



MCS PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

2025 / 2026



Table of CONTENT



1	Superintendent's Message
2	Board of Education
3	2025-26 District Calendar
4	Contact Information
5	Our Schools
6	Standardized Student Dress
7	Positive Behavior Guidelines
9	Cafeteria Information and Policies
13	Student Absences
17	School of Choice
18	Uniform Complaint Procedures
21	Transportation
26	Student and Parent/Guardian Rights
36	Non-Discrimination, Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying
39	California School Immunization Law
40	Kindergarten Oral Health Requirements
45	Healthy Schools Act
46	Americans with Disabilities Act
47	Local Educational Agency Billing Program
48	Student Network Acceptable Use Agreement
52	Dual Language Immersion
53	M.A.R.S. Afterschool Program
54	Communications

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Families,

Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year! Merced City School District values your participation in your child's education. As you begin the new school year, please take time to review the information in this parent/student handbook. The handbook includes the most current policies, regulations, and procedures that govern our District's work as it relates to you and your students' rights and responsibilities in public education.

Also, to ensure that we can contact you in school-wide or District-wide emergencies, as well as for regular communication between the school and your home, please sign up for ParentSquare. ParentSquare is MCSD's safe and secure platform for all District and school-to-home communication.

Merced City School District's mission is ensuring all students have access to high-quality instruction in environments that value and build from their unique talents. Guiding students toward mastery of academics, we build from our students talents to nurture their continuous academic achievement, critical-thinking skills, and develop the resiliency, perseverance, and confidence necessary to excel in learning and life. Our District team provides positive, inclusive environments where all students feel safe, respected, and connected. Thank you for choosing Merced city schools and being a valuable part of our MCSD community. I look forward to getting to know all our students and families and sharing the wonderful things happening in our classrooms and schools. Let's have a great and enriching school year.

Sincerely,
Julianna Stocking
Superintendent



Julianna Stocking

Meet our

BOARD OF EDUCATION



Priya Lakireddy
President
Trustee Area #1



Tsia Xiong
Member
Trustee Area #2



Allen Brooks
Member
Trustee Area #3



Ann-Marie Delgado
Clerk
Trustee Area #4



Beatrice McCutchen
Member
Trustee Area #5

The Merced City School District is governed by an elected five-member Board of Education. The board members represent five geographic areas that MCSD serves and are elected at large for four-year terms.

The Board of Education is responsible for approving District policy and the District's annual budget. Together, board members and District staff work hard to ensure that the District's mission and core values are fulfilled in all classrooms. The Board of Education holds regular meetings on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 7:00 p.m. Meeting locations may include the Board Room located at 444 West 23rd Street, the STEAM Center on the Ada Givens campus, or various school sites. Meetings are also available on the District's YouTube page. Agendas and previous minutes are posted on the District's website <https://www.mercedcsd.org> or call 385-6640 for the location of the next board meeting. Agendas are posted 72 hours in advance of the regular meeting. Parents are welcome.

Merced City School District 2025-2026 Calendar



July 2025							August 2025							September 2025							October 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5						1	2		1	2	3	4	5	6				1	2	3	4
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30					26	27	28	29	30	31	
							31																				

November 2025							December 2025							January 2026							February 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	31							
30																											

March 2026							April 2026							May 2026							June 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	*5	*6	7				1	2	3	4						1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30				

Important School Dates

August 4-6	New Teacher Orientation
August 7	Teachers Return
August 13	First Day of School
September 11	Back to School (Pre-6)
September 18	Back to School (7-8)
October 9-17	Parent Conference (Pre-6)
Oct 20-28	Parent Conference (7-8)
December 17	Minimum Day- Teachers & Students
February 26-27	Parent Conference (Pre-6)
March 5-6	Middle School Staff Development
March 19	Open House (Pre-6)
March 26	Open House (7-8)
June 3	Graduation
June 5	Last Day of School

1st Quarter = 47 Days
2nd Quarter = 41 Days
3rd Quarter = 49 Days
4th Quarter = 43 Days
Total = 180 School Days

Holidays

July 4	Independence Day
September 1	Labor Day
November 10 & 11	Veterans' Day Recess
November 24-28	Thanksgiving Recess
November 26-28	District Offices Closed
December 18-Jan 2	Winter Recess
December 24-25	District Offices Closed
December 31	District Offices Closed Noon
January 1	District Offices Closed
January 19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
February 16-20	Presidents' Week Recess
February 16 & 20	District Offices Closed
April 3-10	Spring Break
April 3	District Offices Closed
May 25	Memorial Day
June 19	Juneteenth

*Observed

All Wednesdays are 50 minute early release.
Exceptions to the early release are the Wednesdays during parent conferences, the Wednesday before Winter Break, and the last Wednesday of school.

Legend

(1)	Holidays—(circled & in red) Schools & District Offices Closed
	Recesses—(highlighted yellow) Schools Closed
	New Teacher Orientation
	All Teachers Return
	Wednesday (highlighted gray) - early dismissal
	PreK-6 Parent Conferences (Minimum Days)
	7-8 Parent Conference (Minimum Days)
	7-8 Staff Development (Minimum Days)
	Back to School Night
	Open House
	Minimum Day for Teachers and Students
	End of Quarter
	Beginning/End of School Year
	Half Day Holiday
	All Schools and District offices closed
[]	# of School Days

Approved: 9/24/2024

Contact INFORMATION

444 W 23rd Street Merced, CA 95340

www.mercedcsd.org

District Contact Information

District Information	209.385.6600
Deputy Superintendent	209.385.6685
Educational Services	209.381.2816
Office of the Superintendent	209.385.6640
Human Resources	209.385.6730
School of Choice	209.385.6647
School Nutrition Services	209.385.6654
Special Education	209.385.6648
Student Records	209.385.6647
Student Insurance Information	209.385.6645
Transportation	209.385.6690
Communications	209.385.6639
After School Programs	209.381.2421

Other Contact Information

Merced County Office of Education	209.381.6600
Merced Union High School District	209.325.2000
McSwain School District	209.354.2700
Weaver School District	209.723.7606





OUR SCHOOLS

Elementary Schools

Burbank

609E. Alexander Ave.
209.385.6674

Chenoweth

3200 Parsons Ave.
209.385.6620

Community Day

601 Mercy Ave.
(Dominican Ave)
209.385.6647

Franklin

2736 Franklin Rd.
209.385.6623

Fremont

1120 W. 22nd St.
209.385.6627

Givens

2900 Green St.
209.385.6610

Gracey

945 West Ave.
209.385.6710

Muir

300 W. 26th St.
209.385.6667

Elementary (continued)

Peterson

848 E. Donna Dr.
209.385.6700

Reyes

123 South "N" St.
209.385.6761

Rivera

945 Buena Vista Dr.
209.724.2550

Sheehy

1240 W. 6th St.
209.385.6676

Stefani

2768 Ranchero Ln.
209.724.2500

Stowell

241 E. 11th St.
209.385.2803

Wright

900 E. 20th St.
209.385.6615

Middle Schools

Cruickshank

601 Mercy Ave.
209.385.6330

Hoover

800 E. 26th St.
209.385.6631

Rivera

945 Buena Vista Dr.
209.385.6680

Tenaya

760 W. 8th St.
209.385.6687

Preschool

Galen Clark

211 E. 11th St.
209.385.6619

STANDARDIZED STUDENT DRESS

Merced City School District follows a “Standardized Student Dress”.

Standardized Student Dress guidelines as outlined in Board Policy 5132 and Administrative Regulations 5132 are as follows:



1. Only non-modified school hats, bill worn forward, specific to that campus site are allowed. Other hats, caps, or other types of head coverings may not be worn indoors, except for special dress-up days, school-related hats or caps, or for religious or cultural observance. Students may wear sun-protective clothing, including hats, outdoors during the day. (Education Code 35183.5)
2. Wearing apparel, accessories, or colors that advocate, promote, or reference gang activity or are perceived to be a threat to students or staff is not allowed. Gang-related apparel may include, but is not limited to, jewelry, belts, buckles, bandanas, insignias, body writings, drawings, decals, and pictures. (Education Code 32282)
3. Clothing, jewelry, accessories, and personal items (backpacks, fanny packs, gym bags, water bottles, etc.) shall be free of writing, pictures, or any other insignia which is crude, vulgar, lewd, obscene, profane, violent, or sexually suggestive, or which bears drug, alcohol or tobacco company advertising, promotions and likenesses, or which advocates racial, ethnic or religious prejudice.
4. Attire, which does not cover both male and female students' undergarments or midriffs, is not allowed. Incidental visibility of straps or waistbands are not a violation and should not be corrected.
5. Shoes must be worn at all times and must not limit student participation in school activities. Sandals must have heel straps and toes must be covered. Slippers, or sock-like footwear are a safety risk and are not appropriate for school.
6. Only prescription glasses shall be worn in class. A valid medical note, on file in the office, is required for wearing prescription sunglasses. Sunglasses outdoors are not a violation.
7. Pants must be worn at the waist and cannot sag or bag. Shorts, skirts and dresses shorter than mid-thigh are prohibited. Rips in pants or jeans are allowed below mid-thigh only.

In case of questionable dress and grooming situations not covered by these guidelines, the site administrator will determine the appropriateness and make the final decision in accordance with all guidelines above.

Please contact the school principal with any concerns.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

MISSION

Merced City School District continually strives to provide a safe, positive, and productive learning environment for all students and staff. The District has established a comprehensive approach to creating a positive culture at each school site that emphasizes relationship building, acknowledges the importance of diversity and equity, and uses an instructional model to provide those we serve with the necessary social, emotional, and behavior skills to make them successful in our community.

MCSD has adopted a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) for both academics and behavior.

MCSD has adopted a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) for both academics and behavior. Through our school site's tiered systems of intervention, students and staff are able to access services and interventions on multiple levels based on a data-driven analysis of students' needs; while effectively using site resources and personnel. MCSD's MTSS model for behavior incorporates Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS);

A framework to proactively address behavior management. MCSD's PBIS framework focuses on supporting students' social-emotional learning while using culturally relevant and trauma-informed practices.

Every school within MCSD has been involved in continual training in PBIS. Each school site's framework strives to create a positive climate and culture by establishing expected behaviors across all school settings, providing interventions and support to students who are in need, and using data-driven problem-solving to address issues that arise. It is the application of these positive behavior-based interventions that increases a school's capacity to create an environment for teaching and enhanced learning.

An effective multi-level prevention system provides access to increasingly intense levels of instruction and interventions: Tier 1 (available to all), Tier 2 (available to at-risk students who need targeted support), and Tier 3 (available to a few students who require individualized support). Site staff use a data-driven process to identify and implement interventions by working as a team whose target is to identify student success through measurable goals.

MCSD is committed to providing students and staff with high-quality evidence-based behavior interventions. The District has invested in providing a range of supports for students, which include social/emotional and behavioral interventions, counseling and behavior support services, instructional evidence-based curriculums, medical supports, access to mental health supports, and partnerships with community support agencies.

Regular School Attendance

While it's imperative for students to be in school each day and on time not only for success academically, regular school attendance is also essential for students to benefit from social and emotional learning, understanding of the school's expectations and systems, developing problem-solving skills, and working within the school culture. These skills not only will greatly enhance a student's success academically and socially but also will lead to a more complete educational experience and future school success.



Positive Behavior Guidelines (continued)



Infraction

An infraction is a minor violation of school rules or expectations, which can be quickly addressed with minimal loss of instructional time. By addressing infractions, it brings attention to the rule or expectation that was violated, creates a teaching opportunity, supports the student in acknowledging the behavior, and facilitates an opportunity to problem-solve about how to make amends to the school community.

Offense

An offense is a major violation of school rules and/or California Education Code and can include repeated minor infractions. Offenses typically involve the violation of student's, staff's, or school's physical, mental, educational, or property rights. Consequences for offenses are generally higher than for infractions; however, the goal still remains to address the violation and provide teaching and correction of the violation.

Suspension/Expulsion

Students who violate California Education Code can be subject to suspension and in rare and extreme cases expulsion. For a list of California Education Codes for Suspension and Expulsion, please visit the District Website under Pupil Services or contact the Pupil Services Department at (209) 385-6647. A student may be suspended from school by the school administration for violating a California Education Code and removed from school for up to 5 days for any one incident. A recommendation for expulsion may occur when a student violates a California Education Code. Prior to a suspension or expulsion, all students will be provided due process where they will be informed of the possible violation that occurred and are given the opportunity to provide information from their viewpoint.

Parents/guardians will be notified either in person or in writing of any suspension or expulsion involving their child. The decision to suspend or use alternatives will be considered based on the violation, frequency, safety, and best appropriate means of correction.

