# STUDENT HANDBOOK &

# CODE OF CONDUCT 2026-2027

MUSCOGEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

# Muscogee County School District
# Columbus, Georgia

## Muscogee County Board of Education

| | |
|---|---|
| Patricia Hugley Green | Board Chair |
| Laurie C. McRae | Board Vice Chair |
| Dr. David F. Lewis | Secretary |
| Karen P. Jones | Executive Assistant |
| Janice Bloodworth | Treasurer |
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| Mark Cantrell | District 6 |
| Patricia Frey | District 7 |
| Margot Schley | District 8 |
| Dr. Kia Chambers | At-Large |

## Administrative Staff

**(In alphabetical order)**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Dr. David F. Lewis** | **Superintendent of Education** |
| Dr. Travis T. Anderson | Chief Operations and Facilities Officer |
| Gregory M. Arp | Chief of Campus Police Department |
| Terry Baker | Regional Chief, West |
| Janice S. Bloodworth | Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer |
| Tonya L. Carter | Chief Human Resources Officer |
| Patrick Knopf | Chief Student Services Officer |
| Tamura Magwood | Regional Chief, Central |
| Ronald E. Pleasant | Chief Information and Technology Officer |
| Martin Richburg | Regional Chief, East |
| Joseph G. Slaughter | Director of Internal Audits |
| Dr. Timothy S. Smith | Chief Academic Officer |
| Kimberly A. Wright | Director of Communications |

Muscogee County School District
Columbus, Georgia

David F Lewis, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Education

P.O. BOX 2427
Columbus, Georgia 31902-2427

Dear Students and Families of the Muscogee County School District,

Welcome to a new school year. Each of you plays an essential role in our school community-a collaborative partnership that includes our dedicated staff, families, business partners, community organizations, and volunteers. Together, we are committed to supporting the academic success and overall well-being of every student.

This Student Handbook and Code of Conduct is an important resource designed to clearly communicate our district's expectations, policies, and procedures. It provides guidance on student conduct, discipline, and the standards that help ensure a safe, respectful, and productive learning environment for all. We encourage you to review this handbook carefully and refer to it throughout the year.

Understanding and adhering to these expectations is a shared responsibility between students and families. School staff will review key components with students at the beginning of the 2026-2027 school year to reinforce these important guidelines.

I am confident that, working together, we will make this a successful and rewarding school year for every student.

Sincerely,

David F. Lewis Superintendent of Education

Phone (706) 748-2018/748-2019 • Fax (706) 748-2001
E-mail: Lewis.David.F@muscogee.ki2.ga.us • web address:www.muscogee.kl2.ga.us

The safety and well-being of our students, staff, and visitors remain a top priority for the Muscogee County School District. We are committed to maintaining secure, supportive learning environments where students can focus on growth and achievement. As part of this ongoing commitment, the district continues to implement and reinforce safety practices and expectations across all schools. Please take a moment to review the following important information, which is reflected in the Student Code of Conduct for the 2025–2026 academic year.

## ?? Safety Enhancements and Expectations

**1. Electronic Device Policy**
In alignment with Georgia House Bill 340 and to support focused learning environments, the district maintains a clear electronic device policy for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Personal cell phones, earbuds, smartwatches, and other non-school-issued electronic devices are not to be accessed during instructional time unless explicitly permitted by school administration or teachers for educational purposes or during designated times (e.g., before/after school, lunch, or extracurricular events). Violations will result in progressive disciplinary consequences.

**2. Security Vestibules in Schools**
Many of our schools are equipped with secure entrance vestibules, with continued implementation across the district. These controlled access points ensure that all students, staff, and visitors are appropriately screened before entering the main campus. Students will continue to enter through designated doors, with staff and security personnel monitoring arrival procedures. This approach aligns with established safety practices adopted by school districts nationwide.

**3. Weapons Detection Systems**
Weapons detection systems are being implemented at the main entrances of our middle and high schools to support safe and efficient entry. These systems provide non-invasive, real-time screening for potential threats while minimizing disruption to the school day. Students can pass through without removing items unless an alert is triggered, at which point trained staff will conduct a brief and respectful follow-up screening in a designated area.

These measures are designed to support the safety and well-being of students, staff, and visitors while maintaining a welcoming and orderly learning environment.

You will find additional details about these expectations—along with attendance policies, conduct guidelines, and available supports—throughout the Student Code of Conduct. We encourage families to review this information together to ensure a strong and successful start to the school year.

## A Unified Mission

Our commitment to excellence extends beyond academics—it includes the physical and emotional well-being of everyone in our schools. Thanks to the continued support of the citizens of Muscogee County through the Educational Special Local Option Sales Tax, our district is able to maintain and enhance safe learning environments for all students.

Thank you for your trust, cooperation, and partnership. Together—with students, families, educators, and community members—we will continue to strengthen our schools and advance our shared mission of excellence and opportunity for all.

**ARTHUR L. SMITH, III**

CHIEF JUDGE OF SUPERIOR COURTS

GOVERNMENT CENTER
P.O. BOX 1340
COLUMBUS, GEORGIA 31902-1340

TELEPHONE 706/225-4273
FACSIMILE 706/225-4569

August 1, 2026

Dear Parent or Guardian,

On behalf of the Superior Courts of Chattahoochee, Harris, Marion, Muscogee, Talbot, and Taylor Counties, I wish to welcome you to a new school year and confirm that school attendance is mandatory in the State of Georgia. Regular student attendance is a basic requirement for academic progress, as we all know. Attendance is linked closely to lifelong learning and productivity. It is well established that frequent or chronic absences, late arrivals and truancy place a child at a severe disadvantage, both in school and in endeavors later in life.

With these considerations in mind, you should know that your child's school is legally required to report students with excessive absences or late arrivals to your school's social worker for follow up and possible legal action.

Should such a referral occur, efforts will be made to help the family resolve attendance problems. If such efforts are unsuccessful, it shall be the duty of the social worker to file proceedings in Juvenile Court or take other legal steps to ensure compliance with Georgia's compulsory attendance laws.

Your child's school realizes that occasional absences or tardiness are necessary or even unavoidable because of illness or family emergencies; however, your student will be responsible for all assignments and homework covered during the absence. If a student needs the teacher's assistance to understand missed material, the teacher will usually be glad to assist the student at a pre-arranged time before or after regular class hours. Generally, it will not be possible for the teacher to stop class or interrupt instruction to accommodate students who are absent or tardy as this would be unfair to other students.

I hope that you and your student have a great academic year and that you will call upon your school with any questions or concerns.

With best regards,

Arthur L. Smith, III

Chief Judge of Superior Courts
Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit

ALS, III/lb

## Muscogee County School District Mission and Vision Statement

**Mission**: Our mission is to inspire and equip all students to achieve unlimited potential.

**Vision:** The Muscogee County School District is a beacon of educational excellence where all are known, valued, and inspired.

## Preface

The Muscogee County School District (MCSD) Student Handbook provisions of this booklet are a general reference guide only and are designed to be in harmony with Board policy. Please be aware that this booklet is not a complete statement of all policies or procedures that may be applicable in any given circumstance. In case of conflict between Board policy (including the Student Code of Conduct) and any provisions of the Student Handbook, the provisions of Board policy and the Student Code of Conduct are to be followed. The most updated version of the board policies is available through Ms. Karen Jones or online at:
https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/PolicyListing.aspx?S=4121

This Handbook is subject to revision as deemed appropriate by the District; in the event of a revision, the District will create an addendum to this document and provide appropriate notice of the same in collaboration with its Communications Division.

## Student Academic Progression Information

Additional detailed information regarding the systematic grade-level progression from the time a student enters pre-kindergarten through 12th grade based on MCSD standard operating procedures, local and state policy, and legislative requirements is available through the District's Division for Teaching and Learning and online, at the MCSD Student Progression Plan. The Student Progression Plan is the best and most accurate source of information regarding academic courses, credits, and curriculum.
https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1701697979/muscogeek12gaus/me9pfiv87bami9zaidur/StudentProgressionPlan2023-2024EDIT_SZFINALHULLEDIT11-30-23.pdf

## MCSD Anti-Bullying Statement

MCSD is committed to providing a safe learning environment and to promptly addressing any bullying behaviors. Bullying is prohibited, and all stakeholders are encouraged to report any bullying behaviors.

## MCSD Police Department

The Muscogee County School District Police Department (MCSDPD) was formed by Board of Education and its Counsel by a resolution in 2018 and is currently staffed with police officers certified by the Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training Council. MCSDPD is charged with the responsibility of supporting and facilitating the educational process by providing a safe and secure environment for teaching and learning. MCSDPD is committed to the creation of a collaborative relationship between its officers and our students, parents, school district employees, and community stakeholders.

MCSDPD promotes community policing, which encourages officer to continuously operate in the same physical area in order to create a stronger bond with the citizens in that area, thus promoting mutual positive engagement and crime prevention. MCSDPD's goal is to create a partnership with the community with the shared goal of safe and secure school communities. If you would like to contact the MCSDPD with a non-urgent matter or question, please contact Chief Greg Arp at (706) 748-2743.

# Muscogee County School District
## 2026-2027 Calendar

| DATE | EVENT |
|---|---|
| July 1-24 | Summer Break |
| July 6 | Independence Day Observed |
| July 27-31 | Teacher Planning/Staff Development Days |
| August 3 | 1st Day of School/1st Semester Begins |
| September 2 | Progress Reports |
| September 7 | Labor Day |
| September 24 | Virtual Day |
| September 25 | Teacher Planning/Staff Development Day |
| October 6 | End of 1st Nine Weeks |
| October 9-12 | Fall Break |
| October 13 | Report Cards |
| November 10 | Progress Reports |
| November 11 | Veterans Day |
| November 23-27 | Thanksgiving Break |
| December 18 | 1st Semester Grading Period Ends |
| December 21-January 1 | Winter Break |
| January 4 | Teacher Planning/Staff Development Day |
| January 5 | 2nd Semester Begins |
| January 6 | Report Cards |
| January 18 | Martin Luther King, Jr. Day |
| February 5 | Progress Reports |
| February 11 | Teacher Planning/Staff Development Day |
| February 12-15 | Mid-Winter Break |
| March 12 | End of 3rd Nine Weeks |
| March 17 | Report Cards |
| April 5-9 | Spring Break |
| April 21 | Progress Reports |
| May 18-22 | Graduation |
| May 21 | Last Day of School (All)/Report Cards Elementary |
| May 24-25 | Teacher Post Planning |
| May 25 | Report Cards (Secondary) |
| May 26-June 30 | Summer Break |

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# I. General Information for Students and Parents

Parents/guardians are asked to raise all building-level concerns to the Principal or Building Leader.

If a parent or guardian seeks additional assistance after the Principal or Building Leader has addressed the concern, the below information may be useful in directing inquiries.

The District is divided into three regions; a Region Chief for each region supervises the building level school Principals. Your school's Region Chief is your first point of contact once the Principal or Building Leader has had the opportunity to address your concern.

**School Specific Region Chiefs: (706) 748-3289** [this handbook contains a chart showing which Chief corresponds to each school] See page six

- West Region: Mr. Terry Baker
- Central Region: Ms. Tamura Magwood
- East Region: Mr. Martin Richburg

### Division of Students Services: (706) 748-3217

- Issues concerning discipline, school residential zones, school transfers, and bullying.

### School Counselors and School Social Workers (706) 748-2222

- Issues concerning student attendance

### Program for Exceptional Students: (706) 748-1096

- Questions concerning students with disabilities, students who may have disabilities or are in the evaluation process, and questions regarding Individualized Education Programs or Section Plans

### Division of Teaching and Learning: (706) 748-2109

- Issues concerning student grades, academic credits, curriculum, academic competitions, and homeschool re-entry

### Lighthouse Virtual Academy Program: (706) 748-5453

- The procedures, rules, and guidance contained in this Handbook and Code of Conduct apply whether a student is utilizing a traditional or virtual learning model. For additional information specific to the virtual learning model, or to the Lighthouse Virtual Academy Program, please contact your school's Administrator, the Division of Student Services, or Ms. Stacy Martin, the Director of the Lighthouse Virtual Academy Program.

### Virtual Educational Programming (not connected to Lighthouse Virtual Academy)

- The procedures, rules, and guidance contained in this Handbook and Code of Conduct apply whether a student is utilizing a traditional or virtual learning model. The District offers virtual educational programming in appropriate circumstances on a case-by-case basis. For additional information specific to the virtual learning model, please contact the Division of Student Services.

## Modified Bell Schedule for Schools Impacted by Spiderweb Construction

| Schools | Doors Open | Start Time | End Time |
|---|---|---|---|
| Carver | 8:45 a.m. | 9:15 a.m. | 4:00 p.m. |
| Columbus High School | 8:30 a.m. | 9:00 a.m. | 4:00 p.m. |
| Rainey McCullars School of the Arts | 8:45 a.m. | 9:15 a.m. | 4:05 p.m. |

## Bell Schedule

| Schools | Doors Open | Start Time | End Time |
|---|---|---|---|
| Elementary | 7:00 a.m. | 7:45 a.m. | 2:15 p.m. |
| Middle | 7:40 a.m. | 8:10 a.m. | 3:10 p.m. |
| High | 8:15 a.m. | 8:45 a.m. | 4:00 p.m. |
| | | | |
| **Marshall Success Center** | **Doors Open** | **Start Time** | **End Time** |
| Elementary | 7:45 a.m. | 8:00 a.m. | 2:30 p.m. |
| Middle | 7:45 a.m. | 8:00 a.m. | 3:00 p.m. |
| High | 7:45 a.m. | 8:00 a.m. | 3:30 p.m. |
| | | | |

# District Phone Numbers

| | |
|---|---|
| Switchboard | 706-748-2000 |
| Bully Hotline/Report Bullying | 706-748-2267 |
| ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) | 706-748-2120 |
| Federal Programs | 706-748-2154 |
| Foster Care/Group Homes Concerns | 706-786.2453 |
| Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) | 706-748-2184 |
| Homeless Resources –McKinney-Vento | 706-748-2226 |
| Human Resources/Personnel | 706-748-2011 |
| Human Resources/Personnel Complaint | 706-748-2011 |
| Lighthouse Virtual Academy | 706-748-5453 |
| MCSD Police Department | 706-748-2743 |
| MCSD Technical Support | 706-748-2271 |
| Military Family Assistance | 706-749-3217 |
| MTSS/Student Support Teams/Section 504 | 706-748-2196 |
| Office of the Superintendent (Dr. David Lewis) | 706-748-2019 |
| Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) | 706-748-3339 |
| Program for Exceptional Students | 706-748-1096 |
| Regional Chiefs: (See page 7 for designated school names) | |
| West Region: Mr. Terry Baker | 706-748-2105 |
| Central Region: Ms. Tamura Magwood | 706-748-3279 |
| East Region: Mr. Martin Richburg | 706-748-3294 |
| Registration/Enrollment Information: Main Number | 706-748-2219 |
| Registration/Enrollment Information | 706-748-2220 |
| Registration/Enrollment Information | 706-748-2224 |
| School Counselors/School Social Workers | 706-748-2226 |
| School Nutrition | 706-748-2386 |
| School Psychology Department | 706-748-2230 |
| Sports Equity Coordinator | 706-748-2595 |
| Student Discipline –Tribunal | 706-748-2211 |
| Student Services/Coordinator of Compliance | 706-748-3336 |
| Student Services/Central Registration Main Number | 706-748-2219 |
| Student Services- Parent Complaints | 706-748-3217 |
| Students Who are Hospitalized or Homebound | 706-748-3217 |
| Testing, Assessment & Accountability | 706-748-2020 |
| Title VI & Title IX – Harassment and Discrimination Complaints/Concerns | 706-748-3336 |
| Transportation | 706-748-2876 |
| Transportation after Hours (Security) | 706-748-2860 |

# School Phone Numbers

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Allen Elementary School | 706-748-2418 |
| Blanchard Elementary School | 706-748-2461 |
| Brewer Early Innovation Academy | 706-748-2479 |
| Britt David Elementary Magnet Academy | 706-748-2617 |
| Clubview Elementary School | 706-565-3017 |
| Davis Elementary School | 706-748-2638 |
| Dimon Elementary Magnet Academy | 706-683-8772 |
| Dorothy Height Elementary School | 706-683-8871 |
| Double Churches Elementary School | 706-748-2660 |
| Downtown Elementary Magnet Academy | 706-748-2702 |
| Eagle Ridge Academy | 706-569-3746 |
| Forrest Road Elementary School | 706-565-3061 |
| Fox Elementary School | 706-748-2723 |
| Gentian Elementary School | 706-569-3625 |
| Georgetown Elementary School | 706-565-2980 |
| Hannan Elementary Magnet Academy | 706-748-2744 |
| Johnson Elementary School | 706-748-2795 |
| Key Elementary School | 706-683-8797 |
| Lonnie Jackson Academy | 706-565-3039 |
| Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School | 706-683-8815 |
| Mary A. Buckner Academy | 762-332-4360 |
| Mathews Elementary School | 706-569-3656 |
| Midland Academy | 706-569-3664 |
| North Columbus Elementary School | 706-748-3183 |
| Reese Road Leadership Academy | 706-569-3684 |
| Rigdon Road Elementary School | 706-565-2989 |
| River Road Elementary School | 706-748-3072 |
| South Columbus Elementary School | 706-683-8833 |
| Waddell Elementary School | 706-569-3722 |
| Wesley Heights Elementary School | 706-569-3733 |
| Wynnton Arts Academy | 706-748-3147 |

**MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Aaron Cohn Middle School | 706-569-3801 |
| Arnold Magnet Academy | 706-748-2436 |
| Baker Middle School | 706-683-8721 |
| Blackmon Road Middle School | 706-565-2998 |
| Double Churches Middle School | 706-748-2678 |
| East Columbus Magnet Academy | 706-565-3026 |
| Eddy Middle School | 706-683-8782 |
| Fort Middle School | 706-569-3740 |
| Midland Middle School | 706-569-3673 |
| Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts | 706-748-3304 |
| Richards Middle School | 706-569-3697 |
| Rothschild Leadership Academy | 706-569-3709 |
| Veterans Memorial Middle School | 706-748-3203 |

**HIGH SCHOOLS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Carver High School | 706-748-2499 |
| Columbus High School | 706-748-2534 |
| Hardaway High School | 706-748-2766 |
| Jordan High School | 706-748-2819 |
| Kendrick High School | 706-565-2960 |
| Northside High School | 706-748-2920 |
| Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts | 706-748-3304 |
| Shaw High School | 706-569-3638 |
| Spencer High School | 706-683-8701 |

**CENTERS**

Marshall Success Center ..... 706-748-2900
St. Elmo Center for the Gifted ..... 706-748-3115
Therapeutic Day Program ..... 706-887-5559
Woodall Center ..... 706-748-3166

| Region: **WEST**<br>Mr. Terry Baker<br>Region Chief | Region: **CENTRAL** Ms.<br>Tamura Magwood<br>Region Chief | Region: **EAST**<br>Mr. Martin Richburg<br>Region Chief |
|---|---|---|
| **ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS** | | |
| Allen Elementary<br>Britt David Magnet Academy<br>Davis Elementary<br>Double Churches Elementary<br>Downtown Magnet Academy<br>Fox Elementary<br>Hannan Magnet Academy<br>Johnson Elementary<br>North Columbus Elementary<br>River Road Elementary<br>Wynnton Arts Academy | Blanchard Elementary<br>Brewer Early Innovation<br>Clubview Elementary<br>Dorothy Height Elementary<br>Eagle Ridge Academy<br>Gentian Elementary<br>Key Elementary<br>MLK, Jr Elementary<br>Rigdon Road Elementary<br>South Columbus Elementary | Dimon Magnet Academy<br>Forrest Road Elementary<br>Georgetown Elementary<br>Lonnie Jackson Academy<br>Mary A Buckner Academy<br>Mathews Elementary<br>Midland Academy<br>Reese Road Leadership Academy<br>Waddell Elementary<br>Wesley Heights Elementary |
| **MIDDLE SCHOOLS** | | |
| Arnold Magnet Academy<br>Double Churches Middle<br>Veterans Memorial Middle | Baker Middle<br>Blackmon Road Middle<br>Eddy Middle<br>Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts<br>Richards Middle | Aaron Cohn Middle<br>East Columbus Magnet Academy<br>Fort Middle<br>Midland Middle<br>Rothschild Leadership Academy |
| **HIGH SCHOOLS** | | |
| Hardaway High<br>Jordan High<br>Northside High | Carver High<br>Columbus High<br>Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts<br>Shaw High | Kendrick High<br>Spencer High |

## STUDENT SERVICES DIVISION

Patrick Knopf, Chief

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Anne Elizabeth Shepherd Home<br>Catapult Academy | Sara Spano Clothing Bank<br>Marshall Success Center | Therapeutic Day Program<br>Woodall GNETS Program |

## TEACHING & LEARNING DIVISION

Dr. Timothy Smith, Chief

St. Elmo Center for the Gifted

Board of Education Policies can be accessed through the school website at:
www.muscogee.k12.ga.us

**PATH:** About Us > Board of Education > Quick Links > Board Policies

**Repeal Clause**

Please be advised that the Board of Education may revise or create policies over the course of the school year. Any policy or regulation currently in effect or enacted after the publication of this handbook shall supersede.

## Forms Completed During the Online Registration Process

As part of the 2026–2027 student registration and verification process, parents/guardians will be asked to review and electronically sign a set of required documents listed below. These forms must be completed before a student may begin school. These forms ensure that each school maintains accurate information and meets all compliance, safety, and communication requirements for every student. Electronic signatures submitted during online registration carry the same legal effect as a handwritten signature.

Please review the forms listed below, which you will be required to complete and sign during your student's Online Registration (OLR) process:

- 1) Annual Title IX Notice
- 2) Assistance with Homelessness: McKinney-Vento Students
- 3) GA Pre-K Participation and Attendance Agreement
- 4) Georgia Student Wellness/ Student Health 2.0 Survey Parental Permission Form
- 5) MCSD School Nutrition Program
- 6) Parent & Student Notification Agreement Compulsory Attendance Law O.C.G.A 20-2-690.1
- 7) Parental Notification of Rights under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)
- 8) Permission to Allow Student to participate in Media Relations or interviews 2026-2027 School Year
- 9) Permission to Post Student Images, Videos, Audio, Work on MCSD Website and Social Media and other Platforms 2026-2027
- 10) Returned Check Notification
- 11) Right to Know Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Paraprofessionals
- 12) Student Health Services
- 13) Telephone Consumer Protection Act- School District Use of Electronic Messaging Systems
- 14) Universal & Dyslexia Screening
- 15) Universal Screening – Behavior and Wellbeing

In addition to the online documents listed above, several forms must be completed at the school. These forms require in-person signatures verification of identity, presentation of original records, or documentation that cannot be submitted electronically.
Completion of the following School-based forms is required to finalize registration and verification for the 2026–2027 school year. Forms parents will complete at the school:

- Chromebook Form
- Behavior Contract
- Opt-Out of Clubs Form
- Student Handbook Form
- Pre-K Roster Information Form

**Accessing Student Grades and Information Online: The Infinite Campus Portal**

MCSD uses the "Infinite Campus Portal" System to electronically store and provide access to student information. Information on how to access this Portal (Infinite Campus Portal Guide) is available at: https://campus.muscogee.k12.ga.us/campus/muscogee.jsp If you need help accessing the Portal, please reach out to a teacher or building administrator.

## Attendance and Withdrawal

### Entry Age for Public Kindergarten and First Grade

A child must be five years old on or before September 1 to enter public kindergarten; a student must be six years old on or before September 1 to enter first grade.

### Mandatory Attendance Law

Georgia law requires children between the ages of 6 and 16 must enroll in a private, public, or homeschool program. Children under age seven are subject to the law after they are enrolled in a Georgia school for 20 days or more. The school district is charged with responsibility for enforcing the Mandatory Attendance Law.

The school social worker (listed as visiting teacher in the law) must investigate, monitor, and follow-up with student attendance problems. While the school social worker may be required to file charges in State Court or Juvenile Court for chronic attendance problems, we are primarily dedicated to working with the family to improve student attendance. Students may be temporarily excused from school in keeping with MCSD Board Policy. [see MCSD Board Policies JB, JBA, JBC, and JBCD]. These provisions also apply to students assigned to attend an alternative public-school program established by the Board.

### Withdrawal by Parent / Guardian to Homeschool

In the event that a child is withdrawn from a public school to attend a home study program and does not have a Home School Program Declaration of Intent filed within 30 days of the date of the withdrawal, the district must refer the matter to the Division of Family and Children Services to conduct an assessment. The purpose of such referral and assessment shall be limited to determining whether such withdrawal was to avoid educating the child.

#### Recording Attendance

**Elementary School:** The homeroom teacher records attendance daily at the beginning of the school day. The absence remains unexcused until documentation is provided in keeping with MCSD Board Policies JB and JBA.

**Middle and High School:** The teacher records attendance at the beginning of each period throughout the school day. The absence remains unexcused until documentation is provided in keeping with MCSD Board Policies JB and JBA.

**Block Scheduling**: If a student attends a school utilizing block scheduling, please contact the Principal to ensure a full understanding of how the scheduling variation impacts attendance matters and checking a student in late or checking a student out early. As of the date of printing, the schools on block scheduling are Jordan High School, and Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts.

## Absences, Truancy, and Makeup Work

**Georgia Law 4-H Participation**

A student who participates in an activity or program sponsored by 4-H shall be credited as present by the school in which enrolled in the same manner as an educational field trip, and such participation in an

activity or program sponsored by 4-H shall not be counted as an absence, either excused or unexcused, for any day, a portion of a day or days missed from school.

## Excused Absences and Makeup Work

MCSD recognizes the below as valid reasons for an excused absence, where appropriate documentation is provided. [MCSD Board Policy JB.] Additional reasons may be recognized where they do not conflict with the below; for further information, please contact the Principal or Building Leader.

Principals and Building Leaders have the discretion to require official documentation where a student seeks an excused absence; please discuss any questions with the student's Principal or Building Leader.

### Excused Absences per MCSD Board Policy:

- Personal illness or attendance in school that endangers a student's health or the health of others, note that students may be asked to present appropriate medical documentation upon return to school;
- A serious illness or death in a student's immediate family necessitating absence from school;
- In the event of a serious illness in a student's immediate family, documentation is required upon returning to school;
- An Order by a governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school;
- Observing religious holidays, necessitating absence from school;
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety;
- Students whose parent is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard and such parent has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted excused absences up to a maximum of five school days per school year to visit with their parents prior to parent's deployment or during parent's leave;
- Students serving as pages with the Georgia Legislature;
- Students in foster care attending foster care-related Court proceedings, and
- Voting, for a period not to exceed one day.

### Excused Absences and Final Course Grades

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the school in writing of the date and reason for the absences within three (3) days of the absence. The parent/guardian must note the student's name, the date (s) of absence (s), and the reason for the absence. If a student is being checked in or checked out for an appointment, a physician's note or appointment card

- May be required to be considered excused.

Final course grades of students shall not be penalized because of absences if the following conditions are met: absences are justified and validated for excusable reasons and make-up work for excused absences was completed satisfactorily.

**Makeup Work:** Makeup work is allowed when an absence is excused in keeping with MCSD Board Policies JB and JBA. Please note that schools are not required to provide make-up work for unexcused absences; for more information about this, please contact the Principal or Building Leader.

**Absences Related to Military Parents:** Excused absences for students to visit with parents preparing for, on leave from, or returning from overseas deployment in a combat zone or combat support posting or to attend military affairs sponsored events (appropriate prior documentation must be provided) will be granted in keeping with O.C.G.A. 20-2-692.1. A maximum of five (5) excused days per school year are permitted, not to exceed the maximum number of allowed absences per school year.

**Truancy:** When a child is absent, parents, guardians, or other persons who have control of a child enrolled in the district must comply with MCSD Board Policies JB and JBA and school guidelines to

report reasons for absences in order for the absences to be excused. Any child that is subject to compulsory attendance who, during the school calendar year, has more than five (5) days of unexcused absences is considered truant. The law states the following: "Any parent, guardian, or other person residing in this state who has control or charge of a child or children and who violates this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to a fine of not less than $25.00 and not greater than $100.00, or imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction. Each day's absence from school in violation of this part after the child's school system notifies the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a child of five unexcused days of absence for a child shall constitute a separate offense."

- MCSD shall implement a progressive discipline process and a parental involvement process for truant students before referring the students to the juvenile or other court having jurisdiction.
- Schools will notify parents/guardians when a student has accumulated five (5) unexcused absences.

**Reduction of Unexcused Absences:** The MCSD shall adopt policies and procedures to reduce unexcused absences that shall include but are not limited to the following:

1. The MCSD will notify the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of the student when such student has five (5) unexcused absences. The notice shall outline the penalty and consequences of such absences and that each subsequent absence shall constitute a separate offense.
2. After two (2) reasonable attempts to notify the parent, guardian, or other person who has charge of the student, the school system shall send written notice via first class mail or certified mail with return receipt requested; and
3. MCSD will provide to the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of each student enrolled in public school a written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance.
4. By September 1 of each school year or within 30 school days of a student's enrollment in the school system, the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of such student shall sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties. In addition, students age ten or older by September 1 shall sign a statement indicating receipt of a written statement of possible consequences for non-compliance to the local system's policy.

## Withdrawal Procedures

**Administrative Withdrawal Due to Extended Absence:** MCSD is authorized to administratively withdraw students 16 years of age or older who have ten (10) or more consecutive days of unexcused absences without any extenuating circumstances. School administrators shall document a minimum of three (3) attempts to contact a parent, guardian, or other person for the purpose of holding an attendance withdrawal conference prior to withdrawing a student.

**Parental Withdrawal:** MCSD procedure requires that where a parent or guardian seeks to withdraw his or her child from school, the parent or guardian who registered the student must fill out and submit a written withdrawal form. With a few exceptions for health or safety emergencies, the non-registering parent or guardian may not withdraw a student. Where a parent/guardian withdraws a student with intent to homeschool, the parent/guardian must file a Notice of Intent to Homeschool with the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) within thirty (30) days. Please note: Georgia law requires the MCSD to notify the Department of Family and Children Services where a student is withdrawn to homeschool but GADOE has not received a filed Declaration of Intent.

**Parental Withdrawal of Unemancipated Minor:** Students between the ages of 16 and 18 (unemancipated minors) that have not earned a diploma must have parental permission to withdraw from school. The principal or designee must convene a conference with the parent of child within two (2) days of receiving notice of intent to withdraw.

**Withdrawal as Discipline:** The MCSD does not recognize or authorize administrative withdrawal from school as an appropriate disciplinary consequence.

### Checking a Student In or Out During the School Day

Students arriving at school after the school day has started (after the first bell) must be 'checked in' to school; documentation regarding the reason for the late check-in may be required. Students who are removed from classes and leave the school prior to the official end of the school day with a parent or legal guardian are "checking out early." A parent or legal guardian may be required to bring appropriate documentation showing the necessity of an "early checkout" at the time the student is released from school. Students should not be checked out during the last thirty (30) minutes of the school day.

To be considered "in attendance" for a school day, a student must be present for at least one-half of the school day, excluding the lunch period. Students leaving school before meeting that requirement will be considered absent for the day. Please contact the Principal or Building Leader at your child's school for additional information.

## Students Who are Late to School or Class: Tardiness

**Tardy to School -** Any student arriving at school following the ringing bell, chime, or other audible signal established by the principal and intended to indicate the start of the school day. Any student who is on school property but is not in his or her assigned classroom or other authorized area following the bell, chime, or other audible signals will be considered tardy to school.

**Tardy to Class -** A student is "tardy to class" when the student arrives to class following the ringing bell, chime, or other audible signal indicating the beginning of the instructional time**.**

**Excused Tardy -** A tardy resulting from events beyond a student's control, such as an accident, road closed due to an accident, area power outage, late bus, or other excuses determined by the Principal or Building Leader as acceptable. Documentation is required to excuse a tardy if it is for an appointment.

**Unexcused Tardies -** Students accumulating three (3) days of unexcused tardies will receive a phone call from the teacher of office staff/automatic call system to the parent.

**Continued Tardies –** After the fifth tardy, the principal or designee will contact the parent or guardian for a mandatory parent conference and counselor referral. Consequences may include detention, in-school suspension, or other actions in accordance with local school system policy.

**10 or More Days - Referral to School Social Worker and to support agencies such as Muscogee County Attendance Panel or other supportive, appropriate agencies.** Referral to the school social worker and to support agencies outside the school system, as the principal deems appropriate. Among these agencies are the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS), law enforcement, Juvenile Court, Family Connection, or other external agencies**.**

### Elementary and Middle School Tardy Walk-In Procedure

The parent or guardian who brings the student to school must park in a designated parking spot and report to the front office in person with the student(s) to check the student(s) in when arriving to school after the bell or chime.

### High School Tardy Procedure

The student must report to the attendance/front office to check in when arriving to school after the tardy bell.

## Teenager and Adult Driver Responsibility Act (TAADRA)

Students who are under the age of 18 and seek a driver's license or permit must first obtain a Certificate of School Enrollment Form DDS-1 from MCSD pursuant to state law. State law allows licenses or permits to be issued only to students who are enrolled in and not under expulsion from a public or private school.

The Certificate of School Enrollment form satisfies this requirement. The Certificate of Enrollment form is posted on the Georgia Department of Driver Services www.dds.georgia.gov/school-enrollment-documents

## Students Driving Automobiles to School

Students who wish to drive to school and park at school must register with the principal and or designee provide written authorization from a parent or guardian in order to obtain a permit. This permit is subject to revocation by the principal at any time. Students who are permitted to drive vehicles to school shall not be allowed to drive home for lunch or at any other time during the school day without prior permission from the principal or designee. Students are subjected to the rules below regardless of whether they obtain a parking permit.

