and general public of non-discrimination assurances and parent/student rights and identification, evaluation and placement will be disseminated annually in the following manner:
  - a. Public service announcement in local newspapers;
  - b. Announcement in local school systems; and,
  - c. Posted notice in each public school building.Additionally, the notice will be included in each student/parent handbook.

Additionally, the notice will be included in the West Lake Special Education Cooperative professional handbook and disseminated to each principal for inclusion in each student/parent handbook.

6. Munster has established the following local grievance procedure to resolve complaints of discrimination with regard to employment:
  - a. An alleged grievance under Section 504 must be filed in writing fully setting out the circumstances giving rise to such grievance.

- b. Such claims must be made in writing and filed with the following individual:

Assistant Superintendent  
School Town of Munster  
8616 Columbia Avenue  
Munster, Indiana 46321

- c. A hearing will be conducted according to the procedures outlined in the regulations implementing the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- d. The coordinator(s) will appoint a hearing officer who will conduct the hearing within a reasonable time after the request was received.
- e. The coordinator(s) shall give the parent, student, or employee reasonable advance notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing.
- f. The hearing may be conducted by any School Town of Munster Official, who does not have a direct interest in the outcome of the hearing.
- g. The local school district shall give the parent, student, or employee full and fair opportunity to present evidence relevant to the issues raised. The parent, student, or employee may, at their own expense, be assisted or represented by individuals of his or her choice, including an attorney.
- h. The local school district shall make its decision in writing within fifteen (15) days after the hearing.
- i. The decision must be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing and shall include a summary of the evidence and reasons for the decision.
7. The School Town of Munster Exceptional Needs Department will conduct an extensive annual “child find” campaign with the goal to locate and identify all Section 504 qualified individuals with disabilities (ages 0 to 21) to reside within the participating school districts.
8. The School Town of Munster Exceptional Needs Department will inform all individuals with disabilities and their parents or guardian of the district’s responsibilities and procedural safeguards under Section 504, as well as those under Indiana Special Education Regulations (Article 7) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

## **ANTI 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. The procedures adhered to will be those defined in the School Town of Munster Administrative Guidelines 5517. (full text is available online at: <http://www.neola.com/munster-in/>).

## **USE OF TOBACCO ON SCHOOL PREMISES**

The School Board recognizes that the use of tobacco presents a health hazard which can have serious consequences both for the user and the nonuser and is, therefore, of concern to the Board. The procedures adhered to will be those defined in the School Town of Munster Board Policy 5512. (full text is available online at: <http://www.neola.com/munster-in/>).

## **STUDENT NETWORK AND INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE**

Students are encouraged to use the Corporation's computers/network and Internet connection for educational purposes. The procedures adhered to will be those defined in the School Town of Munster Board Policy 7540.03. (full text is available online at: <http://www.neola.com/munster-in/>).

## **CIVIL RIGHTS ASSURANCE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

The School Town of Munster is committed to equal opportunity and does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, religion, sex, handicapping conditions, or national origin including limited English proficiency, in any employment opportunity. No person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to unlawful discrimination on such basis under any educational program or student activity.

If you have experienced discrimination in such educational programs or activities, written inquiries about procedures that are available and for consideration of complaints alleging such discrimination should be directed to:

Dr. Vida Choucalas  
School Town of Munster  
Munster, Indiana 46321  
(219) 836-7256  
Section 504 Coordinator/Americans with Disabilities Coordinator  
(Students)

Mr. Steve Tripenfeldas  
School Town of Munster  
8616 Columbia Avenue  
Munster, Indiana 46321  
(219) 836-9111  
Section 504 Coordinator (Employees)  
Title VI Coordinator (Race, Color, Creed, National Origin, and Limited  
English Proficiency)  
Title IX Coordinator (Gender)

Any other information concerning the above policies may be obtained by contacting:

Dr. Matthew Hicks  
8616 Columbia Avenue, Munster,  
Indiana 46321,  
(219) 836-9111.

The School Town of Munster does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation, transgender status, and gender identity), disability, age, religion, military status, ancestry, or genetic information, which are classes protected by Federal and/or State law, occurring in the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs and/or activities affecting the Corporation environment. No person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to unlawful discrimination on such basis under any educational program or student activity.

## **PEST CONTROL AND USE OF PESTICIDES**

The School Corporation is committed to providing a safe environment for students. It seeks to prevent children from being exposed to pests and pesticides. The procedures adhered to will be those defined in the School Town of Munster Board Policy 8432. (full text is available online at: <http://www.neola.com/munster-in/>).

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the school-community relations program is to establish and maintain in the public mind both respect for the school system and confidence that it is providing the best possible education for the Corporation's students in terms of intellectual, emotional, moral, social, and physical development.

To this end, parents and other Corporation residents are to be kept informed regarding Federal/State regulations and Corporation policies and guidelines.

The Superintendent shall be responsible for the Corporation's public relations program which shall be designed to accomplish the following objectives to:

- A. Explain the programs, achievements, and needs of the schools to parents, local officials, community leaders, local business and industry, community organizations, special interest groups, the community as a whole and/or State and Federal agencies
- B. Obtain reliable, useful information regarding what residents think and would like to know about their schools.
- C. Anticipate potential problems caused by misunderstanding or lack of information and take measures to eliminate them before they happen.
- D. Operate meetings in accordance with law and as speedily and efficiently as circumstances permit.

### Board Communication Procedures

In keeping with their responsibilities as a representative public body, the Board will present a unified front, inasmuch as possible, on issues on which there may not be total agreement, with the Board president and/or the superintendent as the official spokesperson for the Board.

### The Role of the Curriculum and Instruction Office

Under most circumstances, the Curriculum and Instruction Office is the Corporation liaison with the public news media. All contacts and releases concerning Corporation policies and regulations, matters of Corporation-wide interest, or potentially controversial topics will be handled or cleared by the Curriculum and Instruction Office. If unable to answer an inquiry, the Curriculum and Instruction Office will refer reporters to the individual best able to answer.

All crisis communications must be referred to the Curriculum and Instruction Office or, in the absence of the Curriculum and Instruction Director, to another central office administrator. Principals are urged to notify the Superintendent's office or the Curriculum and Instruction Office as quickly as possible in the event of an emergency situation.

### Responding to Individual Concerns

The Corporation does not view the news media as the appropriate forum for responding to the concerns of individual parents and students. Instead, the Corporation refers patrons and the public to the procedure outlined in Board Policy 9130, Public Concerns, as a more effective way to facilitate discussion and resolve issues.

### The Role of Individual Buildings

The principal is the primary contact for information about his/her school. Principals are encouraged to release routine news items and information of a positive nature concerning events, personnel, students and non-controversial programs in their schools. Information may be released in written form (press release) or through personal contact.

Staff members, students and parent representatives of the school must clear all media contacts with the principal in advance.