Decisions on school discipline for violation of school rules or California Education Code will not be discriminatory and not based on race, gender, religion, sex, color, national origin, ethnic group, physical or mental disability, parental status, or any other unlawful consideration. Decisions on school discipline rest with school administration and/or District administration.

CAFETERIA

INFORMATION & POLICIES



Mission

To offer all students nutritionally adequate and attractively presented school meals and snacks within an educational environment that teaches and models healthy choices.

To achieve this mission statement, the School Nutrition Services Department (SNS Department) participates in a variety of federally assisted meal programs to offer breakfast, lunch, super snacks, and summer meals to students in the Merced City School District (MCSD). All meals are carefully planned to meet demanding federal, state, and local standards for meal quality, safety, and nutrient contribution. The goal of the Nutrition Services Department is to provide healthy meals to help students do their best in school each day.

Meal Applications

All meals will be NO COST for all students - regardless of income - during the 2025/2026 school year, thanks to the California Universal Meals Program. Therefore, a meal application is not required.

- All children can receive 1 breakfast and 1 lunch at no cost every school day.
- À la carte and additional entrées/meals will be available for purchase.
- Refund requests for withdrawn or graduating students or students with a positive balance can be issued by submitting a request to the Nutrition Services office.
 - Requests must be made within one school year since the last date of attendance.
 - Adults will not be allowed to charge any meals or à la carte items, causing their meal account to go into a deficit balance.
- Even though meals are free, we are encouraging families to complete MCSD's Confidential Household Income Survey. The information collected will be used to help determine P-EBT payments as well as assist in funding for additional resources for our students, such as sports and intramurals, mental health resources, field trips, enrichment programs, and school supplies. The survey is located on the [Aeries Parent Portal](#) and is confidential, quick, and easy. Please contact Teresa Martinez at 209-385-6605 for more information.

Meals

- We serve 14,500 meals per day.
- An unlimited salad bar is available at breakfast and lunch. We offer a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables – many from central valley farms.
- Milk choices are fat-free and low-fat milk, and our meals include plant-based and lean proteins, whole grain-rich foods, reduced sodium, and are lower in saturated fat and have no trans fat.
- We offer “Breakfast After the Bell” at elementary schools and “Second Chance Breakfast” at middle schools.
- Prior to meal service, students are encouraged to wash their hands and/or use hand sanitizers that are located in every cafeteria.
- We highly encourage parents to practice the PIN number with their student(s) to help with service in the cafeteria.

Cafeteria Information and Policies (continued)

- What is a reimbursable meal?
- For a meal to qualify for federal reimbursement, regulations state that meals served to students, whether breakfast, lunch, or snack, must offer all components of the meal.
- Offer versus Serve (OVS) is a provision of our programs that allows students to decline some of the food offered. The goals of OVS are to reduce food waste in the school meals programs while permitting students to decline foods they do not intend to eat.
- What are the requirements for K-8 breakfast?
- Breakfast is made up of 4 food items: milk, fruit/vegetable, 2 grains (or 1 grain and 1 meat/meat alternate; both considered 2 items). Students must select at least 3 of these items for a complete meal (1 of which must be a vegetable or fruit).
- What are the requirements for lunch and super snacks?
- Lunch and super snacks are made up of 5 basic food components: milk, meat or meat alternative, vegetable, fruit, and grain. Students must select at least 3 of these components for a complete meal (1 of which must be a vegetable or fruit).

Meal Modifications

Schools participating in a federal Child Nutrition Program are required to make accommodations for children who are unable to eat school meals because of a disability* that restricts their diet. In order to make substitutions or modifications to the school meals, the school must have a written Medical Statement* on file signed by a licensed physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner.

- In California, effective April 1, 2025, RDs are permitted to complete and sign a written medical statement for school meal modifications due to a disability. The CDE also permits the following state-licensed healthcare professionals to complete and sign a written medical statement for a disability: licensed physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners.
- California allows electronic signatures. A written medical statement that is e-signed by the designated state-licensed healthcare professional can also be considered an acceptable signature.
- Medical statements must:
 - Describe the physical or mental impairment sufficiently in order for the School Food Authority to understand how it restricts a child's diet.
 - Explain what must be done to accommodate a child's disability.
 - Identify food or foods to be omitted from a child's diet.
 - Recommend food or choice of foods that must be substituted in a child's meals.
 - Please specify if the child can safely consume certain items with the allergen. For example, if a child is allergic to fluid milk but can safely consume an item with dairy as an ingredient. Or if a child has a soy allergy but can safely consume a product with soybean oil.
- Submit the completed medical statement form to your school nurse, who will forward it to Nutrition Services. Allow 5 business days to initiate or change an accommodation.
- Medical Statements are in effect until the condition changes or the student leaves the District. If the condition changes, a revised Medical Statement form, signed by a licensed physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner, must be submitted.
- A parent/guardian may remove a Special Diet accommodation - that is no longer needed - by completing the Remove Special Diet Form. Please allow 2 business days from the date of submission for removal.
- For more information, visit [here](#).

Cafeteria Information and Policies (continued)

District Wellness Policy

The federal government requires any school District that participates in the National School Meals Program to have a local school wellness policy. (Education Code 49432; 42 USC 1758 b; 7 CFR 210.31) MCSd's [Wellness Policy](#) and [FAQs](#) address physical activity, wellness education, and nutrition as they aim at improving the health, attendance rate, and academic performance of our students. The Nutrition goals outline standards for what food is sold, served, or distributed on our campuses, as well as celebrations and parties, classroom snacks brought by parents, and student rewards or incentives.

Standards include:

- Each school will ensure that the foods and beverages sold, served, and given on the school campus to students starting at midnight and up to one-half hour after the school day will comply with the California Education Code and California Code of Regulations.
- To ensure compliance, it is recommended that all foods provided during parties/celebrations, etc., be purchased through the Nutrition Services Department (pizza parties, lunch with the principal for attendance, student birthdays, holiday celebrations, student achievements, etc.). Contact the SNS office for order forms (385-6654).
- Parties/celebrations will be limited to one time per month per classroom.
- Celebrations will be held after lunch.
- Parties/celebrations will make every attempt to include physical activity and healthy foods.
- Celebration foods must be individually wrapped, allergen-free, comply [here](#), or be from this pre-approved list:
 - Fruit kabobs
 - Yogurt tubes/cups served with fresh fruit
 - Healthy granola bars
 - Graham crackers
 - Apple slices with toppings
 - Popcorn
 - Baked Chips
 - Whole Grain Muffins or Cookies
- Fundraisers do not include after-school sporting events or activities.
- Non-compliant food-related fundraisers are prohibited on school campuses from midnight to one half-hour after school.
- Each school will support fundraising efforts that promote healthy eating by selling healthy food items or non-food items.
- [Rewards and incentives](#): The District will provide teachers and other relevant school staff with a list of alternative ways to reward children.
- Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.
- Please refer to the California Department of Education's [website](#) for further guidance.



Cafeteria Information and Policies (continued)

Nondiscrimination Statement



In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint-filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the state or local agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

- To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, [AD-3027 \(PDF\)](#), found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

Mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

Fax:

202-690-7442; or

Email:

Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

STUDENT ABSENCES

Merced City School District recognizes that students may be absent from school from time to time for the following reasons that are considered excused absence. We also recognize that any absence from school for any reason results in missed instruction and educational opportunities. As required by the California Department of Education, reporting on school and District progress is the reporting of chronic absenteeism, which is defined as a student being absent from school for 10% or more for any absence, excused or unexcused. Merced City School District works to educate parents on the extreme importance of regular and on time school attendance.

ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

A student's absence shall be excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness (Ed. Code 48205)
2. Quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer (Ed. Code 478205) (cf. 5112.2 – Exclusions from Attendance)
3. Medical, dental, optometric, or chiropractic appointment (Ed. Code 48205)
4. Attendance at funeral services for a member of the immediate family, which shall be limited to one day if the service is conducted in California or three days if the service is conducted out of state. (Ed. Code 48205)
5. Jury duty in the manner provided by law (Ed. Code 48205)
6. The illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child to whom the student is the custodial parent (Ed. Code 48205) (cf. 5146 – Married/Pregnant/Parenting Students)
7. Upon advance written request by the parent/guardian and the approval of the principal or designee, justifiable personal reasons including, but not limited to: (Ed. Code 48205)
 - a. Appearance in court
 - b. Attendance at a funeral service
 - c. Observation of a holiday or ceremony of his/her religion
 - d. Attendance at religious retreats not to exceed four hours per semester
 - e. Attendance at an employment conference
 - f. Attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization
8. Service as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Elections Code 12302 (Ed. Code 48205) (cf. 6142.3 – Civic Education)
9. Participation in religious exercises or to receive moral and religious instruction in accordance with District policy (Ed. Code 46014).
 - In such instances, the student shall attend at least the minimum school day.
 - The student shall be excused for this purpose on no more than four days per school month. (cf. 6141.2 – Recognition of Religious Beliefs and Customs)
10. For the purpose of spending time with a member of the pupil's immediate family, who is an active duty member of the uniformed services, as defined in Section 49701, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from, deployment to a combat zone or combat support position. Absences granted pursuant to this paragraph shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the superintendent of the school District.



ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

(continued)

11. For the purpose of participating in a cultural ceremony or event.

A pupil absent from school under this section shall be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during the absence that can be reasonably provided and, upon satisfactory completion within a reasonable period of time, shall be given full credit therefor. The teacher of the class from which a pupil is absent shall determine which tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the pupil missed during the absence.

Method of Verification

When a student who has been absent returns to school, he/she shall present a satisfactory explanation verifying the reason for the absence. Absences shall be verified by the student's parent/guardian, other person having control of the minor, or the student if age 18 or older. (Ed. Code 46012.5 CCR 306)

All absences must be verified within 72 hours of the last date of absence or it will become an unexcused absence or truancy.

The following methods may be used to verify student absences:

- 1.** Written note, fax, Parent Square message, or email from parent/guardian or parent representative.
- 2.** Conversation, in person or by telephone, between the verifying employee and the student's parent/guardian or parent representative. The employee shall subsequently record the following:
 - a.** Name of student
 - b.** Name of parent/guardian or parent representative
 - c.** Name of verifying employee
 - d.** Date(s) of absence
 - e.** Reason for absence

Visit to the student's home by the verifying employee, or any other reasonable method which establishes the fact that the student was absent for the reasons stated. The employee shall document the verification and include the information specified in item #2 above.

3. Physician's verification.

- a.** When excusing students for confidential medical services or verifying such appointment, District staff shall not ask about the purpose of such appointment but may contact a medical office to confirm the time of the appointment.

Extensive absences beyond three consecutive days require verification from a physician or medical provider.

Since class participation is an integral part of students' learning experiences, parents/guardians and students shall be encouraged to schedule medical and other appointments during non-school hours. (BP 5113)

A student who is absent from school without a valid excuse three full days in one school year or absent for more than 30 minutes during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof, will be classified as a truant. (EC 48260) Parents/guardians will be notified of the student's truancy by an attendance letter.



ABSENCES AND EXCUSES (continued)

Notification of Truancy

In the Merced City School District, notifications are made to families through a letter that references the Education Code and uses language and terms provided by the State of California. Terms used may seem severe. The letter is not intended to alarm parents or families but to ensure they are fully informed of the requirements and possible consequences for truancy.

Parents/guardians will be notified that their child is truant by letter, email, or telephone call (EC 48260.5)

The letter will include the following information:

- The student is truant
- That the parent/guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the student at school
- That parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290)
- That alternative educational programs are available in the school District
- That the parent/guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the student's truancy
- That the student may be subject to prosecution under Section 48264
- For a student under 18 years of age but 13 years of age or older, that the student may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the student's driving privilege pursuant to Section 1302.7 of the Vehicle Code.
- That is recommended that a parent/guardian accompany the student to school and attend classes with the student for one day (Amended by Stats. 2018, Ch. 507)

School Attendance Review Team (SART)

When a student has accumulated a minimum of 7 unexcused absences or trancies or 10 absences (excused or unexcused), parents will be notified through mail that a School Attendance Review Team (SART) meeting has been scheduled. The purpose of the meeting is to address reasons for absences and to work together to remove barriers that are preventing the student from going to school. A contract will be signed at the conclusion of the conference that indicates failure to comply with the SART will result in a referral to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB).

SART Attendees may include:

- Parent
- Student
- Administrator
- MCSD student Services Personnel if applicable (nurse, social worker, counselor, School Resource Officer)

The SART meeting will be held at the student's school site. Two attempts will be made to meet with parents to discuss attendance concerns and possible solutions. A home visit by an administrator or school resource officer may be conducted if the school is unable to conduct the SART meeting with the family. If families cannot be contacted through two attempts and a home visit by an administrator or school resource officer, the student will be referred to the School Attendance Review Board.