**Student Parking Permit**: A student may earn the privilege of parking his/her automobile on campus subject to the below terms and conditions.

1. Student must have permission to drive to school.
2. Student and guardian understand that the student must have a valid driver's license.
3. Guardian and student understand that the student must have valid car insurance and provide proof of the same.
4. Guardian and student understand and agree that at any time the vehicle is on campus, they are both responsible to ensure that the vehicle does not contain any item that is prohibited by Georgia law or prohibited by the MCSD Code of Conduct. This includes, but is not limited to any product or delivery system that contains nicotine, electronic cigarettes, vapes all types, alcoholic beverages, any nonprescription drugs without proper authorization, or any pornographic material.
5. Guardian and student both understand that the student will be accountable for any item or substance in the vehicle, regardless of who placed the item or substance in the vehicle or whether the student was aware of the same.
6. Guardian and student understand and agree to inspect the vehicle before bringing the vehicle on campus each time in order to determine whether anything forbidden by this permit is in the vehicle.
7. Guardian and student agree that the vehicle is subject to random searches at any time the principal or designee deems appropriate and the student agrees upon request to unlock their vehicle, glove compartment, trunk, or other locked storage compartment in the vehicle for inspection; guardian and student both consent to these searches by signing that they have read and reviewed this Handbook and sending a vehicle with a student.
8. Guardian and student agree and understand that MCSD is not responsible for theft, damage, or loss of vehicle or possessions while parked on MCSD property, and agree not to pursue these costs or claims.
9. The provisions of this section apply to all student vehicles on school district property, regardless of whether or not a student parking permit has been issued.
10. The student's right to park their vehicle on district property may be revoked at any time by the school principal.

## Valuables at School

MCSD personnel cannot search for personal items lost or misplaced while at school. MCSD personnel will not be responsible for the value of an item in the event of damage, loss, or theft while at school. Parents – please consider this carefully and be intentional when you decide whether to send items to school with your child or children. Parents/guardians must inspect any and all containers (and their contents) that are sent to school with their child or children. All containers/contents are subject to inspection if brought onto MCSD property or to a MCSD event. This applies to telephones (please refer to GEORGIA HB340/"DISTRACTION-FREE EDUCATION ACT" 6/2025), computers, and any other personal items that are brought to school.

## Athletics and Extracurricular Activities – Parental Opt-Out Information

Outside of the regular school day, MCSD students have many opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities at the school level. Such activities may include athletics, academic competitions, before and after-

school extracurricular clubs, as well as various fine arts programs. The law allows a wide variety of clubs. We want all parents to be comfortable with the activities selected by students. Parents and guardians must obtain information regarding the extracurricular clubs offered directly from the school level Administrator at the beginning of the school year. Parents or guardians may restrict participation by filling out and returning the "Opt-Out" form provided by the Student Services Division at the beginning of the school year. Please seek information from your school's Principal about the clubs that are offered so that you can make informed decisions about permissions.

Note: If a parent or guardian does not limit the clubs that the student may join, the student will be permitted to join any extracurricular club for which they are eligible. The Opt-Out form must be filled out and returned if a parent or guardian wishes to restrict student participation.

### Clear Bag Requirement

The Muscogee County Board of Education has implemented a clear bag requirement that limits the size and types of bags that may be brought by spectators to District events. This policy is intended to increase safety and enhance the spectator's experience by minimizing time spent searching bags at gate and entrance security checkpoints.

### Eligibility for Competition

The governing body for all competitive interscholastic team events is the Georgia High School Association (GHSA). The GHSA guidelines are posted below.

## HIGH SCHOOL

### Eligibility

Students gain eligibility to practice or compete for the school in which they are enrolled after they have been certified by the Principal of that school after the eligibility forms have been processed by the GHSA office, and after the students have met the standards of academic requirements, age, semesters in high school, residence in the school's service area, and transfer rules.

Note: First-year students (entering 9th grade) are eligible academically.

### Limits of Participation

A student has 8 consecutive semesters or 4 consecutive years of eligibility from the date of entry into the 9th grade to be eligible for interscholastic competition.

### Age Restriction

To be eligible to participate in interscholastic activities, a student must not have reached his/her 19th birthday prior to May 1st, preceding the year of participation.

### Academic Standing

Students must accumulate units (credits) toward graduation according to the following criteria:

First-year students (freshmen entering 9th grade) are eligible academically. Second-semester first-year students must have passed courses carrying at least 2.5 units (credits) the previous semester in order to participate.

Second-year (sophomore) students must have accumulated 5 total units (credits) in the first year, AND passed courses carrying at least
2.5 units (credits) in the previous semester.

Third-year (junior) students must have accumulated 11 units (credits) in the first and second years AND passed courses carrying at least
2.5 units (credits) in the previous semester.

Fourth-year (senior) students must have accumulated 17 units (credits) in the first three years, AND passed courses carrying at least 2.5 units (credits) in the previous semester.

Students may accumulate the required units for participation during the school year and eligibility will be reinstated at the beginning of the next semester.

### Transfer Student Athletic Eligibility

Students and parents or guardians should be aware that school transfers may affect the student's eligibility to participate in athletic and extracurricular activities, which are governed by the Georgia High School Association (GHSA). Parents should verify whether GHSA requirements may affect their child's eligibility, before submitting a school transfer request. Additional information can be found at: https://www.ghsa.net/constitution GHSA transfer rules can be complex and vary depending on individual circumstances. Therefore, parents and students are strongly encouraged to consult with school athletic directors for guidance prior to making transfer decisions.

Parents are advised to discuss transfer policies with the school's athletic director to ensure a clear understanding of eligibility requirements and potential impacts.

### Rainey McCullers School of the Arts

Students in grades 9-12 enrolled at the Rainey McCullers School of the Arts will be permitted to participate in Georgia High School Association sanctioned interscholastic sports at their respective zoned school, in accordance with the GHSA Constitution and By-Laws that are not offered at Rainey McCullers School of the Arts. Students may not participate in GHSA extracurricular activities at both Rainey McCullers School of the Arts and their zoned school, e.g., students may not participate as a member of the cross-country team at Rainey McCullers School of the Arts and the baseball team at their zoned school.

### Home School Students Eligibility

Home study students who take one or more courses in their resident schools may be eligible per Georgia law, to participate in extracurricular and interscholastic activities with the school that the student would attend based on their residency. The law contains several requirements in order for a student to participate; parents and guardians who would like further information should seek additional information from the District well in advance of their desired participation semester to ensure all requirements may be met.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

### Eligibility

Students gain eligibility to practice or compete for the school in which they are enrolled after they have been certified by the Principal of that school, after the eligibility forms have been processed by the MCSD Athletic office, and after the students have met the standards of academic requirements, age, semesters in middle school, residence in the school's service area, and transfer rules. Note: Students establishing eligibility as entering 6th graders are automatically eligible for the first semester.

### Limits of Participation

A student has 3 consecutive years of eligibility from the date of entry into the 6th grade to be eligible for interscholastic competition.

### Age Restriction

To be eligible to participate in interscholastic activities, a student must not have reached his/her 15th birthday prior to August 1st of the current school year.

### Academic Standing

Promotion into 6th grade makes students eligible for the 1st semester of 6th grade. Students must pass 5 out of 6 classes at the end of the first semester to be eligible for the second semester. Eligibility for the first semester for students in grades 7 and 8 is based on passing 5 out of 6 classes for the year during the previous school year.

### Attendance

Individual students who have emergencies necessitating their absence from school for a portion of the school day must have been present one-half of the instructional day in order to be counted present for the school day and to participate in athletics and extracurricular activities.

### Sportsmanship

The interscholastic activity program in the MCSD is an important part of the educational process. It provides opportunities for learning experiences in athletics, competitive band, and literary competitions which are difficult to duplicate in other school activities. The activity program teaches attitudes of responsible team play and cooperation. The program provides a vehicle for learning mental and physical self-discipline, loyalty, personal pride in the school, respect for the rights of others, and the will to win. Participation in interscholastic activity programs in the MCSD is entirely voluntary. The opportunity to participate in the program is extended to all eligible students who are willing to assume the responsibilities congruent with the privilege.

Athletes/participants who exercise their privilege to engage in the program shall abide by the rules of the game or contest in letter and spirit, as well as those guidelines established by their administrators and coaches. This shall include:

a. Maintaining standards of eligibility established by GHSA and the school of attendance
b. Being respectful and courteous to visiting teams and officials
c. Refraining from disrespectfully addressing officials, antics to intimidate, taunting or baiting visiting opponents and using insulting language and/or swearing
d. Respecting the integrity and judgment of officials and accepting their decisions without question
e. Being modest when successful and gracious in defeat
f. Penalties and/or disciplinary actions may be imposed by GHSA and MCSD for any behaviors by students or athletes deemed to be unsportsmanlike conduct.

### Gender Equity Notice to Students

Federal and state law prohibits discrimination based on gender in athletic programs of local school systems. This notifies you that the MCSD does not discriminate on the basis of gender in its athletic programs. If you have an inquiry or complaint concerning sports equity in this school system, you may contact:

Mr. Kendall Mills
mills.kendall.b@muscoge
e.k12.ga.us Sports
Equity Coordinator
2960 Macon Road
Columbus, Georgia 31906
Phone Number -706-748-2595

**Title IX issues may be reported pursuant to MCSD's procedures; please see the section herein entitled**

**MCSD Prohibits Harassment and Discrimination**

# II. Behavior Expectations and Procedures

## Authority of School Leadership

The Principal is the designated leader of the school and, with the staff, is charged by the Superintendent with the safe and orderly operation of the school. In cases of disciplinary violations not covered by this handbook, the Principal or designee may impose corrective measures which they believe to be in the best interest of the student involved and the school.

All student codes of conduct shall be submitted to the board for approval. The Code of Conduct shall be distributed to each student and the student's parents or guardians during the first week of school and upon enrollment of each new student. The parent or guardian shall be required to sign an acknowledgment of the receipt of the Code of Conduct and promptly return the acknowledgment to the school. The Code of Conduct shall be available in the school office, online, and in each classroom.

All discipline of students with disabilities will follow the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, IDEA, and all relevant laws and regulations.

For questions about PBIS, Dr. Kenya Gilmore, Director of Prevention and Intervention Practices, may be reached at PBIS@muscogee.k12.ga.us or 706-748-3292.
Additional information is available online:

https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/about-us-clone/families-students/student-services/prevention-intervention-services-clone

## Progressive Discipline Information

Progressive discipline processes are designed to create the expectation that the degree of discipline will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior leading to the discipline, that the previous discipline history of the student being disciplined and other relevant factors will be taken into account, and that all due process procedures required by federal and state law will be followed.

With a progressive disciplinary approach, the staff is encouraged to implement several lower-level interventions before proceeding to higher levels that may involve disciplinary responses that remove the student from the classroom. These responses are designed to teach appropriate behavior so that students are respectful, can learn, and contribute to a safe environment. These responses should be used in a graduated fashion.

### Multi-Tiered Supports Must Be Provided

No student in public preschool through third grade shall be expelled or suspended from school for more than five consecutive or cumulative days during a school year without first receiving a multi-tiered system of support, such as response to intervention, unless such student possessed a weapon, illegal drugs, or other dangerous instrument or such student's behavior endangers the physical safety of other students or school personnel. If such student is receiving or has received a multi-tiered system of supports, the school shall be deemed to have met the requirements of this Code section. The school or program shall comply with all federal laws and requirements regarding obtaining parental consent during any advanced tier within the system of supports prior to certain screenings or evaluations.

Prior to assigning any student in preschool through third grade to out-of-school suspension for more than five consecutive or cumulative days during a school year, if such student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan, the school or program shall also convene an IEP or Section 504 meeting to review appropriate supports being provided as part of such Individualized Education Program or Section 504 plan.

## Definitions: Detention, Suspension, and Expulsion

**Detention**: Disciplinary assignment of a student to a certain area of the school outside of regular school hours. MCSD does utilize Saturday school detention. Whenever a student is assigned to detention, the student's parent/guardian shall be notified.

**In-School Suspension**: Temporary removal of a student from his or her regular classroom(s) to a different location in the school building for a period not to exceed ten (10) consecutive school days. The student remains under the direct supervision of school personnel and will work on assignments from his or her regular classes.

**Out-of-School Suspension**: Any suspension in which a student is prohibited from attending school as a disciplinary consequence. After an out-of-school suspension, the student and the parent or guardian must attend a re-entry conference upon request by the Principal/Designee. Failure or refusal on the part of the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) to appear for the scheduled conference may result in the Principal making a recommendation to the Superintendent or designee for another period of suspension.

**Short-Term Out of School Suspension**: A student is prohibited from attending school for a period of ten (10) school days or fewer. Georgia law gives Principals and Building Leaders the authority to assign this consequence.

**Long-Term Out of School Suspension**: A student is prohibited from attending school for more than ten (10) school days up to the end of the current school semester or year. This consequence is assigned only after the student is afforded procedural and substantive due process in keeping with Georgia law.

**Expulsion**: The student is prohibited from attending school, and not allowed to enroll in or attend any public school beyond the current school semester or year. This consequence is assigned only after the student is afforded procedural and substantive due process in keeping with Georgia law. Upon the student's return to school after expulsion for the remainder of the year, the

student must report to the office of the Chief of Student Services or their designee for a re-entering interview. A student can be reinstated after permanent expulsion only by vote of the Board of Education to readmit the student.

Georgia law indicates that the state prefers to assign students to an alternative school over permanent expulsion, where appropriate.

## Enrollment of Students Suspended or Expelled from Other Systems

Students suspended or expelled from other school systems will be required to complete their assigned suspension or expulsion prior to attending regular classes at MCSD.

### Attendance at School Events While Suspended

Students that are assigned to the Alternative School, In-School Suspension, Out-Of-School Suspension, or Expulsion from school **may not attend or participate** in any school functions or activities on the day of the infraction or the days of suspension until the assigned suspension or assignment to alternative school is complete. Students assigned Out-Of- School Suspension or Expulsion from school may not be on any MCSD Property without prior permission from the school Principal or Building Leader.

### Eligibility While Suspended

Students assigned to the Marshall Success Center, In-School Suspension, Out-Of-School Suspension, or expelled from school for disciplinary reasons lose their eligibility to participate in any before/after school-related

activities on all day(s) of suspension or expulsion or during assignment to the Alternative School. An assigned disciplinary suspension or expulsion ends when the student returns to the regular class setting on the next regular school day.

## Student Discipline Tribunal Hearing and Appeal Procedures

Where a Principal seeks to impose punishment of a suspension or expulsion of longer than ten (10) school days and/or assignment to Alternative School, the student must be offered a hearing before an impartial panel of qualified members of the Student Discipline Tribunal Panel (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751).

### Filing of Tribunal Referral

A tribunal referral specifying the disciplinary infraction originates the action of the Student Discipline Tribunal Panel.

A teacher, other school officials, or employee who has been subjected to an assault or battery by a student can file a direct complaint with the School Administration and with the Board of Education, and this complaint shall originate action by the Student Discipline Tribunal Panel. Note that failure to file such complaint shall not prevent the tribunal from taking action to hold a hearing.

### Student Discipline Tribunal Hearings

**Notice:** Reasonable notice of the hearing shall be given to all parties, including the parent or guardian of the student, either personally or by First-Class and Certified U.S. mail to the address last provided by the parent to the MCSD. MCSD may also provide parent/guardian with an emailed notice in addition to personal or mailed delivery.

**Attorneys:** Students are not required to, but may be represented by an attorney at these hearings. Parents or guardians who intend to bring an attorney to the hearing should reach out to that attorney early enough to ensure they can attend the scheduled date and time of the hearing. Parents or guardians are required to inform the Division of Student Services of their intention to bring an attorney to the hearing, so that the MCSD may inform its attorney to attend the hearing.

**Evidence**: All parties will be afforded an opportunity to present and respond to evidence and to examine and cross examine witnesses.

**Record**: A verbatim electronic or a written record of the hearing shall be made available by the MCSD where there is such a request by a party.

**Decision**: The decision of the Student Discipline Tribunal Panel shall be based solely upon the evidence received in the hearing and the decision shall be given to all parties within ten (10) days of the close of the record. Such decision shall be

final unless appealed.

**Appeal**: Any decision by the Student Discipline Tribunal Panel may be appealed to the MCSD Board of Education by filing a written notice of appeal within twenty (20) days from the date the decision is rendered. This right of appeal shall apply to either party.

**Review by the Board on Appeal:** Where a parent/student appeals the decision of the Student Discipline Tribunal Panel, The MCSD Board of Education shall review the record and shall render a decision in writing based solely upon the record.

**Note:** The student must serve any punishment rendered while the appeal is pending; however, upon request, the Superintendent may determine whether to temporarily suspend the enforcement of the consequence ordered by the Student Discipline Tribunal Panel pending the outcome of any appeal to the MCSD Board of Education.

### Public Meeting and Record

Hearings related to student discipline matters, whether held by the Student Discipline Tribunal Panel or the MCSD Board of Education, are confidential, shall be closed to the press and other media and to the general public, and information is maintained in keeping with Georgia law regarding these matters.

### Waiver of Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing

Students/Parents/Guardians may waive the right to a hearing by signing a waiver form to forego the hearing and accept the disciplinary consequences assigned by the school Administrator. Parents/guardians who sign a waiver are also waiving their right to any appeal. Parents are required to read and understand the waiver form and its consequences prior to signature.
Parents or guardians should not sign a waiver form unless or until they understand it and are comfortable with what it means for their child.

## When MCSD Rules Apply/Off-Campus Behavior

The MCSD Code of Conduct applies while students are at school, while students are on any school district property, while students are at bus stops, on the way to or from school, on school buses or other MCSD-provided transportation, and at all school-related functions and events, such as sports, extracurricular activities, field trips, or any school-related or school-sponsored events. The Code of Conduct governs student behavior on any school-related or school-sponsored trip. The Code of Conduct additionally applies when students are participating in school or school activities or events using a digital or online platform.

Off-campus behavior of a student which could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process may be addressed with discipline.

## Student Due Process Generally

Students will be told why they are being disciplined and given the opportunity to respond with a brief statement of explanation. If the student is found to be in violation of the Code of Conduct, the Administrator will determine the appropriate consequence. School officials may involve law enforcement officials where appropriate.

## Chronic Disciplinary Problem Students

**Chronic Disciplinary Problem Student:** A student who exhibits a pattern of behavioral characteristics which interfere with the learning process of students around them and which are likely to recur.

### Procedures Specific to Chronic Disciplinary Problem Students

Any time a teacher or Principal identifies a student as a chronic disciplinary problem student, the Principal shall notify the parent/guardian of the disciplinary problem, invite such parent or guardian to observe the student in a classroom situation, and request at least one parent or guardian to attend a conference with the Principal or the teacher or both to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan. The plan should include the consolidated ideas from the Principal and parent/guardian to keep the child in the current school. Also, the plan must address the consequences for the child's inappropriate behavior and steps to prevent reoccurrences.

### Procedures after Suspension or Expulsion of a Chronic Disciplinary Problem Student

Before any chronic disciplinary problem student is permitted to return from an expulsion or suspension, the school to which the student is to be readmitted shall request by telephone call and by mail the following: at least one parent or guardian to attend a conference with the Principal to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan. Failure of the parent or guardian to attend shall not preclude the student

from being readmitted to the school. At the discretion of the Principal, a teacher, counselor, or other person may attend the conference. The Principal shall ensure that a notation of the conference be placed in the student's permanent file.

### Mandatory Consequences Where Students Cause Physical Harm to School Personnel

Georgia law requires that a student who is found to have intentionally made contact of an insulting or provoking nature, or which causes physical harm (unless in self-defense) ("physical violence") to a teacher, school bus driver, school official, or any school employee shall be expelled from the public school system for the remainder of the student's eligibility to attend public school. The District at its discretion may permit the student to attend an alternative education program for the period of the student's expulsion.

If the student who commits an act of physical violence is in kindergarten through grade eight, then the District at its discretion and on the recommendation of the tribunal panel may permit such a student to reenroll in the regular public school program for grades nine (9) through twelve (12). O.C.G.A. §20-2-751.6

The school district will not be limited by this statute but shall be free to impose more severe disciplinary measures as permitted by other provisions of state law and as set out in this handbook. The school district also reserves the right to seek compensation from parents and/or guardians for losses incurred due to intentional acts by said parent and/or student.

## Bus Behavior Expectations & Safety Requirements for All Students

All Muscogee County Code of Conduct Rules and Policies apply to student behavior at the bus stop, school activities, and while riding to and from school. Parents are responsible for getting their children safely to and from the bus stop.
**Parents cannot board the school bus for any reason**. Buses run on a schedule and cannot typically wait for passengers. If problems arise, parents are not to confront the bus driver at the bus stop. Make an appointment with the Transportation Department at (706) 748-2876 to discuss the matter. If problems should arise after normal business hours, please contact the MCSD Security Dispatch at (706) 748-2860.

**Students should keep their bus pass with them during the first month of school and any time they are assigned to a new bus in case the driver needs to check eligibility.**

MCSD is committed to providing a safe learning environment and to promptly addressing any bullying behaviors. Bullying is prohibited, and all stakeholders are encouraged to report any bullying behaviors.

### 1. At the Bus Stop

- Remember that school rules apply at the bus stop. For example, fighting or physical play, use or possession of tobacco, e-cigarettes, vapes, drugs, and alcohol are prohibited.
- Use of profane or vulgar language while waiting for the bus is prohibited.
- Stand at least 12 feet off the roadway while waiting for the bus.
- Students in Grades Pre-K-2nd Grade, must have Parent or Guardian or age-appropriate (typically 11 years or older), individual present at the Bus Stop.

### 2. When the Bus Arrives

- Students shall be prohibited from using any electronic devices while entering the school bus.
- If student must cross the street to board the school bus, wait for the Bus Driver's hand signal.

### 3. On the Bus

- Remember that school rules apply to the school bus. For example, fighting or physical play, use or possession of tobacco, drugs, and alcohol are prohibited.
- **REMAIN SEATED WHILE BUS IS IN MOTION**.
- Make an effort to sit three to a seat.
- Keep arms, head and objects inside windows.
- Use of profane or vulgar language while on the bus is prohibited.
- **ABSOLUTE SILENCE** is required at railroad crossings.
- ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES, INCLUDING CELL PHONES, MUST BE TURNED OFF AT RAILROAD CROSSINGS AND EARBUDS/HEADPHONES MUST BE REMOVED.
- No eating or drinking allowed.
- Students may transport band instrument(s) on the bus, if space is available.
- Using mirrors, lasers, cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices or electronic devices that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus is prohibited.
- Students are prohibited from using electronic devices, including cell phones, on school buses during operation, and this includes activities like listening to music without wearing earbuds/ headphones.
- Students are prohibited from talking on an electronic device, including cell phones, on school buses during operation, it can be a distraction for both students and the bus driver, potentially leading to accidents or unsafe situations.

### 4. Exiting the Bus

- Exit at your designated bus stop
- Students shall be prohibited from using any electronic devices while exiting the school bus.
- When crossing the street is necessary, students will immediately cross in front of the bus in full view of the driver.
- Students in Grades Pre-K-2nd Grade, must have a Parent or Guardian or age-appropriate, typically 11 years or older, individual present to receive the student. If an appropriate individual is not at the Bus Stop to receive the student, the student may be taken back to the school.
- Wait for the Bus Driver's hand signal before crossing the street while loading or unloading.

### Emergency Evacuation of School Buses

Emergency evacuation procedures have been established by MCSD for all students within the school district. These procedures are designed to protect the student in case of an emergency while being transported, i.e., fire, danger of life, danger of collision, inclement weather, mechanical failure or other unsafe conditions. The drivers, who are responsible for safety aboard school buses, as well as the students will practice bus evacuation periodically. Evacuation procedures are as follows:

### Front Door Evacuation

The evacuation will be conducted using the same procedure for loading or unloading, one side at a time or staggered seats, as explained by the driver.

To ensure a safe exit, hands should be kept free. All lunch boxes, books, and other personal belongings should be left on the bus.

Disembark the bus in a safe and orderly manner, as quickly as possible, and go to a safe point at least one hundred feet from the bus. Remain there until further instructions are given.

### Rear Door Evacuation

Passengers should remain in their seats until directed by the driver to leave the bus. The driver may choose whether to evacuate the bus one side at a time or a staggered seat basis.

### Front and Rear Exit Evacuation

The bus will be divided and the front portion will evacuate the same as the front door evacuation procedure. The rear portion of the bus will evacuate by the same procedure as the rear door evacuation.

As in any emergency, evacuate the bus quickly and in an orderly manner. Go to a point at least one hundred feet from the bus, and wait for further instructions, from the driver, monitor, and or law enforcement.

**The Driver is in full charge of the bus and students and may initially work with parents or guardians to resolve minor incidents.**

**Consequences of Bus Violations include, but are not limited to:**

| 1st Offense | 2nd Offense | 3rd Offense | 4th Offense | 5th Offense |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parent contact<br><br>Student conference<br><br>Seatchange on the bus | Parent conference<br><br>Student Bus Behavior Contract may be created through a scheduled meeting with the parent and other essential personnel<br><br>Bus Suspension (0 to 3 days) * | Parent conference<br><br>Modified Student Bus Behavior Contract may be created through a scheduled meeting with the parent and other essential personnel<br><br>Bus Suspension (0 to 5 days) * | Parent conference may be required before student returns to the bus<br><br>Modified Student Bus Behavior Contract may be created through a scheduled meeting with the parent and other essential personnel<br><br>Bus Suspension (0 to 10 days) * | Parent conference may be required before student returns to the bus<br><br>Modified Student Bus Behavior Contract may be created through a scheduled meeting with the parent and other essential personnel<br><br>Bus Suspension (Remainder of the Semester) * |
| | **Based on the discretion of the Principal* | **Based on the discretion of the Principal* | **Based on the discretion of the Principal* | **Based on the discretion of the Principal* |

For violations of any of the above rules may result in your student being removed from the bus. Any student found guilty of student endangerment may result in automatic removal from the bus. Riding the bus is a privilege not a right. Do not abuse your privilege. Drivers are in charge of the bus and may assign seats to students. Many school buses are monitored by surveillance cameras.

## Corporal Punishment is Prohibited

The Muscogee County Board of Education prohibits the use of corporal punishment by its employees. MCSD prohibits the use of seclusion and complies fully to Georgia Board of Education Rules on restraint of students.

### Use of Reasonable Physical Force or Reasonable Physical Contact

In accordance with MCSD Board Policy JDA, there are instances where the use of reasonable physical force or physical contact is necessary and appropriate in a school setting. The prohibition of corporal punishment should not be construed to eliminate or restrict the ability of a school district employee to use his or her professional discretion in the use of reasonable physical contact or reasonable physical force to protect students, themselves, or others from imminent harm or bodily injury. Nothing in that policy shall be construed to prohibit an employee of the school district from taking appropriate action to diffuse a student fight or altercation.

## Return to School After Conviction of a Crime/Pleading Guilty to a Crime and/or Incarceration

A student who has pled guilty to or been convicted of an offense and has therefore served a sentence in a correction or juvenile detention facility who wishes to return to school is required to report with his/her parents/guardians to the Chief Student Services Officer or designee prior to returning to school. These students may be referred to the Student Discipline Tribunal when their behavior could have or did result in the student being charged with a felony and where that behavior makes the student's presence at school a potential danger to persons or property or where that behavior disrupts the education process.

## Program at the Marshall Success Center

The Marshall Success Center serves students in grades 3 – 12 assigned by the Student Tribunal.

# III. Overview of Georgia's Multi-Tiered System of Supports Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

## A. Georgia's Multi-Tiered System of Supports: A Continuous Improvement Framework

Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a data-driven prevention framework that uses (screening and progress monitoring data) to identify and predict which students may need advanced content and/or be at risk for poor academic and/or social-emotional/behavioral outcomes. The Multi-Tiered System of Supports is now called Georgia Multi-Tiered System of Supports (GaMTSS) by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE). (https://gadoe.org/whole-child-supports/gatss/) MCSD is moving toward full implementation of GaMTSS with the goal of having GaMTSS fully implemented in every school.

GaMTSS is a system that helps teachers and others key stakeholder know when students need advanced content and/or additional supports, and helps teachers put those supports into place. GaMTSS is a framework that ensures successful educational outcomes for all students by using a data-based problem-solving process. The intent of the GaMTSS is to provide and evaluate the effectiveness of multiple tiers of integrated academic and social-emotional/behavioral instruction as well as intervention supports.

GaMTSS can be thought of as a problem-solving culture, where teachers use data to determine how much progress each student is making, and how much support each student needs. By using data to evaluate and monitor student progress, the MCSD seeks to more efficiently and effectively use its available resources to improve student outcomes.

GaMTSS is set up as a tiered system that includes the following:

Tier 1: high-quality core instruction in academics, behavior, and attendance, provided to all students by classroom teachers.

Tier 2: includes skills-based interventions for a targeted group of students that are not making adequate progress with Tier 1 instruction.

Tier 3: includes intensive skills-based interventions provided to fewer students that are not making adequate progress with Tier 1 instruction or Tier 2 intervention.

## B. Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS)

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a multi-level prevention system for behavior embedded in the GaMTSS (see above). PBIS is intended to create a positive school climate as an emphasis is placed on teaching appropriate behavior in the same way that we teach math or science. Although consequences for unexpected behaviors still occur, being proactive and preventative through the use of proven behavioral strategies and intervention is the focus.

Successful implementation allows for more energy and time to be spent recognizing students who exhibit positive behaviors.

MCSD is dedicated to building this framework in all schools. It takes at least three years for a school to fully implement PBIS.

Parents are encouraged to contact the school administrator to learn more about GaMTSS at their students' school(s). If you have any questions about GaMTSS, please Dr. Kenya Gilmore, Director of Prevention and Intervention Practices or the MTSS Program Manager, Dr. Nikki Sutton, at (706) 748-2000.

### What happened to Response to Intervention?

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a term used to describe how the MCSD gathers information about student response to interventions and supports provided. We want parents/guardians to have access to information so they are comfortable with supports being provided at school to ensure the best possible results for students. For additional information please visit the Prevention and Intervention Practices website at: https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/about-us-clone/families-students/student-services/prevention-intervention-services-clone

MTSS is an expansion of the Response to Intervention (RTI) model. Major components of the model used to determine the educational needs of students have not changed. RTI is part of an MTSS framework but the inverse is not true. MTSS provides a more comprehensive solution in that it uses an educational systems-level change paradigm focused on overall school improvement that is sustainable and, ensures that practices, policies, and programs are aligned on classroom, school, and district levels. MTSS requires collaboration between general education and special education and emphasizes prevention and intervention.

### Student Support Team

Student Support Team (SST) is a term used to describe the process by which the school-level staff identifies students who need additional academic or behavioral help to improve school and/or classroom performance. The Student Support Team (SST) is a school-based, solution-focused team of general and special education professionals designed to support the academic, behavior, and social-emotional needs of students through the provision of alternative evidence-based instructional practices; these evidence– based practices are also called interventions. This process includes identifying needs, planning and implementing appropriate instruction, monitoring progress, and conducting assessments when needed. The (SST) process is embedded at Tier 3 of Georgia's Tiered System of Supports, as it requires more intensive academic, behavioral, and/or social/emotional support for specific students.

## Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plans for Students in the SST Process

### Functional Behavior Assessment

A functional behavior assessment (FBA) involves gathering information in order to determine the cause or function of a behavior. In most circumstances, an FBA should be conducted before developing a behavior intervention plan. There are many different tools that can be used for an FBA. Tools are selected on a case-by-case basis for each individual student. The information that is collected in an FBA is used to help understand why and in what conditions target behaviors occur. The information will help a

Student Support Team or other group of individuals working with a student to develop a behavior intervention plan or address behaviors in another appropriate way. An FBA is not a consequence for misbehavior but is a process by which MCSD personnel gather information in order to learn more about the function of a target behavior.

Any student that has been provided Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 behavioral interventions and has received 7 or more office referrals in one school year must be considered for a Functional Behavior Assessment and the development of a Behavioral Intervention Plan as a part of the Student Support Team Plan (SST).

### Behavior Intervention Plan

A Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is a plan that can be added to a student's SST to address target behaviors. A BIP includes positive interventions, strategies, and supports to address target behaviors. Typically, between one and four behaviors are selected for inclusion in a BIP. The BIP identifies the function of those behaviors, as well as interventions, strategies, and supports that are linked to those functions. Parents are an important part of both the FBA and BIP process and will be asked for input throughout the FBA and BIP process. If your child is displaying behaviors that would necessitate the consideration of an FBA or BIP, consent will be obtained through the appropriate MCSD process. Please do not hesitate to ask questions of your child's teacher(s) or other school-based personnel involved to ensure you are comfortable with the process.

# IV. STUDENT HEALTH

## Medicine at School

Students who need to take medication during school hours must comply with MCSD Board Policy JGCD, which is available on the MCSD website and must be carefully reviewed. Any questions about this policy and its requirements must be presented to the Principal or Building Leader prior to sending any medication to school.