School Attendance & Review Board (SARB) and Truancy Mediation

When a student in MCSD is habitually truant, has irregular attendance at school, or is chronically absent (absent for 10 percent or more of the school year), the student may be referred to the School Attendance Review Board. After a student has reached 12 absences or trancies or 14 absences (excused or unexcused), the school site will send a SARB referral to the Pupil Services office. The intent of SARB is to provide targeted guidance to meet the special needs of students with school attendance problems or school behavior problems pursuant to EC Section 48320.

ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

(continued)

These interventions are designed to support students with attendance and behavioral problems within the education system and to reduce the number of students who dropout of school.

The School Attendance Review Board may identify available community services that can resolve the attendance concerns. The SARB Panel shall direct the student or the student's parents or guardians, or both, to make use of community services.

The School Attendance Review Board may require, at any time, that it determines proper, the student or parents or guardians of the student, or both, to furnish satisfactory evidence of participation in the available community services. (EC 48263 b1)

SARB Hearings are held at Student Services located at 601 Mercy Ave.

SARB attendees may include:

- Parent/guardian
- Student
- MCSD Student Services Director or designee
- Merced County Probation Department
- Merced County Child Protective Services
- Merced Police Department
- Merced County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS)
- MCSD Nurse
- MCSD Counselor
- MCSD Site Administrators
- Merced County District Attorney Representative (EC 48321)



In accordance with District Policy, residents of the Merced City School District may apply to enroll their child(ren) in a School of Choice other than their assigned school, if space is available.

Applications are available beginning January 5, 2026 at:

Merced City School Pupil Services Office
601 Mercy Ave, Merced, California
209-385-6647

**(Office entrance is located at the corner of
Mercy Ave and Dominican Dr.)**

The deadline for submitting an application is May 1, 2026.

Applications are not first-come, first-served, but will be processed based on enrollment factors at the school.

A copy of the complete District Policy for the Schools of Choice Program is available upon request at the Pupil Services Office or by visiting our MCSD website.

This notice is being included in this Handbook as required by Education Code Section 489980.



**ALL SCHOOLS OF CHOICE APPLICATIONS FOR
THE 2025/2026 SCHOOL YEAR MUST BE
RETURNED TO:**

Pupil Services Office, 601 Mercy Ave, Merced, California
(Office entrance is located at the Corner of Mercy Ave
and Dominican Dr.)

NO LATER THAN: May 1, 2026

Approval/Denial of your application will not occur until the end of the third week of the new school year. That means that your child must be registered and consistently attending their home school and be in attendance there on the first day of school in order to be eligible for a School of Choice (SOC).

Applications will be selected by lottery to determine the order in which students may be accepted as openings occur.

Notification of approval will be by phone call or mail.

Applicants who receive approval must enroll at the approved School of Choice within 3 days of receiving notification.

Home-to-school transportation is the responsibility of the parent.

Please be advised that if an SOC is granted, the SOC requested school will become the child's permanent school of record for the remainder of their schooling in the Merced City School District. By accepting the SOC, you are relinquishing your child's position at their current school of residence. If you want your child to return to the original school or any other school with the Merced City School District, you must fill out a new SOC application and abide by all rules and requirements.

For questions, please call 385-6647.



UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

ANNUAL NOTIFICATION OF UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURES (UCP) 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR (Board Policy 1312.3)

The Merced City School District has the primary responsibility to ensure compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations. The Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP) is established to investigate and resolve allegations of unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying, and complaints alleging violation of state or federal laws governing educational programs, non-compliance with laws relating to pupil fees and the District's Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP).

The Merced City School District will investigate all allegations of unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying on the basis of the student's actual or perceived ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, immigration status, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital or parental status, as identified in Education Code section 200 and 220 and Government Code section 11135, including any actual or perceived characteristics as set forth in Penal Code section 422.55 or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics in any program or activity conducted by the agency, which is funded directly by, or that receives or benefits from any state financial assistance.

Programs and Activities Subject to the UCP.

The UCP shall also be used when addressing complaints alleging failure to comply with state and/or federal laws in:

- Accommodations for Pregnant and Parenting Pupils
- Adult Education
- After School Education and Safety
- Agricultural Career Technical Education
- Career Technical and Technical Education, Career Technical, Technical Training (state)
- Career Technical Education (federal)
- Child Care and Development
- Compensatory Education
- Course Periods without Educational Content
- Educational and Graduation Requirements for Pupils in Foster Care, Pupils who are Homeless, former Juvenile Court Pupils now enrolled in a school District and Children of Military Families
- Every Student Succeeds Act
- Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP)
- Migrant Education
- Physical Education Instructional Minutes
- Pupil Fees
- Reasonable Accommodations to a Lactating Pupil
- Regional Occupational Centers and Programs
- School Plans for Student Achievement
- School Safety Plans
- School Site Councils
- State Preschool
- State Preschool Health and Safety Issues in LEAs Exempt from Licensing

Pupil Fees

A pupil fee includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:

- A fee charged to a pupil as a condition for registering for school or classes, or as a condition for participation in a class or an extracurricular activity, regardless of whether the class or activity is elective or compulsory, or is for credit.
- A security deposit, or other payment, that a pupil is required to make to obtain a lock, locker, book, class apparatus, musical instrument, clothes, or other materials or equipment.
- A purchase that a pupil is required to make to obtain materials, supplies, equipment, or clothes associated with an educational activity.

A pupil fees complaint may be filed with the principal of a school or our superintendent or his or her designee. A pupil fee and/or an LCAP complaint may be filed anonymously, however, the complainant must provide evidence or information leading to evidence to support the complaint.

A pupil enrolled in a school in our District shall not be required to pay a pupil fee for participation in an educational activity.

A pupil fee complaint shall be filed no later than one year from the date the alleged violation occurred.





Additional Information

MCSD will post a standardized notice of the educational rights of pupils in foster care, pupils who are homeless, former juvenile court pupils now enrolled in a school District, and pupils in military families as specified in Education Code Sections 48645.7, 48853, 48853.5, 49069.5, 51225.1, and 51225.2. This notice shall include complaint process information, as applicable.

We shall post a notice to identify appropriate subjects of state preschool health and safety issues in each California state preschool program classroom in each school, notifying parents, guardians, pupils, and teachers of (1) the health and safety requirements under Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations that apply to California state preschool programs under HSC section 1596.7925 and (2) where to get a form.

The staff member, position, or unit responsible for receiving UCP complaints for students is:

Ms. Tamara Ferrario, Executive Officer of Human Resources
530 West 21st Street, Merced, CA. 95340
(209) 385-6759

The designated UCP compliance and investigation staff member knows the laws and programs assigned to investigate.

The compliance officer who receives a complaint may assign another compliance officer to investigate and resolve the complaint. The compliance officer shall promptly notify the complainant and respondent, if applicable if another compliance officer is assigned to the complaint.

Complaints alleging discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, must be filed within six (6) months from the date the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, occurred or the date the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, unless the time for filing is extended by the superintendent or his or her designee.

Complaints will be investigated and a written report with a Decision will be sent to the complainant within sixty (60) days from the receipt of the complaint. This time period may be extended by written agreement of the complainant. The person responsible for investigating the complaint shall conduct and complete the investigation in accordance with our UCP policies and procedures.

The complainant has a right to appeal our Decision of complaints regarding specific programs and activities subject to the UCP, pupil fees, and the LCAP to the California Department of Education (CDE) by filing a written appeal within 15 days of receiving our Decision. A copy of the originally filed complaint and a copy of our Decision must accompany the appeal.

The complaint is advised of civil law remedies, including, but not limited to, injunctions, restraining orders, or other remedies or orders that may be available under state or federal discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying laws, if applicable.

Notwithstanding the process for written complaints, any individual who believes that he/she or another student or group has been subjected to unlawful discrimination may orally report the alleged discrimination to the involved student's teacher (or a teacher of a student in the alleged group), or to the principal, or to the principal's designee of the school site where the alleged discrimination occurred. The principal or principal's designee shall, in the process of following up on the report, inform the individual making the report of the right to file a written complaint. If the individual making the oral report does not want to file a written complaint, does not want to be identified, or does not give names of the perpetrators, the school still may have a duty to respond in some way, depending on the seriousness of the allegations and the risk of future harm to the student or others. However, the extent to which these concerns can be investigated and/or responded to may be limited given the lack of information made available to the District. The District's response to the oral reporting of concerns of unlawful discrimination shall follow the process outlined in the local UCP. Copies of our Uniform Complaint Procedures process shall be available free of charge.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation services may be provided only to students currently enrolled and attending a Merced City School District school. The service is only provided to those students living outside the established non-transport (walk) area to the school of attendance. The Merced City School District School Board has designated the following non-transport area distances:

Transitional Kindergarten through sixth grade: 1 mile;

Seventh and eighth grade: 1.5 miles

Note: Mileage is straight-line mileage, not roadway miles

Bus Stop Locations

Merced City School District selects bus stops with the safety of students in mind. Statistics show that escort crossings and interior residential areas are the locations of many school bus-related injuries. We strive to provide the highest level of safety for students. Please ensure your child is within sight.

Students may lose their bus riding privileges for any of the following offenses at the bus stop.

- Crossing behind the school bus
- Not waiting for the driver to escort the student with the handheld stop sign.
- Any of the offenses mentioned in the "Bus Safety Rules" in this handbook.

Safety to and from the Bus Stop

When the stop nearest your home is determined, teach your children how they are expected to walk to and from the bus stop. Students who are not accompanied by their parents MUST know how to get to and from the bus stop safely. Encourage them to meet other students and parents at the bus stop. Having the phone numbers of these students and parents would be helpful. If your student goes to day care, coordinate with their staff on how you wish your student to walk to/from the nearest bus stop for their school.

Bus Stop Times

The AM times are the departure times. Drivers cannot wait after the departure time. Once the clock reaches the departure time, the driver must depart once it is safe and all visible students have been loaded. Parents are advised to have their children at the bus stop, ready to board, no more than five minutes before the scheduled departure time. Buses are not allowed to stop again; students who do not make the departure time cannot board at a non-designated bus stop.

Parents at Bus Stops

Parents are encouraged to escort and supervise their children going to and from the bus stop. Merced City School District does require parent/guardian supervision of Transitional Kindergarteners and Kindergarteners. In the event a child expects a parent(s) to be waiting for them and they are not there, the child (other than Transitional Kindergarteners and Kindergarteners) will still be dropped off at the bus stop. If a situation exists where the child is quite upset or the parent(s) has requested to be at the stop to receive their child and they are not there, or the student is a Kindergartener, the student will remain on the bus, and the bus driver will return the student to school at the end of the run. This policy does not allow for exceptions as failure to follow this policy will lead to late and potentially unsafe drop-off times or conditions for other students on the bus.

Transportation (continued)

Bus Safety Rules

1. All school discipline rules will be enforced on the bus.
2. The driver is the "Leader" on the bus and therefore students must follow the direction of the driver the first time given.
3. The driver has the authority to immediately remove a student from the bus for the day for severe, unsafe acts. A final decision on the severity of discipline will be determined in conjunction with the Transportation Supervisor and School Principal.
4. The driver has authority over students at the bus stop before the bus arrives. If students are within sight of the bus driver at the bus stop, school, or field trip location, they are considered to be on the bus and all rules apply. Examples of punishable acts are, but are not limited to:

- Pushing or horseplay while waiting for the bus
- Disrespectful behavior toward others
- Pushing while loading or unloading the bus
- Exiting bus other than through the entrance door
- Throwing objects inside the bus or out the windows
- Fighting on the bus or at the bus stop
- Refusal to wear a seatbelt if equipped
- Sudden, shrill, and loud voices
- Lighting matches or other flammables
- Carrying unauthorized objects on the bus
- Playing in the street
- Disrespect for private property
- Eating, drinking, or chewing gum on the bus
- Riding the wrong bus
- Improper loading
- Standing while the bus is in motion
- Disruptive behavior (screaming, loud voices, or disrespect to another person)
- General vulgarity/vulgarity directed at another person
- Saving seats
- Disobeying the driver and defiant behavior
- Arguing
- Giving an improper name or phone number
- Failure to return signed Conduct Report

Corrective Action Steps

The following step progression will be adhered to when it comes to student corrective action. Please note that some offenses are worthy of the outright loss of bus privileges if determined by the Transportation Supervisor, School Principal, and District Representatives. This process can also be found on the MCSD website and includes ALL school bus transportation.