NOTE:

Students who require medication to be administered at school must have a Medication Administration/Medical Authorization and Release Form completed, signed and returned to school with the medication. A parent/guardian should take the medication and the authorization form directly to the school office/clinic, in keeping with MCSD Board Policy. Prescription medication must be in original labeled container as required by law. Dosage on label must agree with information on the Medication Administration Authorization Form. Non-prescription medication must also remain in original container properly labeled with the child's name and specific instructions regarding dosage and time of administration. Controlled substance medications will be counted upon receipt. Students may only carry specific medications on their person with a special permission form signed by a licensed physician and shared to the District before the student's first day of school. If your child needs emergency medications, please contact the school immediately so that accommodations can be made.

## Students with Severe Food or Other Allergies

The District works to accommodate students with severe allergies. The District relies on parents and students to provide accurate and updated information about a student's food allergies or other allergies, their impact, and what to do to avoid an exposure or address an accidental exposure. The school district allows Epi-pens and other allergy medications, but requires that parents share information with the District about their child's allergy prior to sending the Epi-pen or other medication to school. Please provide information to the Principal or Building Leader as early as possible, so that appropriate steps can be taken prior to the student's first day of school.

The District encourages parents and students to be aware and discuss that others may have food sensitivity or allergies (including but not limited to: peanuts, tree nuts, soy, sesame, milk/dairy products, fish/shellfish) and encourages students to refrain from sharing food in the cafeteria or at any time during the school day. For food allergies, please submit the appropriate documentation to support the student's needs.

## Serious Infectious Illnesses

If a student is noted to have symptoms that are consistent with a communicable/infectious illness/condition, such as COVID19 or the Flu, the parent/guardian will be notified. It may be necessary to exclude the student based on symptoms and have the student evaluated by his/her health care provider for diagnosis and treatment prior to returning to school. The parent/guardian will be given an exclusion letter/form that must be signed by the physician and presented to the school upon the student's return as directed by the health care provider. These precautions are in place to provide a safe environment for all of our students.

## Immunization

Pursuant to Georgia Law, no child shall be admitted to or attend any MCSD school or facility unless the child shall first have submitted a certificate of immunization (GA form 3231 is available at www.gadoe.org) to the responsible official of the school or facility. MCSD may grant a 30-calendar day waiver of the certification requirement for a justified reason. This law provides for the following vaccination exemptions:

- **Medical:** Medical exemption for a vaccine should be filled in only when there is a physical disability or condition that contraindicates immunization for that particular vaccine. There must be an annual review of medical exemptions, and certificates must be reissued with or without indication of exemption.

- **Religious:** For a child to be exempt from immunizations on religious grounds, the parent or guardian must furnish the school/facility with a notarized Affidavit of Religious Objection to Immunization (DPH Form 2208) Chapter 511- 2-2-.07 of the Rules of the Department of Public Health. The school/facility must keep the affidavit

on file and available for inspection by health officials in lieu of the Georgia Immunization Certificate (Form 3231). The affidavit does not expire.

## Fever

If a student has a fever of 100.0 degrees or higher, that student should not come to school or to a school function until they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. Students with a fever of over 100.0 degrees or other symptoms of a contagious disease must go home.

## Head Lice – No Nit Policy

MCSD has a "no nit" policy. When head lice are discovered, the Principal or his/her designee will notify the parent/guardian to make arrangements for the student to be picked up and treatment initiated. Instructions will be given on how to treat for head lice. Upon return to school, the Principal or designee will inspect the student's head for the presence of nits or active lice. The student will not be readmitted if either is present. If the lice infestation occurs again or becomes problematic, the Principal may request treatment documentation from the student's health care provider or the local health department. Head lice requires immediate treatment.

## Students who are Hospitalized or Homebound

MCSD serves its enrolled students who are hospitalized or homebound as a result of illness or injury. In cases of prolonged Absences (10 or more consecutive days) due to illness or injury, or anticipated absences due to illness or injury, the parent or guardian should seek assistance from the Principal or designee for hospital/homebound instruction.

The school will provide the parent with a Hospital/Homebound Referral Form to be completed and signed by a physician indicating that the student is unable to attend school. The form is returned to the school and then submitted to Student Services for processing.

**Additional Student Health Services Information can be found at**: https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/about-us-clone/families-students/student-services/student-health-services

## Suicidal Ideations Safety Protocol

The District seeks to prevent deaths by suicide. When a student has expressed suicidal ideations or threats of suicide, the School Counselor shall meet with the student to provide counseling support and address risk factors. Contact will be made with the parent or guardian to discuss safety concerns, next steps, and provide community resources. The student may be required

to be checked out by the parent/guardian and return to school only upon the provision of appropriate documentation.

## Student Insurance

MCSD does not carry accident insurance coverage on students who are injured at school, and in most cases is not liable. MCSD Board Policy: Descriptor Code JGA

It is the responsibility of parents or guardians to make sure their children are covered by medical insurance. Muscogee County School District does not carry health coverage on students.

## School and Student Safety

### School Safety Plans and School Emergencies

MCSD has prepared School Safety Plans, approved by the Superintendent and appropriate governmental agencies, in accordance with Georgia law.

### Lock Down/Secure Perimeter Parent Protocols:

Please keep in mind our first responsibility is to make sure our students and staff are safe. In any lockdown situations, all parents will be communicated with as soon as appropriate by an auto call, email, and/or text message. It's important for you to listen to the entire voice message before calling the school.

**In the event a school is placed on secured perimeter or in a lock down, please know the following:**

- Communication will go out by text and/or email to alert parents about school lock downs or secured perimeter
- We work closely with the police department and it takes time to gather and confirm accurate information, please be patient.
- To enable everyone to remain safe, no one will be allowed to enter or exit the building until the authorities authorize such a release.

## Safety Drills

**MCSD conducts safety drills throughout the school year, as follows:**

**FIRE DRILLS:** Schools will conduct a "fire drill" in keeping with relevant fire code regulations and MCSD procedures each month (except for two severe weather months) that school is in session. This is a Fire Code requirement as well as a District requirement. We want each student to understand and be aware of the Importance of this drill when the fire alarm is sounded.

**LOCKDOWN DRILLS:** The schools will conduct periodic "Lockdown Drills"; perimeter doors to classrooms and the building will be locked and access will be limited. This type of drill will secure the school building and safely shelter all students, staff, and visitors inside the building. The purpose of this drill ls to keep the students safe from any danger outside or inside the building. During a "lockdown drill" all of the perimeter doors to the classrooms and school building will be locked. They will remain locked until the danger or issue outside or inside the building Is removed. To enable everyone to remain safe, no one will be allowed to enter or exit the building until the authorities authorize such a release.

**SEVERE WEATHER DRILLS:** Severe weather drills will be conducted twice a year; students and staff are moved to a secure location within the building. The purpose of this drill is to prepare students to move to a secure location within the building in case of severe weather or tornados.

Please direct any questions regarding Safety Drills or other safety protocols to the MCSD Police Department or the Risk Management Department.

## Alternate Release Protocol

Alternate Release Protocol is a formalized and controlled method of reuniting students with parents and guardians after a significant event at the school. Should this procedure be triggered, parents will be notified through the MCSD Blackboard Mass Notifications announcement system. Additional information may be shared through the media, radio, and social media appropriate. Please note that parents will be asked to provide identification as part of this procedure.

Because a controlled release is not a typical end of school day event, an Alternate Release Protocol may occur at a different location than the school a student attends.

Parents: If you would like the District to use a cell phone number during an Alternate Release Protocol event, you must list this number as the first number on the emergency form that you need to complete at the beginning of each year. In the case of multiple students being released, each student must be signed out using the system in place at the time of release.

If a parent or guardian is notified that an Alternate Release Protocol is needed, there are some expectations that parents or guardians should be aware of: First, bring identification, which will streamline things during the Alternate Release Protocol. Second, be patient. Please do not go to your child's school until a message is sent; this ensures you arrive at the correct location. Alternate Release Protocol is a process that protects both the safety of the student and provides for an accountable change of custody from the school to a recognized custodial parent or guardian.

When a parent can't immediately go to the Alternate Release Protocol site, students will only be released to individuals previously identified as a student's emergency contact. Otherwise, the school will hold students until parents can pick up their student.

Students are expected to be orderly and quiet while waiting for pickup. Students may be asked to text a message to their parents or guardians. Students may be asked not to send other text messages either in or out

of the school or the Alternate Release Protocol area. Keeping the cellular network usage at a minimum may be important during an Alternate Release Protocol.

Parents and guardians should use caution when driving to and at the pickup site and will be asked to park and go to the Alternate Release Protocol "Check-In" area and form lines based on the first letter of their student's last name. While in line, parents may be asked to fill out an Alternate Release Protocol card and/or asked to present ID. The card is perforated and will be separated during the process. Some of the same information is repeated on both the top and separated bottom of the card. Parents are asked to complete all parts of the card. In the case of multiple students being released, a separate card for each student needs to be completed.

During check-in, identification and custody rights are confirmed. The card/s is/are separated and the bottom half is given back to the parent. From the "Check-In" area parents are directed to the "Alternate Release Protocol " area. There, a runner will take the bottom half of the card/s and take It to the Student Assembly Area to recover the student or students. Parents should be aware that in some cases, they may be invited into the building or other location for further information.

In some cases, parents may be advised that a law enforcement investigation is underway and that interviews are necessary. In extreme cases, parents may be pulled aside for an emergency or medical information.

For more information or with specific questions, please contact the Risk Management Department at 706-748-2079.

**Raptor Visitor Management System**

MCSD utilizes a security measure called "Raptor Visitor Management System." Upon entering an MCSD building, visitors will be asked to present a valid government-issued ID, which will be entered into the Raptor System. If an adult does not have a US government-issued ID, the school staff member can use an alternate form of identification as appropriate, and can manually enter information into the Raptor System. The System ensures compliance with Georgia law requiring notification of sex offender status. No data from the ID is recorded, and no information is shared with any outside agency.

**CARE Team**

MCSD has a multi-disciplinary team whose purpose is to promote the safety of our students, faculty, and stakeholders when a potential crisis or behavioral concern is identified. The CARE team provides consultation, management, response and after care support.

# V. Where to Go for Help

## Students Experiencing Homelessness: McKinney-Vento

The MCSD is committed to providing services that meet the needs of students who are experiencing homelessness; these services will ensure appropriate educational opportunities are provided, and will ensure the preservation of dignity.

Students in homeless situations are those who lack a fixed, regular, adequate nighttime residence and may be residing in any of the following situations: (1) sharing housing with others due to loss of housing or economic hardship (2) living in a motel or hotel due to loss of housing or economic hardship (3) staying in a shelter (4) living in substandard housing without electricity, running water, health code violations, etc. (5) sleeping in a car, campground, park or public space. These students are protected by the McKinney-Vento federal law. Generally, this federal law provides that students in homeless situations should be enrolled, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residence, birth certificates, proof of guardianship, or other required documentation. A full statement of the MCSD's practices around homeless students is outside the scope of this document, but further information can be obtained at the MCSD website at:

https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/about-us-clone/families-students/mckinney-vento-act

If you are experiencing homelessness, or have questions or need further information, please consult with the MCSD's McKinney-Vento Department for information regarding enrollment at 706-748-2372. You may also contact your school's counselor for more information.

**MCSD McKinney-Vento Department (Points of Contact)**

Dr. Trikella Nelson, Director of Counseling and School Social Work Services Homeless Liaison 706-748-2226

McKinney-Vento Outreach Specialist, Homeless Designee, 706-748-2372 McKinney-Vento Manager, Homeless

Designee, 706-748-2372

McKinney-Vento Case Worker, Homeless Designee, 706-748-3226

Please contact your child's school counselor or school social worker if you have questions regarding mental health, academic, career/college, and/or socio-emotional concerns.

## Helpful Community Resources

**Information and Referral Line Resources:**
United Way of Chattahoochee Valley: Dial 2-1-1 or 706-748-8532, CONTACT 2-1-1 is an information and referral line program. CONTACT 2-1-1 callers can speak to a certified specialist that will link them to local community resources such as food, shelter, counseling, employment assistance, quality child care and much more. Residents can also search the comprehensive database online at www.211uwcv.org The program provides online and telephone access 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, and is confidential, free, and available in multiple languages.

**Mental Health Resources**:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988
- Boystown National Hotline: 1-800-448-3000 Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD): 1-800-448-1833
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): (706) 320-3755, PO Box 8581, Columbus, Georgia 31908
- Georgia Crisis and Access Line (GCAL): 1-800-715-4225
  https://www.georgiacollaborative.com/providers/georgia-crisis-and-access-line-gcal

**Child Abuse and Neglect Resources:**

Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS) Dfcs.dhs.georgia.gov 1-(855) GA-CHILD or 1-855-422-4453

**Human Sex Trafficking (Georgia) Resources:**

Children Treehouse is a program of Twin Cedars Youth and Family Services, Inc. 1225 3rd Avenue Columbus, GA 31901 706-327-9612

Human Sex Trafficking Hotline: 888-363-4842

**Dating and Domestic Violence Resources:**

Teen Dating Violence Hotline If you are in danger, call 911 or reach the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800- 799-7233 or TTY 1-800-787-3224

National Domestic Violence Hotline If you are in danger, call 911 or reach the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799- 7233 or TTY 1-800-787-3224

**Homework Resources:**

For free help with homework, tutoring, essay writing: https://www.cvlga.org/resources/brainfuse
https://www.cvlga.org/teens/homework-help/Click on "Brainfuse"

## MCSD Prohibits Harassment and Discrimination

MCSD does not discriminate on the bases of race, color, sex (including pregnancy and related conditions), gender, religion, national origin, age, military status, disability, or any other federally protected status in its educational programs and activities, including its athletic programs. MCSD provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

Any student or parent who believes they have been subjected to harassment or discrimination by other students of the school district based upon any of the factors listed above should promptly report the same to the Principal of the school or the leader of the program, who will implement the board's discriminatory complaints or harassment procedures.

Equity coordinators for the school system and their respective contact information may be found at https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/about-us-clone/families-students/student-services/anti-discrimination-statement-and-equity-coordinators

### Alleged discrimination or harassment by Employees under Title IX:

**Tamura Magwood**
Chief Regional Officer,
Central Region Muscogee
County Public Education
Center 2960 Macon Road
Columbus, GA 31906
Magwood.Tamura@muscogee.k12.ga.us/ 706-748-3289

**Terry Baker**
Chief Regional Officer,
West Region Muscogee
County Public Education
Center 2960 Macon Road
Columbus, GA 31906
Baker.Terry@muscogee.k12.ga.us/ 706-748-3289

**Martin Richburg**
Chief Regional Officer,
East Region Muscogee
County Public Education
Center 2960 Macon Road
Columbus, GA 31906
Richburg.Martin@muscogee.k12.ga.us/ 706-748-3289

### Alleged discrimination or harassment of/or by Employees under Title VII:

**Tonya Carter**
Chief Human Resources Officer Muscogee County Public
Education Center 2960 Macon Road Columbus, GA 31906
Carter.Tonya.L@muscogee.k12.ga.us/ 706-748-2011

### Alleged discrimination or harassment by Students under Title IX, Title VI:

**Patrick Knopf** Chief Student Services Officer
Anti-Discrimination Coordinator (Students) Muscogee County Public Education Center
2960 Macon Road Columbus, GA 31906
Knopf.Patrick.C@muscogee.k12.ga.us/ 706-748-3336

**Inquiries regarding Section 504 and Title II of the ADA**

**Dr. Nikki Sutton**
Section 504 Coordinator
Muscogee County Public
Education Center 2960
Macon Road Columbus,
GA 31906
Sutton.Nikki.T@muscogee.k12.ga.us / 706-748-2196

**Inquiries regarding Equity in Athletics:**
Kendall Mills
Athletic Director, Sports Equity Coordinator Muscogee County Public
Education Center 2960 Macon Road Columbus, GA 31906
Mills.kendall.b@muscogee.k12.ga.us/ 706-748-2595

**Inquiries regarding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):**
LaChrista Thornton
Executive Director, Program for Exceptional Students Muscogee County Public
Education Center 2960 Macon Road
Columbus, GA 31906
Thornton.LaChrista.S@muscogee.k12.ga.us/ 706-748-2000

**Inquiries regarding Title II of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA):**

**Chris Dryman**
Executive Director of Federal Programs Muscogee County Public
Education Center 2960 Macon Road Columbus, GA 31906
Dryman.Christopher.L@muscogee.k12.ga.us/ 706-748-2154

Equity coordinators may also be contacted at the Muscogee County Public Education Center, 2960 Macon Road, Columbus, GA 31906, or 706-748-2000.

Students will not be subjected to retaliation for reporting such harassment or discrimination. A copy of the discriminatory complaints procedure under Muscogee County School District Policy JAA (Equal Educational Opportunities) or under Policy IDFA (Gender Equity in Sports) is available on the MCSD website at https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/index.aspx?s=4121

## Discrimination/Harassment Complaints

### A. Complaints Against Students

MCSD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex (including pregnancy and related conditions), gender, religion, national origin, age, military status, or disability. It is the policy of the MCSD to comply fully with the requirements of Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and all accompanying regulations. MCSD also prohibits retaliation against any person opposing discrimination or participating in any discrimination investigation or complaint process, internal or external to the institution.

Any student or parent who believes that they or any student has been discriminated against or harassed in violation of MCSD's policy by a MCSD student must make a complaint in accordance with the procedures outlined in Paragraph C below.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS**:

Procedures for complaints of sexual discrimination and harassment which may constitute Title IX violations by students are distributed in the parent packet sent home with every student annually and are posted on the District's website at: https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/about-us-clone/families-students/student-services/title-ix-coordinator see also board policy JAA.

## B. Student/Parent Complaints Against Employees or Third Parties

MCSD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex (including pregnancy and related conditions), religion, national origin, age, military status, or disability. It is the policy of the MCSD to comply fully with the requirements of Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and all accompanying regulations. MCSD also prohibits retaliation against any person opposing discrimination or participating in any discrimination investigation or complaint process, internal or external to the institution.

Any student or parent who believes that they or any student have been discriminated against or harassed in violation of MCSD's policy by employees or third parties (e.g., visiting students, contractors, vendors, volunteers, parents) may choose to make a complaint to the MCSD in accordance with the procedures outlined in Paragraph D below. The MCSD will address these complaints to the best of its ability and involve outside authorities where appropriate.

## C. Procedure and Appeal Process for Student/Parent Complaints Against Other Students or Third Parties (Board Policy JAA)

Complaints presented to the MCSD that allege discrimination or harassment on the basis of sex in violation of Title IX will be processed in accordance with the procedures outlined by the District. These procedures may be found on the District's website at: https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/about-us-clone/families-students/student-services/title-ix-coordinator

Complaints presented to the MCSD, pursuant to this procedure, that allege discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color or national origin in violation of Title VI, or on the basis of disability in violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or the Americans with Disabilities Act will be processed in accordance with the following procedure:

1. Any student or parent with a complaint or report alleging a violation as described above shall promptly notify, in writing or orally, the Building Leader or Principal of his/her school within fifteen (15) work days of the alleged violation. If the complaint is verbal, the school Principal or Building Leader to whom the complaint is made shall promptly prepare a memorandum or written statement of the complaint as made to them and shall have the complainant read and sign the memorandum or statement confirming that it accurately reflects the complaint made. The Principal or Building Leader shall be responsible for promptly notifying the appropriate Regional Chief and the appropriate coordinator of the complaint.
2. The Principal or Building Leader shall have fifteen (15) work days to investigate the initial complaint, gather information, review the information, review the action requested by the complainant, and attempt to resolve the complaint. The Principal or Building Leader shall prepare a brief written response. This response shall be furnished to the complainant, the appropriate Regional Chief, and the Chief Student Services Officer.
3. If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint, the complainant may appeal the response, in writing, within five (5) workdays of receiving a copy of the written response. The appeal request will be reviewed by the Regional Chief.
4. The Regional Chief shall have fifteen (15) work days to review the complaint and the initial response of MCSD, investigate and gather information, and attempt to resolve the complaint. The Regional Chief shall provide to the complainant a written response setting forth either his or her approval of the action recommended in the initial response or an alternate response. This shall also be provided to the Chief Student Services Officer.

5. If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution of the appeal, the complainant may, in writing within five (5) workdays of receiving a copy of the written response from the Regional Chief, appeal the response. The appeal request will be reviewed by the Chief Student Services Officer.

6. The Chief Student Services Officer shall have fifteen (15) workdays to review the complaint, and the initial response of MCSD, the appeal, and attempt to resolve the complaint. The Chief Student Services Officer shall provide to the complainant a written response setting forth either his or her approval of the action recommended in the initial response and the initial appeal, or an alternate action to be taken by MCSD in response to the complaint in lieu of those previous recommendations.

7. This policy is not intended to discourage or deprive any individual of the ability they may have to file a complaint under any other applicable policy of the local board or to contact the Office of Civil Rights or other appropriate state or federal agency with regard to any allegations that the MCSD has violated the statutes described above.

8. The MCSD shall distribute this policy and procedure to students and parents through its District website and the Muscogee County School District Student Handbook and Code of Conduct.

9. No retaliation shall occur as a result of reporting allegations in good faith under this policy.

10. The discovery of truth and/or elimination of harassment or discrimination shall be the overriding consideration when investigating/reviewing complaints, and may preclude confidentiality.

Contact information for all Building Leaders, Principals, Regional Chiefs, and the Chief Student Services Officer is available at the MCSD website at www.muscogee.k12.ga.us or by calling 706-748-2000.

## D. Procedure and Appeal Process for Student/Parent Complaints Against School District Employees or Third Parties

MCSD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, military status, age, disability, or sex in its employment practices. The MCSD complies fully with the requirements of Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) and all accompanying regulations.

MCSD prohibits harassment, discrimination, or inappropriate differential treatment of any employee or by any employee, and encourages students and parents who believe they have been discriminated against to seek relief through the discrimination complaint resolution procedures outlined in board policies available at the MCSD website; see GAAA, GAEB, GAEC.

Except as outlined below, employee, vendor, and contractor misconduct issues are not matters for the StudentServices Division, and must be reported to the District Human Resources Division for handling at 706-748-2000.

## E. Student Complaints or Reports of Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct by a School District Employee (Georgia Professional Standards Commission Mandated Procedure under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-984):

1. Any student who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school.

2. Any teacher, counselor or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school Principal or Principal's designee and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school Principal or Principal's designee within 24 hours. If the Principal is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee.

3. Any school Principal or Principal's designee receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. §19-7-5 shall make an oral report immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.

4. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the school Principal or Principal's designee shall make appropriate reports to the Superintendent or designee and other outside authorities.

## MCSD Prohibits Bullying

MCSD does not tolerate bullying. Students who experience bullying are encouraged to report and share information with any school district personnel. In the event you see or hear about bullying, please let someone know as soon as possible.

**Bullying is defined by Georgia law as follows:**

(1) Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so;

(2) Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or

(3) Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act that a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that:

(A) Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of Code Section 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harm as such term is defined in Code Section 16-5-23.1;

(B) Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;

(C) Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or

(D) Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

The term applies to acts that occur on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school-

related functions or activities, or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system.

Bullying also includes acts of cyberbullying that occur through the use of electronic communication, whether or not such electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment, if the electronic communication (1) is directed specifically at students or school personnel, (2) is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, and (3) creates a reasonable fear of harm to the students' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose.

For purposes of this Code section, electronic communication includes but is not limited to any transfer of signs, signals, writings, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical system.

Each local board policy shall require that, upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer, panel, or tribunal of school officials provided for in this subpart that a student in grades six through 12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, such student shall be assigned to an alternative school.

Each local board of education shall establish and publish in its local board policy a method to notify the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a student upon a finding by a school administrator that such student has committed an offense of bullying or is a victim of bullying.

Additional information and further information about consequences are contained under Rule 4 of the Student Code of Conduct and in MCSD Board Policy JCDAG.

Some bullying may also trigger responsibilities under the District's policies preventing discrimination. Individuals receiving complaints of bullying or harassment should consider both sets of District policies that prohibit both bullying and peer harassment based on race, color, national origin, gender, religion, sex, or disability.

Each reported incident of bullying behavior will be documented and investigated by the Principal or designee, and a disposition determined.

**How to Make a Silent (Anonymous) Report of Bullying**

The District encourages reporting of bullying behaviors by students and will strive to maintain the confidentiality of reporters wherever possible and appropriate. Parents and students, please report bullying or harassing behaviors to any adult at the school. Students who want to make a report of bullying behavior in writing without including their own name may obtain and fill out a "Silent Report" form. These forms are available in the offices of school counselors and school administrative offices.

**Additional Bullying Reporting Options**:

- MCSD Student Safety Hotline: 706-748-2267
- MCSD Bullying e-mail: Bully.free@muscogee.k12.ga.us
- Vector Safe Schools Alert is located on the MCSD website front page or https://muscogee-ga.safeschoolsalert.com/

# VI. Students with Disabilities

**Message to Parents:**

The mission of the Program for Exceptional Students is to provide a quality educational program that prepares all students for success. We believe that through meaningful access to quality education, all children can be challenged to achieve their best in school, and all children can be lifelong learners. We are committed to Seeking, Serving, and Supporting our students and families.

At MCSD, students with disabilities are provided a free, appropriate public education in schools where decisions concerning services and support are made based on the individual needs of the student, in their least restrictive environment, and in accordance with the guiding principles of the applicable law.

Specially designed instruction is provided through a continuum of educational environments from general education classrooms with special education services and supports at the student's home school to full-day programs in specialized environments. Where appropriate, the type and degree of services provided are determined through the development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to meet the unique needs of the student. For more information, visit the MCSD website "Program for Exceptional Students" or contact the Program for Exceptional Students at 706-748-2230.

**Parent Rights:**

It is the responsibility of the District to provide parents with notice of their rights under the IDEA. The MCSD's Parent Rights form is available at the MCSD website at:
https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/about-us-clone/families-students/student-services/students-with-disabilities

Child Find – What is Child Find?

Child Find refers to the process of locating, identifying, and evaluating children to ensure that they receive services to which they are entitled. Children and youth, age birth to 21, who live or attend school in Muscogee County, and who are suspected of having a disability, may be referred for a possible evaluation to determine if they are eligible for special education services.

Preschool children: If you are aware of a child, from birth through 3 years old, who has or may have a developmental disability, please contact the "Babies Can't Wait" Division of the Georgia Department of Public Health at 888-651-8224.

If you are aware of a preschooler, from 3 through 5 years old, who has or may have a developmental disability, please call the Program for Exceptional Students at 706-748-2230

School age children and youth: If you are aware of a child who is enrolled in a Muscogee County school, any private school, or homeschool, and may be in need of special education services, please contact the Program for Exceptional Students at 706-748-2230.

## Students Eligible for Special Education Supports and Services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act/Students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Parents and children have many rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This law provides that eligible students should receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). For eligible students, the type and degree of services provided is determined through the development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to meet the unique needs of the student with a qualifying disability. The IEP outlines the needs and strengths of the individual student, and guides the delivery of special education supports and services for that student.

A full outline of the programs and services available to students, and the rights afforded to parents and students by virtue of the IDEA is outside the scope of this handbook, but the MCSD welcomes your questions about any part of the IEP process or procedure. Parents are an integral part of all IDEA-related processes, so if you have questions or want information, we encourage you to please visit the MCSD website: https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/about-us-clone/families-students/student-services/students-with-disabilities or contact Program for Exceptional Students at 706-748-2230.

### MCSD Facilitated IEP Meeting Procedure

MCSD, in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) offers Facilitated IEP Meetings. In a Facilitated IEP Meeting, an impartial third-party facilitator helps to keep members of the IEP Team focused on the development of the IEP while addressing conflicts and disagreements that may arise during the meeting. Parents or district personnel may initiate the process by completing the IEP Team Meeting Facilitation Request Form located on the MCSD website. Both parties – parents and MCSD – must agree to participate. Further information about the Facilitated IEP Process is available at: https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/about-us-clone/families-students/student-services/students-with-disabilities/facilitated-individualized-education-program-fiep-team-meetings

## Discipline for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities will be disciplined in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations. At times, discipline procedures for students with disabilities will be the same as the procedures implemented for students without disabilities, and, at times, the procedures implemented for students with disabilities will be different. A comprehensive discussion of those procedures and their legal underpinnings is beyond the scope of this MCSD Handbook. However, if you have questions about the disciplinary process related to a student with disabilities, and those questions cannot be answered at the school level, please contact the Regional Chief for the student's assigned school.

### Manifestation Determination Meetings

Within ten (10) school days of the decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of misbehavior or violation of a Code of Student Conduct, the MCSD will provide notice and hold a Manifestation Determination Meeting (MDM). This meeting will include relevant members of the child's IEP or Section 504 Team. Parents will be given notice of the meeting and are encouraged to attend.

The purpose of this meeting is to consider whether the behavior has a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability and/or to determine whether the behavior was a direct result of the District's failure to implement the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan. The meeting participants will consider relevant information from the student's IEP, 504 Plan, or other records, teacher observations, and information provided by parents.

A decision will be made at the Manifestation Determination Meeting. After that meeting and decision, the parent or the school may appeal by requesting a Due Process Hearing. If such a request is filed, the parent or the school may request an expedited hearing, which will typically occur within twenty (20) school days of the date the complainant requesting the hearing is filed**.**

### Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs)

#### Functional Behavior Assessment

A functional behavior assessment (FBA) involves gathering information in order to determine the cause or function of a behavior. In most circumstances, a FBA should be conducted before developing a behavior intervention plan.

There are many different tools that can be used for a FBA. Tools are selected on a case-by-case basis for each individual student. The information that is collected in a FBA is used to help understand why and in what conditions target behaviors occur. The information will help an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team or other group of individuals working with a student to develop a behavior intervention plan or address behaviors in another appropriate way. A FBA is not a consequence for misbehavior but is a process by which MCSD personnel gather information in order to learn more about the function of a target behavior.

#### Behavior Intervention Plan

A Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is a plan that can be added to a student's IEP to address target behaviors. A BIP includes positive interventions, strategies and supports to address target behaviors.

Typically, between one and four behaviors are selected for inclusion in a BIP. The BIP identifies the function of those behaviors, as well as interventions, strategies, and supports that are linked to those functions.
Parents are an important part of both the FBA and BIP process and will be asked for input throughout the FBA and BIP process. If your child is displaying behaviors that would necessitate the consideration of a FBA or BIP, consent will be obtained through the appropriate MCSD process. Please do not hesitate to ask questions of your child's teacher(s) or other school-based personnel involved to ensure you are comfortable with the process.

### Change of Placement

A change of placement in the context of a discipline event occurs where a student is removed from school for more than 10 (ten) consecutive or cumulative school days during a single school year, or the child has been subjected to a series of removals from school that constitute a pattern. A disciplinary change of placement for a student with a disability will likely involve an analysis of the behaviors and may include the initiation of a FBA, or revisions to an existing BIP.

## Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as "Section 504," is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students. For more information regarding Section 504, or if you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact your teacher or Principal, the Section 504 Chair at your school, or the MCSD Section 504 Coordinator, Dr. Nikki Sutton, at 706-748-2230. https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/about-us-clone/families-students/student-services/students-with-disabilities/students-with-a-504-plan or https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/individuals-disabilities/section-504.

**Notice of Section 504 Procedural Safeguards and Parent Rights**

Any student, parent or guardian ("grievant") may request an impartial hearing due to the school district's actions or inactions regarding a student's identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing must be in writing to the District Section 504 Coordinator, Dr. Nikki Sutton at 706-748-2230. A grievant' s failure to request a hearing in writing does not alleviate MCSD's obligation to provide an impartial hearing if the grievant makes a request verbally to the MCSD's Section 504 Coordinator. Additionally, Dr. Sutton can provide a copy of the Procedural Safeguards and Parent Rights document.

Dr. Sutton will assist the grievant in completing a Request for Hearing as necessary. Dr. Sutton may be contacted for assistance. Copies of the MCSD 504 Procedural Safeguards and MCSD Parents Rights may be found on the District website or may be picked up at each school or the District central office (2960 Macon Road).

# VII. TECHNOLOGY AND DEVICES AT SCHOOL

## Technology at School or School Events

**Technology or device** as used here refers to District-provided or privately owned wireless and/or portable electronic equipment that includes, but is not limited to, existing and emerging mobile communication systems and smart technologies, portable internet devices, Personal Digital Assistants, tablets, phones, handheld entertainment systems or portable information technology systems that can be used for word processing, wireless Internet access, image capture/recording, sound recording and information transmitting, receiving, storing, etc.

**Internet:** Only the internet gateway provided by the District may be accessed while on campus. Personal devices with internet connectivity, such as but not limited to, cell phones/cell network adapters, hotspots, smartwatches, to include electronic accessories, are not permitted to be actively used to access non-District internet sources.

**New Georgia Law HB340 - Distraction Free Education Act:** While the law requires the banning of personal electronic devices for grades K-8, MCSD will apply this requirement to all grade levels from the first bell to the last. This is to reduce distractions and improve focus, with exceptions for medical/emergency needs and school-issued devices.

**Personal Devices if brought to school:** Individual owners are responsible for the care of their devices; MCSD is not liable for any personal device that is lost, stolen, or damaged on District premises. It is recommended that skins, decals, and other custom touches be used to physically identify individually owned devices. Protective cases for technology are encouraged and should be age- appropriate**.**

**District Issued Devices for School Use:** Student use of any District-provided technology or devices is a privilege that is earned by abiding by the rules described in the Acceptable Use Policy (see below) and the rules in the MCSD Student Behavior Code of Conduct.

**Expectations and Procedures**: Failure to use technology or devices properly and respectfully can result in the privilege being revoked and possible disciplinary action. Schools will follow a Progressive Discipline Policy for for any infractions. The parent will be notified.