1. Verbal Warning & Written Warning
2. 1 Day Suspension
3. 3-Day Suspension
4. 5-Day Suspension
5. Parent Conference Prior to bus riding privilege reinstatement
6. Loss of all Bus riding privileges

Daycare, InterDistrict, School of Choice Transfers, and Social Activities

Transportation services and bus stop locations outside of the school attendance boundary will not be provided. Riding a bus other than the authorized one or boarding/departing at a stop other than the designated stop will not be allowed. This process can also be found on the MCSD website and includes ALL school bus transportation.



Transportation (continued)

State law does allow for some exceptions if pre-approval is obtained and there is adequate space on the bus.

Do not assume your student can ride the bus. Student will not be transported if there is no room and/or if there is no prior approval in writing from the parent which has been received by both the school and the Transportation Department. The final approval of the request is the School Bus Driver.

If an activity or other reason requires the student to ride a different bus, parents should plan to make other transportation arrangements, as most of the buses do not have seats available for extra passengers. However, in some cases, it is permitted under the following circumstances:

- There is adequate room on the other bus.
- The student exhibits proper behavior.
- The student is given a note stating the date and the bus stop to be used.
- The note is signed by a parent/guardian.
- The note is signed by the school office with Transportation approval

Baggage/Luggage

The State law is very clear about what articles may be transported on a school bus. The following items are NOT allowed on the bus:

- Animals or insects that are alive or used to be alive
- Items that could break or spill
- Items that could be used as a weapon
- Items that cannot be held on the lap

Musical Instruments

Musical instruments that are used for band daily may be transported on the bus with prior approval from the Transportation Department.

Lost and Found

The Transportation Department does not have a Lost and Found area. If a driver finds an item on the bus, or another student turns an article in, the bus driver will attempt to return it to the student or to the school from which the route originated.

Late Students Who Ride the Bus

If your student does not arrive home on time, probably he/she went to a friend's without your knowledge. In any case, do the following:

- Check around the house and neighborhood
- Call the school
- Call your child's friends
- Call the police
- Always leave someone at home to answer the phone, and be there when the student comes home

If the bus is running late due to a scheduling, traffic, or mechanical problems, it may be up to fifteen minutes late or more. If the bus is late, you may call the school.

The school will contact the Transportation Department and we will have all buses in the area look for the student as well as sending available staff out to assist in the effort when possible.

Note: It is very important that your child carry their student ID with them at all times. The Transportation Department is currently exploring barcode scanners to confirm stops and your child's ID may be used to track attendance and location in the future.



Transportation (continued)

Vandalism Between Home and the Bus Stop

Vandalism between a student's home and the bus stop will be reported to the school and the appropriate law enforcement office.

Vandalism on the Bus

Vandalism on the bus will be reported to the school and the appropriate law enforcement office. The cost of vandalism repairs will be recovered from the student responsible and bus riding privileges may be suspended until repairs are paid for.

Fog Delays and Emergency Dismissals

In the unlikely event of heavy fog or emergency, parents/guardians and students are advised to monitor local radio and television stations for changes in bus schedules. We contact the media once a decision is made to alter the regular bus schedule, to notify parents/guardians as quickly as possible. In accordance with Vehicle Code Section 34501.6, Merced City School District school buses shall not operate when atmospheric conditions reduce visibility to 200 feet or less.

PLAN A--WHEN THIS ANNOUNCEMENT IS MADE, IT WILL INDICATE:

- Ground fog exists in certain isolated areas throughout the Merced City School District.
- Bus transportation and classes will start on regular schedules.

PLAN B – WHEN THIS ANNOUNCEMENT IS MADE, IT WILL INDICATE:

- Bus transportation will be delayed by two (2) hours.
- Classes will start on a regular schedule.

PLAN C – WHEN THIS ANNOUNCEMENT IS MADE, IT WILL INDICATE:

- All morning bus routes to school will be canceled.
- Classes will start on the regular schedule.
- Buses will be dispatched on all "school-to-home" routes on the regular day schedule.

If the weather looks threatening, parents/guardians are encouraged to stay tuned to the local news media for updates. This information will be announced on the following local radio stations:

KMJ 580 AM
KYOS 1480 AM
KABX 97.5 FM
KUBB 96.3 FM
LOBO 97.8 FM
KFSN Channel 30

1. Cooperating radio stations will be notified by approximately 5:30 a.m. if a foggy day schedule for buses is necessary. By 5:45 a.m. such announcements should be on the air.
2. If hazardous conditions require further delay, such an announcement will be made by the radio stations.
3. For students who walk to school, all schools will maintain regular starting times when a "foggy day" schedule is in effect. Students arriving late on delayed buses will not be reported absent or tardy.
4. Afternoon take-home runs will normally operate at regular times. If cancellation of these runs is necessary, announcements will be made by radio stations.
5. In the event of a District-wide school delay, early dismissal or other emergency, the MCSD may also use an automated telephone calling system to quickly notify parents and staff members of emergency situations and schedule changes.

Transportation (continued)

Bus Safety and Video Cameras (BP/AR 5131.1a)

It is the policy of the Governing Board of the Merced City School District to promote and ensure a safe environment for staff and students who operate and ride District school buses.

In furtherance of this goal and to ensure compliance with District disciplinary rules and student conduct regulations, the District has installed a video camera observation system in District School buses. The use of such video cameras are governed by the following rules:

1. The Superintendent or designee shall determine the District buses in which video cameras will be installed. All buses currently have some form of video capability
2. Video camera observations shall augment, not replace, written disciplinary reports prepared by the bus driver.
3. The Transportation Supervisor or designee may review video recordings to monitor violations of school disciplinary rules and student conduct regulations. If no incidents of improper conduct are reported or observed within five (5) days, the video may be erased or recorded over. If an incident of improper conduct is reported or observed the District will retain the video until the matter is resolved and the time for appeal of any action taken has expired.
4. Due to Federal Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act (FERPA), confidentiality regulations, videos are not for public viewing unless authorized on a case-by-case basis by the Superintendent or designee.
5. All buses have a sign in plain view on the inside of the bus informing the passengers that a video observation system is in use.



STUDENT & PARENT/ GUARDIAN RIGHTS



State and federal law requires that parents be notified each year about certain provisions affecting their children's education.

Absence for Religious Exercises and Instruction:

Pupils may be excused, with written permission from a parent or guardian, in order to participate in religious exercises or receive moral and religious instruction away from school property. Every pupil so excused must attend at least the minimum school day. (Ed. Code 46014)

Comprehensive Sexual Health Education:

This education will take place in 7th grade. Parents may inspect books and other materials used in those units that may include age-appropriate comprehensive sexual health education instruction in which reproductive organs and their functions are described, illustrated, or discussed. Words or pictures in any science, health, or hygiene textbook are not involved in this section. Instruction shall encourage communication between students and their families, and all factual information shall be medically accurate and objective, including HIV/AIDS/STI and Human Trafficking prevention. Parent notification is required for students who take such units. Written objection by the parent or guardian to pupil participation in such a unit will be honored. (Ed. Code 51930-51934) You have a right to request a copy of the Education Code from the District Office, which describes state law regarding Comprehensive Sexual Health Education as well as a copy of the curriculum used. (Ed. Code 51933)

Excused from Instruction:

Upon written request of parent, a pupil may be excused from any part of instruction in comprehensive sexual health education, which conflicts with the parent(s)' religious training or beliefs (including personal moral convictions). (Ed. Code Section 51930-51939)

Confidential Medical Services:

For students age 12 and older, the District may release a student for the purpose of obtaining confidential medical services without obtaining the consent of the student's parent or guardian. (Family Code 6926 (a)) Go [HERE](#) to see a full listing and description of the laws.

Head Lice: The MCS D adheres to a no live lice policy. Checks of individual students suspected of having head lice may be done without parental notification. Students with live lice will be sent home. Students with nits, but no live lice, will be allowed to remain at school. Upon return to school, students must be rechecked PRIOR to returning to class and MUST have an adult present. Students returning to school after being home for live lice must be rechecked with a parent/guardian present, prior to returning to the classroom.

The Governing Board requires that the responsibility for the treatment of head lice rests with the parent/guardian. Three school days of excused absence will be allowed for the head lice to be resolved, not including the day the students was sent home. Additional absences will be coded as unexcused. Excessive absences due to head lice may result in referrals to the School Attendance Review Board and/or Child Protective Services. The MCS D follows the Merced County community-wide response to head lice among children in school/preschool/day care settings protocol. A copy of the protocol and specific District procedures are available for review at each site.

Student & Parent/Guardian Rights (continued)

Administration of Prescription or Over-the-Counter Medication:

- a.** Any student needing medication during the school day, may be assisted by a nurse, health assistant, or other designated and trained school employee (Ed. Code 49423). A medication permission form must be filled out and signed by the parent/guardian and the healthcare provider.
- b.** School personnel are prohibited from giving any over-the-counter medication, including aspirin or Tylenol, unless the medication permission form containing the proper information and signature from parent and physician are on file in the health office.
- c.** All medication must be in the original or properly labeled pharmacy container, and will be kept in the school office. Students may be allowed to self-carry inhalers for asthma and epinephrine auto injectors for severe allergic reactions. Please consult with the site school nurse for additional information and requirements. (Parent, student, and healthcare provider).
- d.** Each site in the District has auto-injectable epinephrine available to students for the treatment of life-threatening allergic reactions which may occur without knowledge or warning. Students with known life-threatening allergies are asked to provide their own emergency medication. If you do NOT want your child to receive this medication in the event of the emergency, please submit your request, in writing, to your student's school site. An annual notification is required.
- e.** Licensed nurses currently administer insulin for diabetic students.

- It may also be administered by other trained, unlicensed staff, on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the school nurse. Trained school site staff with written permission will provide all other aspects of diabetic care from the healthcare provider and parent/guardian. Emergency medications such as injectable Epinephrine, Diastat, lorazepam, and solu-cortef given in the school setting may be administered by trained, designated unlicensed school personnel with written permission from the healthcare provider and the parent/guardian. Contact your child's site school nurse for more information.
- f.** Written permission to administer medication is good for only the school year that the permission was written. For permission forms coming in late in the current school year, the School Nurse may elect to use that form for the next school year, as long as there are no changes to the medication.
 - g.** It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to notify the site office if their child has a medication at school that needs to accompany the student on a field trip or other off-campus event. Notification should be made at least two weeks in advance.
 - h.** The parent is responsible for keeping a supply of medication for the child at school. The parent or other adult, age 18 or older, is to deliver the medication to the school office personnel. Medications are not to be brought to school, transported on the bus, or picked up by the student unless special arrangements have been made in advance.
 - i.** All medication left at school on the last day, following a student's return from camp or other off campus trip, or after a student exits a school site, will be disposed of according to District protocol after one week.



Student & Parent/Guardian Rights (continued)

Immunizations:

The District may allow a physician, surgeon, or registered nurse to administer immunizations to pupils whose parents have consented in writing to immunizations. (Ed. Code 49403)

Vision and Hearing Screenings:

Screenings may not be given to a child whose parent has filed a written objection for each school year in which they do not want their child screened. Vision and hearing screenings are mandated by the state and are performed yearly on those students in the mandated grades for that screening. Parents/guardians are not routinely notified of when screenings will occur. A parent whose child does not pass any screening will be notified by U.S. Mail or the information will be sent home with the student. Parents are not notified if their child passed the state mandated screenings.

Supplemental At-School Student Accident Insurance:

Voluntary Student Accident Insurance our District offers a voluntary accident medical insurance program which is available for purchase by parents that will be available for school time or an optional 24-hour accident coverage. This program allows parents to purchase additional accident medical insurance for their students. Details to follow and an application or web link will be provided.

For Your Information: Some students may qualify to enroll in no-cost or low-cost local, state or federally sponsored health insurance programs. Information about these programs may be obtained by calling the agencies listed below:

- **Covered California (coveredca.com) (800) 300-1506**
- **Medi-Cal Program (800) 541-5555**

Student with Disabilities:

Every individual with exceptional needs who is eligible to receive special education instruction and related services under this part, shall receive that instruction and those services at no cost to his or her parents or, as appropriate, to him or her. A free appropriate public education shall be available to individuals with exceptional needs in accordance with Section 1412(a)(1) of Title 20 of the United States Code and Section 300.101 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations in accordance with Ed. Code 56040.

Notice of Language Programs for English Learners:

Proposition 58 allows schools to utilize multiple programs, including bilingual education, to support language acquisition. Furthermore, it made parental waivers no longer necessary to take non-English-only classes. If requested by enough parents, the measure requires schools to offer specific English learner programs. Language acquisition programs are educational programs designed to ensure English acquisition occurs as rapidly and effectively, and provide instruction to English learners based on the state-adopted academic content standards, including English language development (ELD) standards. (EC Section 306[c])

The Merced City School District (MCS D) offers a Structured English Immersion (SEI) program option. If you choose this option your child is placed in a classroom that uses mostly English, with curriculum and a presentation designed for pupils who are learning English. At a minimum, students are offered ELD and access to grade level academic subject matter content.