**Technology and Device Acceptable Use Policy**

The use of District technological resources, including access to the Internet, is a privilege. Students are responsible for their behavior and communications and are expected to behave in a manner that is ethical, respectful, and academically honest.

General student behavior standards, including those prescribed in applicable board policies, the Student Handbook and Code of Conduct, and other regulations and school rules apply to use of technological resources. Guidance provided here is intended to clarify expectations for conduct but should not be construed as all-inclusive.

## Board Policy IFBG: Internet Acceptable Use

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 03/18/2002 | Last Revised Date: 09/15/2025 | Last Reviewed Date: 09/15/2025

It is the belief of the school system that the use of telecommunications, including the Internet, in instructional programs is an educational strategy that facilitates communication, innovation, resource sharing, and access to information. Use of the Internet must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational mission, goals, and objectives of the school system.

It shall be the policy of the Board of Education that the school system shall be compliant with the "Protecting Georgia's Children on Social Media Act of 2024" (The Act) and have in continuous operation, with respect to any computers belonging to the school having access to the Internet:

1. A qualifying "technology protection measure," as that term is defined in Section 1703(b)(1) of the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 (CIPA) and is compliant with The Act; and

2. Procedures or guidelines developed by the Superintendent and his/her designee(s), including administrators and/or other appropriate personnel which provide for monitoring the online activities of users and the use of the chosen technology protection measure to protect against access through such computers to visual depictions that are (i) obscene, (ii) child pornography, or (iii) harmful to minors, as those terms are defined in CIPA and The Act. Such procedures or guidelines shall be designed to:

i. Provide reasonable opportunities and procedures for parents/guardians of students to confer and collaborate with school administrators and teachers regarding appropriate internet access for such students;

ii. Provide for monitoring the online activities of users to prevent, to the extent practicable, access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and the World Wide Web;

iii. Promote the safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications;

iv. Prevent unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking," and other unauthorized activities by minors online;

v. Prevent the unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors; and

vi. Restrict minors' access to materials "harmful to minors," as that term is defined in CIPA and The Act.

vii. Provide for students age-appropriate instruction regarding safe and appropriate behavior on social networking sites, chat rooms, and other Internet services, behaviors that may constitute cyber-bullying, and how to respond when subjected to cyberbullying.

viii. Establish appropriate enforcement measures in response to:

1. Students against students and school employees who willfully intentionally violate the acceptable-use policy, whether or not such student or school employee was, at the time of such violation, on school property, on a school bus or other school vehicle, at a school related function, or elsewhere, provided that such measures include disciplinary measures; and

2. A person who is not a student or school employee who violates the acceptable-use policy, whether or not such person was, at the time of such violation, on school property, on a school bus or other school vehicle, at a school-related function, or elsewhere;

ix. Provide for administrative procedures to: enforce the acceptable-use policy; for administrative procedures to address complaints regarding possible violations of the acceptable-use policy which, at a minimum, require that each complaint is responded to in writing by an appropriate school or local school

system official; and provide for expedited review and resolution of a claim that the application of the acceptable-use policy is denying a student or school employee access to material that is not within the prohibition prohibitions of the acceptable-use policy.

x. Each parent/guardian shall be provided a copy of the acceptable-use policy, as well as the student Code of Conduct addressing its enforcement and related consequences.

xi. Upon written request, each parent/guardian shall be provided a copy of the school district's acceptable use policy, information regarding the administrative procedures in effect to enforce the acceptable use policy, and to address complaints about such enforcement.

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## Acceptable Use Guidelines

### A. ACCEPTABLE USE GUIDELINES - IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BOARD POLICY IFBG

1. School system technological resources are provided for school-related purposes, and must be used consistently with the educational objectives of the District. Acceptable uses of such technological resources are limited to responsible, efficient, and legal activities that support learning. Use of school system technological resources for commercial gain or profit is prohibited.
2. Students must comply with all applicable laws, including those relating to copyrights and trademarks, confidential information, and privacy. Any use that violates state or federal law is strictly prohibited. Plagiarism of Internet resources is prohibited.
3. No user of technological resources, including a person sending or receiving electronic communications, may engage in creating, intentionally viewing, accessing, downloading, storing, printing, or transmitting images, graphics (including still or moving pictures), sound files, text files, documents, messages, or other material that is unlawful, obscene, defamatory, profane, pornographic, harassing, abusive, or that is harmful to minors.
4. The use of anonymous proxies to circumvent content filtering is prohibited. Students may not install or use any Internet-based file sharing program designed to facilitate sharing of copyrighted material.
5. Students may not send electronic communication fraudulently (i.e., by misrepresenting the identity of the sender). Users are prohibited from using another individual's ID or password for any technological resource.
6. Students may not reveal personal, private, or confidential information while online or via electronic communication; this information includes but is not limited to a home address or telephone number, credit or checking account information, or social security number of themselves or fellow students.
7. Students are prohibited from intentionally or negligently damaging computers, electronic devices, software, networks, or the data of any individual connected to school system technological resources. Furthermore, users may not knowingly or negligently transmit malicious code, viruses, or self-replicating messages, nor engage in any activity intended to degrade or disrupt system performance.
8. Students may not create or introduce games, network communications programs, or any foreign program or software onto any school system computer, electronic device, or network without the express prior permission of the technology director or designee.
9. Engaging in unauthorized or unlawful activities, such as "hacking" or using the computer network to gain or attempt to gain unauthorized or unlawful access to other computers, computer systems, or accounts, is prohibited. Students are prohibited from copying, changing, or deleting another user's work without their permission.
10. Students are required to immediately report any inappropriate Internet content they encounter while on District premises to a teacher or other adult.

## B. ACCEPTABLE USE GUIDELINES – USE AND CARE OF DEVICES

1. Students are authorized to use devices only as specifically permitted by this policy and as permitted by their school administrator. Possession and use of a device while at school is a privilege that may be revoked by the school administrator or designee.
2. Students should bring the device to school fully charged every day, taking full responsibility of its care, and keep it with them at all times. Sharing of district-provided devices without prior teacher permission is prohibited; students must log in with assigned student username and password only.
3. Students are prohibited from loaning district-provided devices to another user without prior express permission of the Administrator or designee.
4. Students must keep devices silent while at school and on school buses.
5. Students must immediately comply with an adult's request to close the screen, power down a device, or put a device away.
6. Students have been issued a Chromebook (to include Case and Charger) to use during the school day. Students must be responsible for their Chromebook/Case/Charger at all times. In an effort to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars, students must be responsible for the care of their Chromebook and not damage it in any way. Chromebooks have a protective cover that should not be removed. Students who damage Chromebooks and/or accessories can be assessed a replacement fee as per Board Policy (see MCSD Board Policy JS: Student Fees, Fines, and Charges).
7. Students must promptly report any damage to a district-provided device and must submit the device to be examined upon request. Only MCSD personnel may inspect and/or repair devices; do not take the device to a third party for any such action.
8. Students must back up their work.
9. Students must not knowingly introduce any virus, Trojan, or program designed to damage, alter, destroy, or provide access to unauthorized data; participation in hacking is prohibited.
10. Any use of a device to record or photograph another individual is prohibited without (1) express prior teacher permission and (2) express prior permission of that individual. Any such use may subject the student to disciplinary action and if appropriate, may be referred to legal authorities.
11. Any use of a device to transmit a recording of another individual without both express prior permission of a teacher and express prior permission from all persons depicted in the recording is prohibited and may subject the student to disciplinary action, and if appropriate, may be referred to legal authorities.
12. Use of any device with a camera in a locker room, bathroom, or any other area where others have an expectation of privacy is strictly prohibited.
13. Any use of a device that violates any rule in the Student Handbook and Code of Conduct is prohibited and may subject the student to disciplinary action. Any action will follow the districts Progressive Discipline policy.
14. All devices, whether district-provided or privately owned, are subject to reasonable search and confiscation. Any device deemed to contain evidence in a disciplinary or legal matter will be maintained by the MCSD pending the outcome of the matter. Parents, please consider this when determining what device will come to school with your child.

## C. ACCEPTABLE USE GUIDELINES – HOME AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

The District takes precautions to prevent students from accessing material and information that is inappropriate, obscene, pornographic, or otherwise harmful to minors, including violence, nudity, or other content that does not serve a legitimate pedagogical purpose. However, parents and guardians should be aware that the internet contains information from diverse and rapidly changing sources, including some that could possibly be inappropriate for students. Please talk with your child or children about responsible use of the internet, and please share any concerns with your child's school Administrator.

The District uses third-party resources, such as Google for Education. The District is not responsible for the content accessed by students who connect to the internet via their personal mobile telephone technology by passing District filters. Accessing inappropriate content this way is prohibited and will be addressed as a disciplinary matter.

Parental permission will be obtained when necessary to create and manage such third-party accounts; currently, MCSD utilizes Google Workspace for Education tools along with Chromebooks, and parental permissions are obtained specific to those tools through the parent acknowledgement of the MCSD Student Handbook which is completed annually. Parents and age-appropriate

students should review the Student Handbook carefully, and should use the website listed below to learn about Google Workspace for Education. If you wish to decline the use of the Chromebook and Google Workspace for Education services, please make an appointment with the Principal of your child's school to discuss the educational options available in the absences of these resources. Additional information regarding Google Workspace for Education can be accessed at the following site: https://edu.google.com/intl/ALL_us/our-values/privacy-security/frequently-asked-questions/#:~:text-Google%20Workspace%20for%20Education%20Core%20Services%20don't%20Collect%20

## Care and Use of School Property

**Chromebooks, Textbooks, and Media Center Checkouts:** Students will be held responsible for the proper care of all books, supplies, Chromebooks, and accessories or equipment furnished to them by the school. A student who defaces, damages, or loses school property shall be required to pay for the damage or loss (see MCSD Board Policy JS: Student Fees, Fines, and Charges).

A parent/Student must pay all fees and fines owed to the school in a timely fashion. Parent/Student must clear all fines and fees during the year the fines are assessed. Fines must be paid/cleared where they were assessed and before moving to the next level in school.

# Muscogee County School District

## Chromebook and Google Workspace Agreement & Permission Form

***MCSD believes that all students should be engaged in, be excited by, and be owners of their own learning.***

**Purpose:** To promote and maximize personalized learning and achievement, MCSD students use Google's Workspace for Education tools, Chromebooks, and web based applications selected and authorized by classroom teachers as learning tools. Although this Agreement authorizes the student's use of the Chromebook for the year, the device is the property of the District and must be returned upon the District's request, and no later than the last day of the student's attendance for the school year.

**Permission:** PLEASE READ CAREFULLY
My signature below indicates that I have read the information provided and referenced in this document and in the MCSD Student Handbook and Code of Conduct regarding the use of devices, technology and web-based applications used by MCSD. I give permission for MCSD to create/maintain a Google Workspace for Education account for my child and for Google to collect, use, and disclose information about my child only for the purposes described in the notice below.

| | **The student will be issued a Chromebook, a protective case, and a USB-C charger (if the device is authorized to be taken** |
|---|---|
| **Use of and Care for the Tools** | comply with all applicable School Board policies and regulations as outlined in the MCSD RUP (Responsible Use Policy). The RUP is located within the MCSD Handbook & Code of Conduct. The student is responsible for the reasonable care of the device and all applicable equipment associated with the device. The student should take care not to drop it or get it wet, and must not leave it outdoors or in a car in extreme weather conditions, or use it near food or drink. The student may clean the device with a soft, dry cloth, only. The student will carefully transport the device in the assigned protective case, and if applicable, will bring it to school each day, fully charged. The student and parent/guardian understand that if the student comes to school without his/her device, the student may not be able to participate in classroom learning activities and his/her grade may be affected. The device is for the student's exclusive use. The student shall not: lend the device/equipment to anyone; alter, disfigure or deface the device/equipment; cover up any numbering, lettering, or insignia displayed on the device; alter or remove any MCSD software, programs or applications from the device, and will not load any software, programs or applications on the device. The student is responsible for all personal data contained on the device, and MCSD is not responsible for any data loss. The student should regularly back up all files and data to external media such as Microsoft's OneDrive or the Google Drive. |
| **Damage Protection** | Each student-issued Chromebook comes with an Accidental Damage Protection (ADP) Warranty. This warranty is provided "free of charge" by the Muscogee County School District. The ADP warranty covers a variety of unintentional and/or accidental damage to the Chromebook. Students should follow all school procedures and policies when reporting damage to a Chromebook. Damage caused by intentional acts, fire, theft or loss, are not covered. |
| **Fees or Fines for Intentional Damage to or Loss of the Device** | Students and parents or guardians must comply with all District policies, procedures, and regulations as outlined online and in the MCSD Student Handbook and Code of Conduct and MCSD's RUP (Responsible Use Policy). A violation of any of these policies could result in a loss of privilege to use the Chromebook, appropriate discipline action and/or restitution.<br><br><u>Board Policy JS: Student Fees, Fines, and Charges</u><br>The Muscogee County School District Board of Education retains the right to charge students a reasonable fee for restitution of lost, damaged, or abused school system property, including textbooks, library books or media materials.<br><br>The current replacement cost to MCSD from our Chromebook vendor, Virtucom, is listed below. All repairs must be completed by Virtucom. **Prices can change at any time, and parents and students may be charged the current rate for intentional damage or loss of the device:**<br>• Chromebook Replacement Cost - $100.00<br>• Chromebook Tablet Replacement Cost - $100.00<br>• Chromebook Gumdrop Case - $20.00<br>• Lenovo USB-C Charger Cost - $10.00<br>• Chromebook Sleeve - $10.00<br>• Hotspot (T-Mobile) - $20.00 |
| **Inspection & Security Measures by MCSD** | The student has no expectation of privacy in his/her use of the device. MCSD reserves the right to monitor the student's use of the device and to inspect the device and anything stored on it without prior notice. MCSD has installed security measures on the device that are intended to filter or block access to sites MCSD deems to be inappropriate, in keeping with CIPA https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/childrens-internet-protection-act. MCSD does not collect personal student info for commercial purposes per COPPA https://www.ftc.gov/legal-library/browse/rules/childrens-online-privacy-protection-rule-coppa.<br><br>While MCSD uses these technology protection measures to limit access to material considered inappropriate to students, it may not be possible for the system to absolutely prevent such access, and the parent/guardian should supervise the student's use of the device while at home. If the device is lost or stolen, MCSD will remotely render the device inoperable. Workspace accounts are school-managed, therefore administrators have access to information stored in them. |

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MCSD utilizes Google's Workspace for Education with the Chromebook. Workspace Core Services include Gmail, Calendar, and Classroom; these are required for Chromebook login. Workspace also offers additional Services like YouTube, Maps, and Blogger are used with Workspace for Education accounts only if appropriate and only for educational purposes. Full listings of Services and additional information is available at the links below.
Google does not own student data stored or created in MCSD Workspace for Education, nor does it sell student information residing in MCSD Workspace for Education. MCSD Workspace does not show advertising to logged-in students. Google's adherence to its contractual obligations to protect student privacy is audited by several third parties. You can learn more at the Workspace for Education FAQ (https://support.google.com/a/answer/139019?hl=en) and notice( https://support.google.com/a/answer/7391849 ) and the Workspace for Education Privacy and Security page (https://edu.google.com/why-google/privacy-security/?modal_active=none). Students may, where appropriate, access Google services such as Google Docs and Sites for collaborative work, which include features where users can choose to share information with others or publicly.

Google uses the information collected from all Additional Services to provide, maintain, protect and improve the services, to develop new ones, and to protect Google and its users. Google may also use this information to offer tailored content, such as more relevant search results, and may combine personal information from one service with information, including personal information, from other Google services. Google does not use any user personal information (or any information associated with a Google Account) to target ads.

# Muscogee County School District

## Parent & Student Technology Flat Fee Guide

Creating WE!

### 1:1 Student Personalized Learning

The Muscogee County School District (MCSD) will provide students with access to a Chromebook, accessories, and Google's Work Space for Education as learning tools to promote and maximize Personalized Learning and Student Achievement.

MCSD's one-to-one technology program provides students an equal opportunity to explore and discover their passions through anytime/anywhere personalized learning. MCSD guides and supports students as they set their learning goals, engage in more self-driven learning experiences, collaborate, communicate, create, and self-reflect in order to facilitate the skills needed to be successful in the future.

### MCSD's "CARE" Program

MCSD understands that accidents happen, that is why each student-issued Chromebook comes with an Accidental Damage Protection (ADP) warranty. This warranty is provided "FREE OF CHARGE." The ADP warranty covers a variety of unintentional and/or accidental damage to the Chromebook. Accessories are not included under the warranty. MCSD expects each student to treat the Chromebook as a valuable learning tool and to care for it accordingly. Proper care and treatment of the Chromebook, and accessories, is required. The student's use of the device must comply with all applicable School Board policies and regulations as outlined in the MCSD RUP (Responsible Use Policy) located within the MCSD Handbook & Code of Conduct.