Requesting a Language Acquisition Program:

Parents/Guardians may choose a language acquisition program that best suits their child. Schools in which the parents or legal guardians of 30 pupils or more per school or the parents or legal guardians of 20 pupils or more in any grade request a language acquisition program that is designed to provide language instruction shall be required to offer such a program to the extent possible. (EC Section 310[a])

Student & Parent/Guardian Rights (continued)

- **Structured English Immersion (SEI) Program:** A language acquisition program for English learners in which nearly all classroom instruction is provided in English, but with curriculum and a presentation designed for pupils who are learning English. At minimum, students are offered ELD and access to grade level academic subject matter content.
- **Dual-Language Immersion (DLI) Program:** Also referred to as Two-Way Immersion. A language acquisition program that provides language learning and academic instruction for native speakers of English and native speakers of another language, with the goals of high academic achievement, first and second language proficiency, and cross-cultural understanding. This program begins in Transitional Kindergarten/Kindergarten (TK/K) and continues to sixth grade.
- **Transitional Bilingual Program:** A language acquisition program for English learners that provides instruction to pupils utilizing English and a pupil's native language for literacy and academic instruction, enabling an English learner to achieve English proficiency and meet state-adopted academic achievement goals. This program begins in TK/K and continues to third grade where students transition to instruction all in English.
- **Developmental Bilingual Program:** Language acquisition program for English learners that provides instruction to pupils utilizing English and a pupil's native language for literacy and academic instruction, enabling an English learner to achieve language proficiency and meet state academic achievement goals. This program begins in TK/K and continues with the goal of biliteracy to sixth grade.

- **Heritage Language Program:** Language acquisition program for English learners that provides instruction to pupils utilizing English and a pupil's native language for literacy and academic instruction, enabling non-English speakers or students who have weak literacy skills in their native language to achieve language proficiency and meet academic achievement goals. This program is designed for grades 6-8.

Parents may provide input regarding language acquisition programs during the development of the Local Control Accountability Plan. If interested in the process to choose a different program from that listed above, please contact:

**Aaron Alexander, Director
Department of State and Federal Programs
444 West 23rd Street, Building B, Merced,
California 95340
AAlexander@mcsd.k12.ca.us
(209) 385-6664**

Parents of English learners have a right to decline or opt their children out of the school District's language acquisition program or opt out of particular English learner service(s) within a language acquisition program. (20 U.S.C Section 6318[c][A][vii]) However, LEAs remain obligated to provide the student meaningful instruction (5 CCR Section 11302) until the student is reclassified, inform the parent when progress is not made, and offer the parent programs and services to consider at that time.

Parents May File a Complaint:

Concerning violations of federal or state law or regulations governing special education and related services. To file a complaint, write a description of the manner in which you believe Special Education Programs for students with disabilities do not comply with state or federal laws or regulations and file with the Director of Special Education, Kevin Smith, Merced City School District, 444 West 23rd Street, Merced, CA 95340.

**Kevin Smith, Director
Special Education
444 West 23rd Street, Building E, Merced,
California 95340
KSmith@mcsd.k12.ca.us
(209) 385-6648**

Student & Parent/Guardian Rights (continued)

Release of Student Information:

The District does not release information or records concerning a child to non-educational organizations or individuals without parent consent except by court order or when otherwise allowed by law. The following categories of directory information may be made available to various persons, agencies, or institutions unless the parent or guardian notifies the District in writing not to release information:

- Name, address, date and place of birth, major field of study, class schedule, class roster, photographs, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, diplomas and awards received, and most recent previous educational institution attended.
- Telephone numbers shall be released only with express parental consent.

Inspection of Student Records:

a. A parent or guardian has the right to inspect and review records during school hours relating directly to their child within five (5) days of his/her request.

b. Any parent who wishes to review the types of student records and information contained therein may do so by contacting the principal at his/her child's school. The principal of each school is ultimately responsible for maintenance of student records.

c. Parents with legal custody have a right to challenge information contained in their child's records. Any determination to expunge a student's record is made after a review of said record(s) by building administrators and certificated staff, according to established District procedures which may be obtained by a parent and from the District Office.

d. A Student Records Log is maintained for each student. The Student Records Log lists persons, agencies or organizations requesting and/or receiving information from the records to the extent required by law. Student Record Logs are located at each school and are open to inspection by parents or guardians.

e. School officers or employees having a legitimate educational interest may access student records without first obtaining parental consent. "School officers and employees" are District employees and appointed or elected District officers. A person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a special service (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist) or a parent or student serving on an ethical committee or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A "legitimate educational interest" is one held by officials and employees whose duties and responsibilities create a reasonable need for access.

f. Parents and guardians have the right to authorize the release of student records to themselves. Only parents and guardians with legal custody can authorize the release of student records to others.

g. Parents and guardians will be charged ten (10) cents per page for the reproduction of student records.

h. Parents have a right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education for alleged violations of parent rights related to student records.

i. Parents may obtain a copy of the District's complete student records policy by contacting the Pupil Services Department at 385-6647.

Family Education Privacy Act: In addition, you have certain rights regarding student information guaranteed under federal law.

Student Discipline:

Rules pertaining to student discipline are available to parents or guardians of District students in each school office. (Ed. Code 35291)

Dissection of Animals: If a student has a moral objection to dissecting or otherwise harming or destroying animals, or any part of an animal, the pupil must notify the teacher regarding such objection, and the objection must be substantiated with a note from the pupil's parent or guardian.

Student & Parent/Guardian Rights (continued)



If the pupil chooses to refrain from participating in such a project, and if the teacher believes that an adequate alternative education project is possible, then the teacher may work with the pupil to develop and agree upon an alternate education project for the purpose of providing the pupil an alternate avenue for obtaining the knowledge, information or experience required by the course of study. Ed. Code 32255-32255.6)

Educational Assistance Under Section 504: Section 504 Plans are available to students who may have a disability, which interferes with their access to an equal educational opportunity. Please notify your school principal for information regarding your rights and your child's rights under Section 504 of the 1973 Federal Rehabilitation Act, or call the Pupil Services Department at 385-6647.

A Temporary Disability:

Which makes it impossible or inadvisable for a student to attend class shall cause the student to receive individualized home instruction. (Ed. Code 48206.3) A note from the physician to Merced City School District regarding individual home instruction must be given to the school secretary and/or school nurse.

A pupil with a temporary disability who is in a hospital or another residential health facility, other than a state hospital, which is located outside of the school District in which the pupil's parent or guardian resides, shall be deemed to have complied with the residency requirements for school attendance in the District in which the hospital is located. It is the responsibility of the pupil's parent or guardian to notify the applicable school District of the Pupil's presence in the hospital or residential health facility so that the

District can determine whether the pupil is able to receive individualized instruction and to provide individualized instruction if it is possible to do so. (Ed. Code 48207-48208)

Student Residency:

A student may be enrolled in a District where one or both of the student's parents or legal guardian works other than in the District in which the student resides. (Ed. Code 48204 (D) In addition, a student shall be deemed to be a District resident if (1) the student is placed in a regularly established children's institution, licensed foster home, or family home (Ed. Code 48204 (a)), (2) an emancipated student who lives within the District (Ed. Code 48204 (c)), (3) a student who lives in the home of an adult who has submitted a caregiver affidavit (Ed. Code 48204 (d)), or (4) a student who resides in a state hospital in the District (Ed. Code 48204 (e).

Attendance Options: Parents are advised that the District allows for students from other Districts to apply for admission into or transfer out of our District through the InterDistrict transfer process if certain requirements are met. Parents of students living outside a school's geographic boundaries may also apply for a transfer to another school if certain criteria are met. Parents interested in InterDistrict or "Schools of Choice" (IntraDistrict) transfers should contact Pupil Services at 385-6647.

Notice of Alternative Schools:

California state law authorizes all school Districts to provide for alternative schools. Section 58500 of the Education code defines alternative school as a school or separate class group within a school which is operated in a manner designed to:

- a.** Maximize the opportunity for students to develop the positive values of self-reliance, initiative, kindness, spontaneity, resourcefulness, courage, creativity, responsibility, and joy.
- b.** Recognize that the best learning takes place when the student learns because of his desire to learn.

Student & Parent/Guardian Rights (continued)

- c.** Maintain a learning situation maximizing student self-motivation and encourage the student in his own time to follow his own interests. These interests may be conceived by him totally and independently or may result in whole or in part from a presentation by his teachers of choices of learning projects.
- d.** Maximize the opportunity for teachers, parents and students to cooperatively develop the learning process and its subject matter. This opportunity shall be a continuous permanent process.
- e.** Maximize the opportunity for the students, teachers, and parents to continuously react to the changing world, including but not limited to the community in which the school is located.

Students and/or parents interested in further information should contact the Director of Pupil Services at 385-6647. (Ed. Code 58501)

Nutrition Program:

The State Department of Education has established a statewide program to provide nutritious meals and milk at school for pupils. In some instances, nominal cash payments may be required. (Ed. Code 49510, et seq.)

U.S. Department of Education Programs:

The following applies to programs directly funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

All instructional materials, including teacher's manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary material which will be used in connection with any survey, analysis, or evaluation shall be available for inspection by the parents or guardians of the children.

No student shall be required, as part of any applicable U.S. Department of

Education funded program, to submit to a survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning:

- a.** Political affiliations;
- b.** Mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student or his family;
- c.** Sex behavior and attitudes;
- d.** Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior;
- e.** Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
- f.** Legally recognized, privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers; or
- g.** Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program), without the prior consent of the student (if the student is an adult or emancipated minor), or in the case of an unemancipated minor, without the prior written consent of the parent. (20 U.S.C. 1232h)

Fingerprint Programs:

With the written consent of the parent or guardian, kindergarten or newly enrolled students may be fingerprinted. The fingerprint document may not be retained by the District but must be delivered to the parent or guardian. A fee shall be charged to the parent or guardian to reimburse the District for its actual cost. (Ed. Code 32390)

Procedures for Parent Complaints or Charges Against District Employees:

The Board of Education has adopted a policy which establishes a procedure to permit consideration of a charge or complaint made by parents against an employee or against a specific school, office, or department. Parents who do not have their concerns resolved informally should follow the procedure set forth in the policy (Policy 1312.3).

Any serious charge or complaint concerning a District employee should be reported immediately to the employee by the individual receiving the complaint. Every effort should be made to resolve the complaint at the administrative level by progressing through the chain of command.



Student & Parent/Guardian Rights (continued)

Any serious charge or complaint concerning a District employee should be reported immediately to the employee by the individual receiving the complaint. Every effort should be made to resolve the complaint at the administrative level by progressing through the chain of command.

Copies of the entire policy are available for review in each school office and at the District Office.

Following the Lines of Communication:

Parents who wish to obtain information about their child(ren) or other school-related matters should first consult with the staff member most directly involved. This also applies to problems which may arise. Generally, the order in which inquiries should be made is:

- **First:** the teacher
- **Second:** the site principal
- **Third:** Ken Cooper, Director of Pupil Services
601 Mercy Avenue, Merced
- **Fourth:** Tamara Ferrario, Executive Officer, Human Resources
530 W. 21st Street, Suite A
- **Fifth:** Board of Education President
444 West 23rd Street, Building A
Merced, CA 95340

Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP):

The Uniform Complaint Procedures is established to investigate and resolve allegations of unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying, and complaints alleging violation of state or federal laws governing educational programs, non-compliance with laws relating to pupil fees and the District's Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP).

Additional information is located in the Annual Notification of Uniform Complaint Procedures following this section.

Section 504 Of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973:

In compliance with procedural requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the following Notice of Parent/Student Rights in Identification, Evaluation, and Placement shall be utilized in the Merced City School District.

The following is a description of the rights and options granted by federal law to students with disabilities. The intent of the law is to keep you fully informed concerning decisions about your child and to inform you of your rights if you disagree with any of these decisions.

You have the right to:

- a. Request a Section 504 hearing.
- b. Have your child take part in, and receive benefits from, public education programs without discrimination because of his/her disabling condition.
- c. Have the school District advise you of your rights and options under federal law.
- d. Receive notice with respect to identification, evaluation, or placement of your child.
- e. Have your child receive a free appropriate public education. This includes the right to be educated with students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate. It also includes the right to have the school District make reasonable accommodations to allow your child an equal opportunity to participate in school and school-related activities.
- f. Have your child educated in facilities and receive services comparable to those provided students without disabilities. Special Education is a District provided service, not necessarily at each site. Services will be provided but may not be at your neighborhood school.
- g. Have your child receive special education and related services if he/she is found to be eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA – PL 101-476), and/or general education intervention/modifications outside of special education under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.



Student & Parent/Guardian Rights (continued)



h. Have evaluation, educational, and placement decisions made based upon a variety of information sources, and by persons who know the student, evaluation data, and placement options.

i. Have transportation provided to and from an alternative placement setting at no greater cost to you than would be incurred if the student was placed in a program operated by the District.

j. Have your child given an equal opportunity to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities offered by the District.

k. Examine all relevant records relating to decisions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program, and placement.

l. Obtain copies of educational records at a reasonable cost unless the fee would effectively deny you access to the records.

m. A response from the school District to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of your child's records.

n. Request amendment of your child's educational records if there is reasonable cause to believe that they are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of your child. If the school District refuses this request for amendment, it shall notify you within a reasonable time, and advise you of the right to a hearing.

This hearing will be according to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and should not be confused with an impartial due process hearing.

o. Request an appeal hearing of the Section 504 decision regarding your child's identification, evaluation, placement or educational program. You and the student may take part in the hearing and have an attorney or the other person represent you.

p. Request mediation (this is not mandatory prior to requesting an appeal to the Section 504 hearing decision). You may request, in writing, a meeting with the school principal and school site committee to attempt resolution of the disagreement. The costs for mediation are assumed by the school District.

q. File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 50 U.N. Plaza, San Francisco, CA 94102, (415) 437-7700.

r. Parents have the right to request information regarding teacher credentials and license for grade level and subject matter taught, and the qualifications of paraprofessional. This information is available in the school office.

Victims of Bullying Transfer Rights:

An amendment to CA Education Code 46600 require school Districts to approve intraDistrict and interDistrict transfer requests by victims of an act of bullying. A "victim of bullying" is defined as a student who has been determined to have been a victim of bullying by an investigation in accordance with the Safe Place to Learn Act (Ed. Code 234.1). Parents can contact their child's school to request a transfer.

Lactating Pupil Accommodations:

A school operated by a school District shall provide reasonable accommodations to a lactating pupil on a campus. Reasonable accommodations include a private space, permission to bring necessary equipment, storage needs, and time. Reasonable accommodations include a private space, permission to bring necessary equipment, storage needs, and time.

Pupil Protections:

Students have a right to a free public education, regardless of immigration status or religious beliefs. More information can be found in the Immigration-Enforcement Actions at California Schools, Guide for Students and Families. This can be located in the Pupil Services office.



Student & Parent/Guardian Rights (continued)

Contraband Detection Dogs:

Merced City School District is fully committed to promoting a safe learning environment and, to the extent possible, eliminating the possession and use of weapons, illegal drugs, and other controlled substances by students on school premises and at school activities. In an effort to keep all MCSD schools (elementary and middle) free of dangerous contraband, the District may use specially trained, non-aggressive dogs to sniff out and alert staff to the presence of substances prohibited by law or Board policy. (BP 5145.12)





INTIMIDATION, & BULLYING

Full versions of Board Policy may be accessed at the website <https://www.mercedcsd.org>

Board Policy 5131.2 - BULLYING

Definition: No individual or group shall, through physical, written, verbal, or other means, harass, sexually harass, threaten, intimidate, retaliate, cyberbully, cause bodily injury to, or commit hate violence against any student or school personnel.

Cyberbullying includes the electronic creation or transmission of harassing communications, direct threats, or other harmful texts, sounds, or images as defined in Education Code 48900. Cyberbullying also includes breaking into another person's electronic account and assuming that person's identity to damage that person's reputation.

Board Policy 5141.52 – SUICIDE PREVENTION

Definition: Suicide is the leading cause of death among youth. School personnel who regularly interact with students are often in a position to recognize the warning signs of suicide and to offer appropriate referrals and/or assistance. District strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention include, but are not limited to:

1. Staff development on suicide awareness and prevention for teachers, school counselors, and other District employees who interact with students
2. Individual or group instruction as appropriate to students in problem-solving and coping skills to promote students' mental, emotional, and social health and well-being, as well as instruction in recognizing and appropriately responding to warning signs of suicidal intent in others
3. Methods for promoting a positive school climate that enhances students' feelings of connectedness with the school and that is characterized by caring staff and harmonious interrelationships among students
4. Information to parents/guardians regarding risk factors and warning signs of suicide
5. Encouragement for students to notify appropriate school personnel or other adults when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions
6. Crisis intervention procedures
7. Counseling



Board Policy 5145.3 – NON DISCRIMINATION/HARASSMENT

The District strongly encourages any student who feels that they are being or have been discriminated against, harassed, intimidated, or bullied on school grounds or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity by another student or an adult, or who has experienced off-campus sexual harassment that has a continuing effect on campus, to immediately contact a teacher, the principal (or the principal's designee), or the District compliance officer. Any employee who receives a report or observes an incident of discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying shall notify the principal (or the principal's designee), or the District compliance officer. Complaints of unlawful harassment shall be addressed consistent with the procedures set forth in BP 1312.3.

The District desires to provide a safe school environment that provides all students with equal access and opportunities to participate in the District's academic, co-curricular, extracurricular, and other educational support programs, services and activities. The Board prohibits, at any District school or school activity, unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation and bullying, targeted at any student by anyone, based on the student's actual or perceived race, color, ancestry, national origin, nationality, immigration status, ethnicity, ethnic group identification, age, religion, marital or parental status, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.



Board Policy 5145.7 - SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The District strongly encourages any student who feels they are being or have been sexually harassed on school grounds or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity by another student or an adult, or who has experienced off-campus sexual harassment, including cyber harassment/on-line/social media activity and/or sexual violence, that has a continuing effect on campus, to immediately contact a teacher, the principal, or any other available school employee. Any employee who receives a report or observes an incident of sexual harassment shall notify the principal or the District compliance officer. Once notified, the principal or compliance officer shall take the steps to investigate and address the allegation, as specified in the accompanying administrative regulation.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that all District students receive age-appropriate information on sexual harassment. Such instruction and information shall include:

1. What acts and behavior constitute sexual harassment; including the fact, that sexual harassment could occur between people of the same sex and could involve sexual violence
2. A clear message that students do not have to endure sexual harassment under any circumstance.
3. Encouragement to report observed incidents of sexual harassment, even where the alleged victim of the harassment has not complained
4. A clear message that student safety is the District's primary concern, and that any separate rule violation involving an alleged victim or any other person reporting a sexual harassment incident will be addressed separately and will not affect the manner in which the sexual harassment complaint will be received, investigated, or resolved
5. A clear message that, regardless of a complainant's noncompliance with the writing, timeline, or other formal filing requirements, every sexual harassment allegation that involves a student, whether as the complainant, respondent, or victim of the harassment, shall be investigated and prompt action shall be taken to stop any harassment, prevent recurrence, and address any continuing effect on students
6. Information about the District's procedures for investigating complaints and the person(s) to whom a report of sexual harassment should be made
7. Information about the rights of students and parents/guardians to file a civil or criminal complaint, as applicable, including the right to file a civil or criminal complaint while the District investigation of a sexual harassment complaint continues
8. A clear message that, when needed, the District will take measures to ensure a safe school environment for a student who is the complainant or victim of sexual harassment and/or other students during an investigation and that, to the extent possible, when such interim measures are taken, they shall not disadvantage the complainant or victim of the alleged harassment

Any student who believes they are the victim of sexual harassment shall immediately contact the Principal or designee of the school. Upon receiving such a complaint, the Principal or designee shall immediately investigate the complaint in accordance with the law and District procedures specified in BP 1312.3 – Uniform Complaint Procedures. A student who has been found to have demonstrated sexual harassment shall be subject to discipline in accordance with law, board policy and administrative regulations.





CALIFORNIA SCHOOL IMMUNIZATION LAW

California Health and Safety Code, Sections 120325-120375

Under these statutes, children in California are required to receive certain immunizations in order to attend public and private elementary and secondary schools, childcare centers, family day care homes, nursery schools, day nurseries, and development centers (pre-kindergarten facilities). Schools and pre-kindergarten facilities are required to enforce immunization requirements, maintain immunization records of all children enrolled, and submit reports.

California Code of Regulations Title 17 Division 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter 8

These regulations specify California school immunization requirements and provide additional clarifications of the law. Also available at www.oal.ca.gov.

For additional information on immunization requirements, go to shotsforschool.org. You can also review the [California Immunization Handbook](#).

In 2015, Senate Bill 277 went into effect, which eliminated personal belief and religious exemptions for vaccine requirements. Current personal beliefs will become null and void upon entry to 7th grade.

The only exceptions allowed for a student who is not up to date on his/her immunizations are:

1. Conditional entrant: Up to date at the time of registration, with additional doses needed in the future. A parent's failure to obtain additional doses when they are due will result in that child being excluded from school.
2. Temporary or permanent medical exemption. Please go to www.cdph.ca.gov to find information on how to obtain a new medical exemption through your child's healthcare provider. Your child will not be able to attend school without proper documentation reflective of current legislation. Please contact your school nurse for additional information and to discuss the medical condition impacting your student's ability to get fully vaccinated.
3. home-schooled students.
4. Students with special education services/ an Individual Education Plan (IEP).
5. Students designated as homeless or in foster care.

HEALTH REQUIREMENT AND INFORMATION

Beginning January 1, 2007, all children entering public school for the first time (kindergarten/transitional kindergarten or first grade) are required to have an oral health assessment/dental checkup by May 31 of that school year. Any dental exam done within 12 months prior to enrollment will be accepted. The cutoff date will be August 1. If the student is starting school in August 2024, the dental exam must have been done on or after August 1, 2023, to meet the requirement. The exam must be carried out by a licensed dentist, dental hygienist, or registered dental assistant with supervision. Parents/guardians will be provided with information on where to find a dentist and how to apply for MediCal/Denti-Cal and Healthy Families. Parents/guardians will also be educated on the importance of dental health and given information on how to improve their child's oral health. For more information, contact the school nurse.

General Policies Related to the Health of Students in the Merced City School District

COVID-19

The Merced City School District will follow guidance from the Merced County Department of Public Health, the California Department of Public Health, and the Centers for Disease Prevention when establishing protocols for the management of COVID-19 in our schools. Parents will be notified via established communication tools regarding current protocols, as well as updates. Specifics on current protocols are not included here, as frequent changes occur. Parents are encouraged to consult the MCSD website for specific guidelines.

Illness

- Students who have a temperature of 100.0 or higher are not allowed to remain at school
- Schools may send students home, in the absence of a fever, if they generally appear unwell and/or present with other signs of illness, i.e. productive coughs, vomiting, diarrhea, cold symptoms, etc.
- Students with a fever, vomiting, or diarrhea must be free of these symptoms for a period of 24 hours without the aid of medication, prior to returning to school.
- Students with suspected communicable diseases will be excluded from school. Written clearance from a healthcare provider will be required in order for the student to return.

Use of 911

The Merced City School District reserves the right to call 911 in the event of a student medical emergency. If the student has a written health plan, District staff will follow the instructions contained therein as it relates to calling 911. For other serious illnesses or injuries not covered by a health plan, 911 will be called at the discretion of District staff.



Health Requirement (continued)



The MCSD is committed to responding appropriately and quickly to serious illnesses or injuries that require care beyond the scope of District staff. Should a parent/guardian wish to decline the transport of their student, they may do that in accordance with the rules set forth by EMS personnel. The District will not assume liability for any further injury or long-term negative effects that may impact the student as a result of declining emergency care.

Narcan (Naloxene)

All Merced City School District schools have access to Narcan. Narcan is a life-saving medication to reverse an opioid overdose (or drug poisoning). Under the guidance of California's Good Samaritan Law, District employees and/or school resource officers may administer Narcan nasal spray while waiting for emergency medical services to arrive if they suspect that an individual is experiencing an opioid overdose. Signs of overdose may include non-responsiveness, shallow breathing, small pupils, blue/gray lips, face, and fingernails.

Chronic Health Conditions

It is the parent /guardian's responsibility to notify the school on a yearly basis, if their child suffers from any health condition that may impact the student's ability to attend school. Parents should notify the site school nurse by phone or see the School Nurse personally at the beginning of the school year or at the time of enrollment. Under certain circumstances, such as in the case of a diabetic student or student with a seizure disorder, it may be necessary to keep the student out of school, until an individual health support plan (IHSP) is in place to ensure the student can be safely cared for while at school. Plans are renewed on a yearly basis and as needed.

School staff who have contact with your child during the school day may be notified of your child's health condition and provided a copy of his/her IHSP, to ensure his/her safety. These staff may include, but are not limited to, classroom teachers, aides, administrators, office staff, and noon duty supervisors. Which school staff are notified will be at the discretion of the school nurse with input from the parent/guardian.

If your child moves to another site within the District through a change in address or graduation, the site nurse may communicate your child's health condition with the site nurse at the new school or District. This ensures your child's safety and provides continuity of care. Despite this communication, you are still required to notify the new site of your child's health condition. Please contact your child's school nurse if you DO NOT want health information about your child shared with other sites or Districts.



Health Requirement (continued)

Administration of Prescription or Over-the- Counter Medication



(a) Any student needing medication during the school day, may be assisted by a nurse, health assistant, or another designated and trained school employee (Ed. Code 49423), a medication permission form must be filled out by the healthcare provider and signed by the parent/guardian.

(b) School personnel are prohibited from giving any over-the-counter medication, including aspirin or Tylenol unless the medication permission form containing the proper information is completed by the healthcare provider, signed by the parent, and on file in the health office.

(c) All medication must be in the original or properly labeled pharmacy container and will be kept in the school office. With a completed medication form including written permission from the healthcare provider, students may be allowed to self-carry inhalers for asthma and epinephrine auto-injectors for severe allergic reactions. Please consult with the site school nurse for additional information and requirements. (Parent, student, and healthcare provider).

(d) Each site in the District has auto-injectable epinephrine available to students for the treatment of life-threatening allergic reactions that may occur without knowledge or warning. Students with known life-threatening allergies are asked to provide their own emergency medication. If you do NOT want your child to receive this medication in the event of an emergency, please submit your request, in writing, to your student's school site. An annual notification is required.

(e) Licensed nurses currently administer insulin for diabetic students. It may also be administered by other trained, unlicensed staff, on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the school nurse. With written permission from the healthcare provider and parent/guardian, trained school site staff will provide all other aspects of diabetic care. Emergency medications such as injectable Epinephrine, Diastat, lorazepam, and solu-cortef given in the school setting may be administered by trained, designated unlicensed school personnel all such medications require written permission from the healthcare provider and the parent/guardian. Contact your child's site school nurse for more information.

(f) Written permission to administer medication is valid for only the school year that the permission was written. For permission forms coming in late in the current school year, the School Nurse may elect to use that form for the next school year, as long as there are no changes to the medication.



Health Requirement (continued)

(g) It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to notify the site office if their child has medication that needs to accompany the student on a field trip or other off-campus event. Notification should be made at least two weeks in advance.

(h) The parent is responsible for keeping a supply of medication for the child at school. The parent or other adult, age 18 or older, is to deliver the medication to the school office personnel.

(i) All medication left at school on the last day, following a student's return from camp or other off-campus trip, or after a student exits a school site, will be disposed of according to District protocol after one week.

Visions and Hearing Screenings

Screenings may not be given to a child whose parent has filed a written objection for each school year in which they do not want their child screened. Vision and hearing screenings are mandated by the State and are performed yearly on those students in the mandated grades. Parents/guardians are not routinely notified of when screenings will occur. A parent whose child does not pass any screening will be notified by U.S. mail or the information will be sent home with the student. Parents are not notified if their child passed the State-mandated screenings.

Immunizations

The District may allow a physician, surgeon, or registered nurse to administer immunizations to pupils whose parents have consented in writing to immunizations. (Ed. Code 49403)

Head Lice

The MCSD adheres to a no-live lice policy. Checks of individual students suspected of having head lice may be done without parental notification. Students with live lice will be sent home. Students with nits, but no live lice, will be allowed to remain at school. Upon return to school, students must be rechecked PRIOR to returning to class and MUST have an adult present. Students returning to school after being home for live lice must be rechecked with a parent/guardian present, prior to returning to the classroom.

The Governing Board requires that the responsibility for the treatment of head lice rests with the parent/guardian. Three school days of excused absence will be allowed for the head lice to be resolved, not including the day the student(s) was sent home. Additional absences will be coded as unexcused. Excessive absences due to head lice may result in referrals to the School Attendance Review Board and/or Child Protective Services.



Health Requirement (continued)

The MCSD follows the Merced County community-wide response to head lice among children in school/preschool/daycare settings protocol. A copy of the protocol and specific District procedures are available for review at each site

Supplemental At-School Student Accident Insurance

Voluntary Student Accident Insurance

Our District offers a voluntary accident medical insurance program which is available for purchase by parents and will be available for school time or an optional 24-hour accident coverage. This program allows parents to purchase additional accident medical insurance for their students. Details will follow and an application or web link will be provided.

For Your Information:

Some students may qualify to enroll in no-cost or low-cost local, state, or federally-sponsored health insurance programs. Information about these programs may be obtained by calling the agencies listed below.

Covered California (coveredca.com) (800) 300-1506
Medi-Cal Program (800) 541-5555



HEALTHY SCHOOLS ACT

Notice to all students, parents/guardians and employees of the Merced City School District:

Assembly Bill 2260 went into effect on January 1, 2001. This legislation enacted Education Code sections 17608 et seq., which require, among other things, that school Districts notify parents and staff about the use of pesticides at school. The purpose of this legislation is to reduce exposure to toxic pesticides through information and application of an integrated pest management system at schools. Towards this end, and pursuant to the requirements of this legislation, please be advised of the following:

The Merced City School District expects to use the following pesticides at its campuses during the upcoming year:

Parents/guardians of the Merced City School District can register with the District's designee, Steven Whitaker, Supervisor of Maintenance and Operations, to receive notification of individual pesticide applications by calling (209) 385-6694. Persons who register for this notification shall be notified at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to the application, except in emergencies, and will be provided the name and active ingredient(s) of the pesticide as well as the intended date of application.

If you wish to access information on pesticides and pesticide use reduction developed by the Department of Pesticide Regulation pursuant to California Food and Agricultural Code section 13184, you can do so by accessing the Department's web-site at www.cdpr.ca.gov.

Asbestos in Schools and Management Plan

Merced City School District has been inspected for the presence of asbestos and all known asbestos has been identified. A management plan has been developed which includes inspection reports, response actions, post response actions, and operations and maintenance activities. It also includes names of the inspector and management planner.

In Accordance with Asbestos Hazard, Emergency Response Act (AHERA) Hazard Management Services have performed a 3-year re-inspection. In addition, 6-month surveillance inspections have been performed. Copies of the abatement records are located at the Department of Facilities, Maintenance and Operations.

During the 2020-2021 school year, the District encountered the need for asbestos abatement in a number of school flooring upgrade projects at Peterson Elementary, Gracey Elementary, and Rivera Middle School. During the summer of 2020, the District completed re-roofing projects at Muir Elementary School, Peterson Elementary School, the M/O/T facility, and a portion of roofing at Hoover Middle School, which included abatement of asbestos materials. During the summer of 2021, asbestos abatement was completed in a portion of the first wing at Hoover Middle School and in roofing wells of four buildings re-roofed at Rivera Middle School and Rivera Elementary School. A copy of the District's entire plan is available in the Department of Facility Services office located at 2105 Wardrobe Avenue, Merced. Individual plans are available at the Site Administrator's office at each site.

The management plans are available for review during regular business hours. A nominal duplicating fee may be charged for those who wish to obtain copies of the plans.





AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT ASSISTANCE

Assembly Bill 2260 went into effect on January 1. In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Merced City School District (MCSD) does not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities.

MCSD does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices and complies with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's regulations in accordance with the ADA.

MCSD will generally, upon request, provide necessary aids and services that lead to effective communication for qualified individuals with disabilities, enabling them to participate equally in MCSD's services, programs, and activities. Such aids and services may include, but are not limited to, qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, and other ways of making information and communications accessible to persons with speech, hearing, or vision impairments.

MCSD will make reasonable modifications to policies and procedures and/or accommodations to ensure that individuals with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from our services, programs, and activities.

Any person who requires an aid or service for effective communication, a modification to policy or procedure, or another accommodation in order to participate in and benefit from a service, program or activity of MCSD, should contact the ADA Coordinator, Raquel Cervantes, Risk Management Specialist, at 209-385-6645, as soon as possible prior to an event, and at least 48 hours in advance. Any complaint regarding the inaccessibility of MCSD services, programs, or activities for individuals with disabilities should also be directed to Raquel Cervantes, ADA Coordinator for MCSD.

LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY BILLING PROGRAM

Notice Regarding the District's Participation in the Lead Medi-Cal Billing Program

The Merced City School District, in cooperation with the California Departments of Health Care Services and Education, participates in a program that allows the District to be reimbursed with federal Medicaid dollars for select health services provided to enrolled Medi-Cal students at school. The money received through this program is directly reinvested into expanding and improving health and social services for all students.

In accordance with state and federal rules and guidelines, we are notifying you that some information may be released from your student's records to our reimbursement recovery vendor, Paradigm Healthcare Services, LLC and to the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) for claiming purposes only (and your child's Medi-Cal benefits may be accessed). This information is only released if we have received your consent to do so. Your consent may have been provided to the District when you registered your student for school, as part of your back-to-school paperwork, or during the IEP/IFSP development and review process (if applicable).

All information that is shared is encrypted and transmitted securely to both our vendor and to DHCS. The education records that may be shared as a result of our participation in this program include:

- Student name, date of birth, health-related evaluation, intervention, and referral information (for services received at school)
- Practitioners' notes related to these health services and select data from child's IEP/IFSP (if applicable)

You have the right to withdraw your consent to disclose your student's information at any time. Please feel free to visit your school's front desk to discuss this program. Please note that students will not be denied services they require to attend school, and parents will never be billed by the school District for services provided as a result of your consent, or nonconsent. Further, while Medi-Cal is reimbursing the District for select health services, your child's Medi-Cal benefits should not be impacted in any way. We participate in this program in an effort to obtain federal funding for the Medi-Cal reimbursable health services already being performed at school, and then use this funding to expand services that are available to all students.

Additional notes:

- Confidentiality & Privacy. The District's reimbursement recovery vendor is bound by a contract that contains specific provisions to keep student records confidential, ensuring information is not used or disclosed inappropriately; further, our vendor is HIPAA compliant. In addition, the District and DHCS are bound by agreements that include specific provisions about the use of the information shared in this program, and governing security protocols.
- Third Party Liability. If your student is enrolled in Medi-Cal and is covered by a third party insurer, DHCS may attempt to recover third party liability if they pay a school-based claim submitted by us. This occurs due to the assignment of third-party liability rights that was provided when your application to Medi-Cal was approved.



ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT & RELEASE OF DISTRICT FROM LIABILITY (STUDENTS)

The Merced City Elementary School District authorizes students to use District technology as tools to support teaching and learning, which is a privilege permitted at the District's discretion and is subject to the conditions and restrictions set forth in applicable Board policies, administrative regulations, and this Acceptable Use Agreement. The District reserves the right to take precautionary measures to maintain the integrity, security and safety of students and District data at any time, without notice, for any reason.

The District expects all students to use technology responsibly in order to avoid potential problems and liability. The District places reasonable restrictions on the sites, material, and/or information that students may access through the system.

Each student who is authorized to use District technology and his/her parent/guardian shall sign this Acceptable Use Agreement as an indication that they have read and understand the agreement.

By accepting the District technology equipment, you agree to abide by the rules and guidelines included in this agreement, regardless of or in lieu of a physical signature.

Definitions

District technology includes, but is not limited to, computers, the District's computer network including servers and wireless computer networking technology (Wi-Fi), the Internet, email, USB drives, tablet computers, iPads, Chromebooks, smartphones, and smart devices, telephones, cellular telephones, personal digital assistants, pagers, MP3 players, wearable technology, any wireless communication device including emergency radios, and/or future technological innovations, whether accessed on or off-site or through District-owned or personally owned equipment or devices.

Student Technology

Student devices may include Chromebooks, iPads, and Wi-Fi hotspots. All devices assigned to students may only be used within the constraints of this Acceptable Use Agreement. The Merced City School District owns all devices and chargers. The District maintains an inventory system that links each student to the serial number of the student's assigned device.

Student Assigned Technology:

Student Assigned Technology:

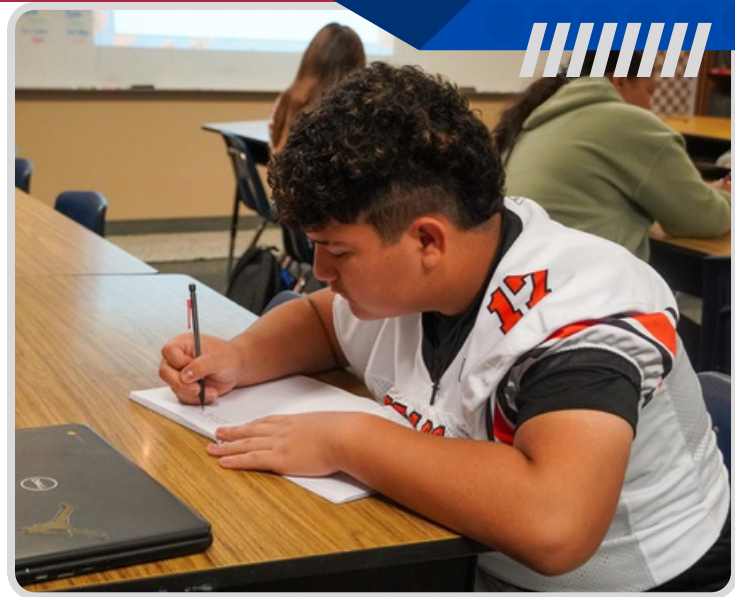
- Students in PreK-1 are assigned iPads. These devices will remain at school at all times.

Acceptable Use Agreement & Release of District from Liability (continued)

- Students in grades 2-5 are assigned Chromebooks. These devices will remain at school. Teachers may assign projects that require the device to go home and return to the school each day.
- Students in grades 6-8 are assigned a Chromebook for which they are personally responsible. The student will bring the Chromebook to and from school each day, fully charged, and ready to be used in the classroom.
- Starting 6th grade, students will use the same device through their 8th grade year while enrolled in MCSD.
- Students who leave or graduate from the Merced City School District must return the assigned device, charger, and hotspot (if applicable). If it is not returned, the parent and student will be responsible for the cost of a replacement device and charger. Each device will be deactivated and rendered unusable.
- Students who have been approved to use a District device over the summer shall return the assigned device and charger before or by the start of the new school year. If it is not returned, the parent and student will be responsible for the cost of a replacement device and/or charger. The device will be deactivated and rendered unusable.
- Students who have been approved to use a District device over the summer shall return the assigned device and charger before or by the start of the new school year. If it is not returned, the parent and student will be responsible for the cost of a replacement device and/or charger. The device will be deactivated and rendered unusable.

General Device Guidelines:

- All devices are the property of the Merced City School District.
- This includes the device, the device battery, and any power cord or adaptor.
- Use only a clean dry cloth to clean the device screen (no chemicals).
- Do not add pressure to the top of the device when closed.



- Do not remove keys or any other parts of the mobile device or modify the keyboard or any other portion of the hardware of the device
- Do not close the device on pencils/pens as it could damage the screen or keyboard.
- Do not bump the device on tables or against walls.
- Take care when carrying a device in a backpack.
- The device must remain free of any stickers or writing not placed on the device by the District.
- The expectation is that the devices will be returned in the condition in which they were received.

Student Obligations and Responsibilities

Students are expected to use District technology safely, responsibly, and for educational purposes only. The District maintains an inventory system that links each student to the serial number of the student's assigned device. The student in whose name District technology is assigned is responsible for its proper use and physical condition at all times. Students shall not share their assigned online services account information, passwords, or other information used for identification and authorization purposes, and shall use the system only under the account to which they have been assigned.

Acceptable Use Agreement & Release of District from Liability (continued)

Students are prohibited from using District technology for improper purposes, including, but not limited to, use of District technology to:

- Access, post, display, or otherwise use material that is discriminatory, libelous, defamatory, obscene, sexually explicit, or disruptive
- Bully, harass, intimidate, or threaten other students, staff, or other individuals ("cyberbullying")
- Disclose, use, or disseminate personal identification information (such as name, address, telephone number, Social Security number, or other personal information) of another student, staff member, or other people with the intent to threaten, intimidate, harass, or ridicule that person
- Infringe on copyright, license, trademark, patent, or other intellectual property rights
- Intentionally disrupt or harm District technology or other District operations (such as destroying District equipment, placing a virus on District computers, adding or removing a computer program without permission from a teacher or other District personnel, changing settings on shared computers)
- Install unauthorized software
- "Hack" into the system to manipulate data of the District or other users

- Engage in or promote any practice that is unethical or violates any law or Board policy, administrative regulation, or District practice

Privacy

Since the use of District technology is intended for educational purposes, students shall not have any expectation of privacy in any use of District technology.

The District reserves the right to monitor and record all use of District technology, including, but not limited to, access to the Internet or social media, communications sent or received from District technology, or other uses. Such monitoring/recording may occur at any time without prior notice for any legal purposes including, but not limited to, record retention and distribution and/or investigation of improper, illegal, or prohibited activity. Students should be aware that, in most instances, their use of District technology (such as web searches and emails) cannot be erased or deleted.

All passwords created for or used on any District technology are the sole property of the District. The creation or use of a password by a student on District technology does not create a reasonable expectation of privacy.

COPPA Compliance

The District is pleased to be able to offer individualized instruction to students through a variety of technological resources. In some instances, the District will offer educational websites or applications



Acceptable Use Agreement & Release of District from Liability (continued)

that utilize personal information of students, such as name, screen name, user name, etc., in order to provide the individualized instruction. A list of such websites and applications and links to their terms and conditions may be found on the District website. Additionally, the District tries to avoid websites and applications that market or sell student personal information. Should such a website or application be utilized for educational purposes, it will be identified on the District website and parents have the right to opt out of student use of such websites and applications.

Reporting

If a student becomes aware of any security problem (such as any compromise of the confidentiality of any login or account information) or misuse of District technology, he/she shall immediately report such information to the teacher or other District personnel.

Financial Responsibilities

When assigned technology is lost or damaged that they are no longer usable, the student shall be immediately assigned a replacement.



However, the student and parent/guardian are responsible for the cost of repair or for the device's fair market value on the date of loss or damage. This includes unreturned devices when a student leaves or graduates from the District.

The principal has the final say in determining replacement and repair situations. If it is demonstrated to the principal that the student has taken all reasonable precautions to safeguard the technology assigned, the principal may excuse payment of reparation.

Consequences for Violation

Violations of the law, Board policy, or this agreement may result in revocation of a student's access to District technology and/or discipline, up to and including suspension or expulsion. In addition, violations of the law, Board policy, or this agreement may be reported to law enforcement agencies as appropriate.

A printed agreement for English, Spanish, or Hmong can be obtained from any MCSD school. Electronic PDFs can be obtained by visiting [our website](#) or contacting Helpdesk (209) 381-2826.

DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION

(DLI) OVERVIEW

We are proud to launch our District's Spanish-English Dual Language Immersion (DLI) program at Don Stowell Elementary School, set to begin in Fall 2025—a milestone made possible by years of thoughtful planning, research, and collaboration with our community. This program reflects our commitment to providing students with rich, equitable learning experiences that prepare them for success in a multilingual world. MCSD will begin with two (2) kindergarten classes in 2025-26 and add two (2) classes per grade level, per year, until Stowell has two (2) DLI classrooms in each grade level, Kindergarten through fifth-grade.

The DLI program began as a vision to expand access to bilingual education and has grown through engagement with educators, families, and District leaders. Grounded in research and best practices, our DLI model promotes bilingualism, biliteracy, academic achievement, and sociocultural competence. Studies show that students in well-implemented dual language programs not only develop proficiency in two languages but also tend to outperform their peers academically over time.

Beginning in kindergarten, students in the DLI program will learn content in both Spanish and English through an additive bilingual model. Our program follows a 90/10 model, using Spanish as the primary language of instruction in the early grades and gradually increasing English each year until reaching a 50/50 balance, ensuring students develop strong skills in both languages. This carefully designed progression ensures that students build strong literacy and academic skills in both languages.

We are excited to bring this opportunity to our District and look forward to growing a generation of students who are confident communicators, cross-cultural thinkers, and lifelong learners.

For more information about the DLI program, please contact the MCSD State and Federal Department at (209) 385-6331.



M.A.R.S. AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM



The Merced Academy of Rising Scholars (M.A.R.S.) is a comprehensive expanded learning program that offers high-quality enrichment opportunities during afterschool hours, summer sessions, and intersession opportunities for students in transitional kindergarten (TK) through 6th grade. Our goal is to inspire curiosity, foster creativity, and strengthen student learning by providing meaningful experiences that support the whole child—academically, socially, and emotionally. We are committed to delivering hands-on, engaging, and student-centered learning that aligns with the diverse interests and developmental needs of our students. We believe that learning should not end when the school day does. Instead, M.A.R.S. serves as an extension of the educational journey, offering a safe and supportive environment where students can explore new skills, discover talents, and build confidence.

Our programs are results-driven and aligned with evidence-based practices, ensuring that every activity and opportunity contributes to measurable student growth. By integrating academic reinforcement with enrichment offerings such as STEM, arts, music, physical fitness, and social-emotional learning, we create a well-rounded experience that goes beyond traditional classroom instruction.

M.A.R.S. is proud to work alongside a variety of community partners, including local organizations, artists, mentors, tutors, and specialists, who bring their expertise and passion into our programs. This collaboration strengthens our connection to the community and enriches the educational experience for every child.

Our expanded learning opportunities complement—but do not replicate—the learning that occurs during the regular school day. Instead, they are designed to extend student learning in innovative and interactive ways, reinforcing key concepts while nurturing essential life skills such as teamwork, leadership, resilience, and problem-solving.

MCSD, and the M.A.R.S. program, believes that every child is a rising scholar, and is dedicated to helping them reach for the stars—both in and out of the classroom - before, during, and after school hours.





COMMUNICATIONS FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Mission

At MCSD, we recognize the critical role that continuous family engagement plays in a child's education. We are dedicated to fostering strong connections between the District, school sites, and families. Transparency and timeliness are at the heart of our mission, as we strive to provide accurate and relevant information to our MCSD community.

Stay Connected

MMCSO takes pride in the many ways we communicate with our community. Please take a moment to familiarize yourself with our various channels of communication.

SUPERINTENDENT NEWSLETTER

Subscribe to our monthly Superintendent Newsletter to stay connected on important District events and announcements, and celebrate student achievements.

[Subscribe here!](#)

Websites

Our District website is <https://www.mercedcsd.org> and to find each school website visit [Our Schools](#) found on the front page of the District website.

Peachjar

The Merced City School District has embraced the digital age by transitioning from hard-copy flyers to a digital flyer delivery system. Partnering with Peachjar, we now send approved flyers directly to parents' email inboxes. This environmentally-friendly approach ensures parents/guardians have quick and easy access to important information. All flyers can be accessed by clicking on the Peachjar button on your child's school website.

District AND SCHOOL MASS NOTIFICATIONS FOR UPDATES AND EMERGENCIES (PARENTSQUARE):

MCSD uses ParentSquare as our official platform for family engagement. Through ParentSquare, you can communicate with your student's teacher(s), receive weekly announcements and callouts from site administrators, and learn about site-specific opportunities and resources.



Communications-Family Engagement(continued)



Parent Emergency Notification

In the event that an emergency situation takes place on a school campus, student safety is our top concern.

- Staff members will first ensure the safety of your student and others on campus, then turn their attention to providing you with timely updates.
- Please know that we also work to ensure all information shared is accurate, which sometimes requires a temporary halt while details are verified with partnering agencies or other sources.
- Depending on the level of the emergency, parents will be notified through ParentSquare, a telephone call, and/or updates made to the District's website.
- Please make sure that your child's school has your most current emergency contact information to ensure you can receive updates as necessary.

Contact your school front office to register or update your ParentSquare account.

[Sign in to ParentSquare.](#)



Communicating with your student in an emergency situation

Communicating with your student in an emergency situation Please wait for your student to contact you during a school emergency. To help ensure their safety, students are asked to keep their cell phones on silent and the screen off at all times, especially during a lockdown.

- Students in 5th-8th grades will keep their phones in a YONDR pouch.
- In the event of an emergency lockdown, school staff will direct students according to emergency preparedness protocol. Student cell phone use during this time has the potential to endanger the safety of the student using the phone and all students and staff within that classroom.
- In the event of an extended lockdown due to activity within the school vicinity, students would be directed to unlock their phone pouches as needed.
- In the event of an evacuation, students would unlock their phone pouches prior to leaving the campus.
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Social Media

Celebrate student achievements and stay updated on District events by following us on social media. Our Communications Department captures many exciting moments, including real-time footage of District events. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram @mercedcityschoolDistrict.

Communications-Family Engagement(continued)

Press Releases & Newsroom Announcements

Stay informed by reading MCSD Press Releases, available on our website, Facebook, Instagram, ParentSquare, and Superintendent Stocking's monthly newsletters.



California Public Records Act (PRA)

As a public agency, MCSD recognizes the right of citizens to access public records. We adhere to the California Public Records Act, which mandates that governmental records be disclosed to the public upon request, unless specific exemptions apply.

To request public records, you may send a letter or email using the District's PRA form to:

Dominique Zuniga
Communications Director
Merced City School District
444 W. 23rd St
Merced, CA 95340

Please email requests to Dazuniga@mcsd.k12.ca.us.

[CLICK HERE](#) or visit
<https://www.mercedcsd.org/community/public-records-request>
to access the District's Public Records Act Request Form



ONE TEAM



One Community