### Intentional Damage or Loss of Technology

Damage the Chromebook, and/or accessories such as intentional acts, fire, theft and/or loss, are not covered under MCSD's Care Program. Below are the parent and student technology replacement flat fees:

- Chromebook - $100
- Chromebook Charger - $10
- Chromebook Sleeve - $10
- Chromebook Gumdrop Case - $20
- Chrome Tablet - $100
- Chrome Tablet Charger - $10
- iPad - $100
- iPad Charger - $10
- Hotspot (T-Mobile) - $20
- Hotspot Charger - $10

*Fees are paid to the student's assigned school.

## VIII. Career, Technical & Agricultural Education

MCSD's Career, Technical & Agricultural Education Department (CTAE) offers career and technical education programs designed to prepare youth for a broad range of employment and further education and are offered under the guidance of certified teachers. All program areas are not available at every middle and high school. For the CTAE offerings at each middle and high school, please visit the school's website. Links to schools' websites are available at http://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/. Click on the schools' links to access each school's website.

CTAE does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex (including pregnancy and related conditions), religion, national origin, age, military status, disability, or any other legally protected status in its educational programs and activities, including its athletic programs. MCSD provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation. Any student or parent who believes they have been subjected to harassment or discrimination by anyone involved in the CTAE program, whether a student or employee of the school district based upon any of the factors listed above, should promptly report the same to the principal of the school or the leader of the program, who will implement the board's discriminatory complaints or harassment procedures.

Equity coordinators are available to address allegations of discrimination; equity coordinators' names and contact information is available in on pages 28 and 29 of this handbook.

For more information about CTAE programs, including admissions requirements, contact:

Mrs. Victoria Thomas
Director of CTAE
2960 Macon Road
Columbus, Georgia 31906 (706) 748-2000
Thomas.victoria.m@muscogee.k12.ga.us

The following CTAE programs are currently being offered

Accounting
Audio-Video, Technology & Film
Business
Cosmetology
Engineering
Graphics
JROTC

Agriculture
Automotive
Computer Science
Culinary Arts
Family & Consumer Sciences
Healthcare Science
Law & Justice
Marketing, Sales & Service

Architecture
Barbering
Construction
Education(Teaching as a Profession)
Firefighting
Heavy Equipment Operations
Machining
Metals

# IX. What Parents and Students Can Expect

## Clear Bag Policy

The Muscogee County Board of Education has implemented a clear bag requirement that limits the size and types of bags that may be brought by spectators to District events. This policy is intended to increase safety and enhance the spectator's experience by minimizing time spent searching bags at gate security checkpoints.

## Valuables at School

MCSD personnel cannot search for personal items lost or suspected stolen while at school. This specifically applies to electronic devices, phones, handbags, or any other valuable items brought by students to school. MCSD will not be responsible for the value of an item in the event of damage, loss, or theft while at school. Additionally, items sent to school that become evidence in a discipline or legal matter must be held pending the outcome of that event. Please consider this carefully when sending items to school with your student, whether in a vehicle, bag, or otherwise.

## Searches of Students or Property and Questioning of Students

MCSD personnel are authorized to conduct reasonable searches of students, staff and visitors, to include the use of handheld metal detector wands prior to entry. All searches will be conducted pursuant to applicable law. Students, staff, or visitors may consent to a search. To conduct a search without consent, school officials with reasonable suspicion may search students whom they believe have violated a law or rule of the school. The scope of the search will be reasonably related to the purpose of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the age and gender of the student and the nature of the suspected infraction.

### Searches of School Property

All lockers, desks, computers, technology resources, and any other school property available for student use are the property of the school district, the school district retains control over said property, and such property is therefore not private, and is subject to search at any time. School computers and school technology resources are not private and are open to school review at any time. Periodic general inspections of school property may be conducted by MCSD for any reason at any time without notice and without student consent.

### Searches of Student Property

Bringing a vehicle to school or to a school event is a privilege, not a right. Where a student chooses to bring a vehicle to school or to a school event, the student has waived any expectation of privacy as related to the vehicle, and in bringing a vehicle to school or to a school event, the student and his or her parents/guardians acknowledge and agree that the vehicle is subject to search at any time. The school retains authority to conduct routine patrols of student parking lots and inspections of student vehicles on school property.

Student vehicles located on or near campus, as well as, student possessions such as pocketbooks, book bags, wall lockers containing student property, and other containers which could hold or transport drugs, alcohol, stolen property, weapons, or other dangerous substances, instrumentalities or contraband or all other articles or instruments in violation of the Student Behavior Code and Discipline Policy or in violation of any law may be subjected to searches by a dog sniffing or otherwise. Personal cell phones and other electronic devices brought on campus are subject to search according to this policy and applicable law.

Where a student chooses to bring any container or item to school or to a school event, the student acknowledges and agrees that the container/item is subject to search at any time.

Students should not share lockers, clothing items, book bags, purses, etc. since items found during searches could subject both parties to disciplinary proceedings.

### Canine Detection

Trained sniff-screening dogs are allowed in the schools and on district property to prevent drugs, weapons, and contraband. These randomized checks of property by dog sniffs are not considered a search by law. Handheld metal detection wands may also be in use in schools and at school events as a condition to entry. These are safety precautions intended to provide a safe and healthy learning environment. Nothing in this provision shall be construed to obstruct a law enforcement officer in the performance of their duty.

## FERPA: Student Education Records

### Notification of Rights under FERPA and the Act

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Student Data Privacy, Accessibility, and Transparency Act of Georgia (Act) afford parents, and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students"), certain rights with respect to the student's education records.

**These rights are:**

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day the District receives a request for access. Parents/guardians or eligible students should submit a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The Principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the District to amend a record should write the school Principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses Personally Identifiable Information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

4. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. The criteria for determining who constitutes a school official and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest must be set forth herein. A school official includes a person employed by the school or school district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or, in legally appropriate circumstances, a person serving on the School Board. A school official also may include a volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by the school, performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; an adult volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official typically has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

5. Upon request, the District discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. MCSD intends to forward records to such other school districts upon request.

6. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The office that administers FERPA:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-8520

FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students' education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in §99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student, §99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the District to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review a record of disclosures upon request. The District may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student:

- To other school officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom the school has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed in §99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(1) - (a)(1)(i)(B)(3) are met. (§99.31(a)(1))
- To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of §99.34. (§99.31(a)(2))
- To representatives of the U. S. Comptroller General, the U. S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State Educational Agency in the parent or eligible Student's State (SEA). Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of §99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf. (§§99.31(a)(3) and 99.35)
- To an agency caseworker or other representative of a State or local child welfare agency or tribal organization who is authorized to access a student's case plan when such agency or organization is legally responsible, in accordance with State or tribal law, for the care and protection of the student in foster care placement. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(L))
- To the Secretary of Agriculture or authorized representatives of the Food and Nutrition Service for purposes of conducting program monitoring, evaluations, and performance measurements of programs authorized under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, under certain conditions. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(K))
- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid. (§99.31(a)(4))
- To State and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a State statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose records were released, subject to §99.38. (§99.31(a)(5))
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, in order to:
  - (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests;
  - (b) administer student aid programs; or
  - (c) improve instruction. (§99.31(a)(6))
- To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions.(§99.31(a)(7))
- To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes. (§99.31(a)(8))
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.(§99.31(a)(9))
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to §99.36. (§99.31(a)(10)
- Information the school has designated as "directory information" under §99.37.(§99.31(a)(11))

**Directory Information**

FERPA requires that the District, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, MCSD may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the District to the contrary in accordance with District procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow MCSD to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include but are not limited to:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- Student work samples;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require Local Educational

Agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following information – names, addresses, and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

**MCSD has designated the following information as directory information**:

- Student's name, address, and telephone number;
- Student's date of birth;
- Student's participation in official school activities and sports;
- Weight and height of members of an athletic team;
- Dates of attendance at schools within the District;
- Degrees, honors and awards received during the time enrolled in district schools;
- Certain Student work samples;
- Photograph;
- Grade level; and
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended.

If you do not want MCSD to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the Principal of your school in writing at the beginning of each school year or within thirty (30) days of enrollment at the District.

## MCSD Video/Audio Recordings

The MCSD seeks to promote a safe and secure teaching and learning environment, and in doing so, utilizes cameras that monitor public areas of MCSD buses, properties, buildings and grounds. Cameras are not utilized in areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy, including but not limited to restrooms, locker rooms, or the like. It is not the typical practice of the MCSD to store, maintain, or allow the viewing of images captured through these cameras.

## Demonstrations and Strikes

School officials have the authority to control demonstrations, strikes, and other similar activities on school campuses, properties, facilities, and buses.

## Visitors to School

Visitors to the school must register at the school office as they enter the building, and must bring a current valid I.D. to utilize the Raptor Visitor Management System. Visitors must also adhere to the guidelines set forth by the school, are asked to wear appropriate attire, and must park in designated parking areas. Yellow and red curbed areas are reserved for authorized vehicles only. Visitors parking in these areas are subject to ticketing.

## Student Dress Code and Uniform Information

MCSD has a district-wide dress code that is enforced at each school. For additional information about the District-wide dress code, please review Rule 16 in the Code of Conduct. In addition to the District-wide dress code, Principals have authority and discretion to set school-specific dress codes and uniform codes at each school. The schools shall present dress and uniform codes to the Board of Education for review. In order to allow students time to obtain clothing, school-specific uniform codes are not enforced during the first five (5) school days that a student attends the school.

Students who cannot afford to purchase a uniform shall not be disciplined nor denied admission to school for that reason. If you need assistance to comply with dress or uniform codes, please contact the Principal or designee for assistance.

It is not the intent of MCSD to dictate the quality or style of clothing worn, but rather an effort to encourage good habits and acceptable group behavior. Student dress and personal appearance should reflect dignity and pride in oneself and in the school. Therefore, a student shall not dress, groom, or wear or use emblems, insignias, badges or other symbols where the effect thereof is to distract unreasonably the attention of other students or otherwise to cause disruption or interference with the operation of the school.

Bona fide religious attire will be permitted. Student dress code and uniform dress codes will be enforced in a reasonable, non-discriminatory manner.

# X. Code of Conduct

Principals and Building Leaders have discretion in the school-level handling of all disciplinary events. At the discretion of the Principal, a student who is accused of violating this policy may be taken before the MCSD Discipline Tribunal, and police may be summoned to the campus.
The following rules apply from the time the student leaves home to go to school until s/he returns home, and any time a student is on school grounds. These rules also apply off school grounds while enroute to or from any school activity, function, or event, enroute to and from school and school functions, activities, or events, any time a student is on a school bus or any other transportation furnished by the school district, as well as at any school bus stop. The school district also addresses certain off- campus misconduct as authorized by law; please see Rule 10.

Violation of any rule will result in an age-appropriate consequence, which should be progressive in nature to include parental involvement:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rule -1 | Verbal Assault, Physical Assault, Disrespectful Conduct of Students | Rule -15 | Damage or Destruction or Theft of Private Property |
| Rule -2 | Alcohol, Narcotics, Stimulants, and Other Dangerous Drugs and Controlled Substances | Rule -16 | Dress and Grooming |
| Rule -3 | Weapons; Hazardous Objects; Unauthorized Items | Rule -17 | Leaving School of Assigned Area Without Permission |
| Rule -4 | Bullying | Rule -18 | Unexcused Absences |
| Rule -5 | Chronic Disciplinary Problem Students | Rule -19 | Trespassing and Loitering on School Property is Prohibited |
| Rule -6 | Sexual Misconduct or Inappropriate Display of Affection | Rule -20 | Incitement of Student |
| Rule -7 | Gangs | Rule -21 | Falsifying Reports of Alleged Inappropriate Behavior by Teacher/School Principal |
| Rule -8 | Sexual Harassment | Rule -22 | Acts of Misconduct |
| Rule -9 | Disruption and Interference with School | Rule -23 | Gambling |
| Rule -10 | Off-Campus Misconduct | Rule -24 | Academic Integrity |
| Rule -11 | Disregard of Directions or Commands | Rule -25 | Counterfeit Currency |
| Rule -12 | Bus Conduct | Rule -26 | Recording Student Fights or Other Misbehavior is Prohibited |
| Rule -13 | Tobacco Products and Electronic Smoking Devices in the Schools | Rule -27 | Student Personal Electronic Devices Prohibited – "Bell-to-Bell" |
| Rule -14 | Damage or Destruction or Theft of School Property | Rule -28 | Students Must Comply With Acceptable Use Board Policy IFBG |

## Teacher and Principal Removal of Student

**It should be noted that the Superintendent fully supports the authority of Principals and teachers to remove a student from the classroom pursuant to Georgia law at O.C.G.A. §20-2-738.**

## Rule 1 – Verbal Assault, Physical Assault, Disrespectful Conduct of Students and Threats

**The following conduct of students is prohibited**:

A. Verbal assault (including threats of violence) against teachers, administrators, and other schoolpersonnel;
B. Physical assault or battery of teachers, administrators, and other school personnel;
C. Disrespectful conduct (including the use of vulgar or profane language) toward teachers, administrators, and other school personnel;
D. Physical assault or battery of other students including sexual harassment;
E. Hazing: to subject a student to an activity that endangers or is likely to endanger the physical health of a student. This is prohibited regardless of the student's willingness to participate in such activity;
F. Verbal assault of other students, including threats of violence and/or sexual harassment;
G. Disrespectful conduct toward other students, including the use of vulgar or profane language;
H. Verbal assault of, physical assault or battery of, or disrespectful conduct toward persons attending school-related functions; and,
I. Threats: Threats include (but are not limited to) threats to commit violence, threats to release dangerous instrumentalities or hazardous substances, and threats to cause harm that are likely to cause terror or evacuations (i.e., bomb threats, threats to bring weapons to school, threats to injure others by violent means, etc.).

Any student alleged to have committed an act of physical violence (as defined below) against a teacher, bus driver, or other school official shall be suspended pending a hearing by the Disciplinary Hearing Tribunal.

A student found by a Disciplinary Hearing Officer, Panel, or Tribunal to have intentionally made physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature against a teacher, school bus driver, school official, or school employee may be disciplined by expulsion, long-term suspension, or short-term suspension. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.6

A student found by a Disciplinary Hearing Officer, Panel, or Tribunal to have intentionally made physical contact that causes physical harm (unless such physical contacts were in self-defense) to a teacher, school bus driver, school official, or school employee shall be expelled from the public school system for the remainder of the student's eligibility to attend public school and shall also be referred to juvenile court with a request for a petition alleging delinquent behavior. The local school board, at its discretion, may permit the student to attend an alternative education program for the period of the student's expulsion. If the student who commits physical harm as described in this paragraph is in kindergarten through eighth grade, the school board at its discretion and on the recommendation of the Disciplinary Hearing Tribunal Panel may permit such a student to re-enroll in the regular public-school program for grades nine through twelve. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.6

## Rule 2 – Alcohol, Narcotics, Stimulants, and Other Dangerous Drugs and Controlled Substances

Students are prohibited from possessing, using, selling, swapping, stealing, transmitting, intending to transmit, distributing, intending to distribute, or ingesting, holding, carrying, or being under the influence of alcohol and/or any other substances prohibited by this rule.

**Substances prohibited by this rule include**:

A. All substances, chemicals, and drugs made illegal or defined as dangerous or illicit by any local, State, or Federal law;
B. Drugs including, but not limited to narcotic drugs, synthetic marijuana, amphetamines, barbiturates, marijuana, herbal marijuana, cocaine, stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens, inhalants, opiates, herbal supplements, or any other controlled substance or intoxicant;
C. Alcoholic beverages or other intoxicants of any kind;
D. Prescription and non-prescription medicine that has not been registered with the school pursuant to Board Policy JGCD;
E. Any item or substance which is thought, represented to be, or treated as if it is an illegal or dangerous drug, illicit substance, intoxicant, or alcohol; and
F. Any drug-related paraphernalia containing any substance prohibited hereunder.

Where a lawful substance is used inappropriately to cause or attempt to cause intoxication, that substance will be treated as an unlawful drug for the purposes of student discipline under this Rule.

Selling, transmitting, intending to transmit, distributing, intending to distribute, buying, attempting to buy, giving, swapping, or stealing prescription or over-the-counter medication is prohibited.

All medication (prescription/nonprescription/over-the-counter to include diabetic supplies) in their original container is to be turned in to the office prior to the beginning of the school day. See MCSD Board Policy JGCD.

A student's prescribed use of a prescription drug pursuant to and in accordance with a prescription from a registered physician authorizing that student's use of the drug is not a violation of this rule if the mandates of MCSD Board Policy JGCD are met prior to that student's use of the drug. Parental permission to have or use substances prohibited by this policy does not exempt a student from compliance.

Improper or 'off label' use of prescription and/or over-the-counter medication is prohibited.

**Student Alcohol Use**

A student shall not possess, sell, use, transmit, or be under the influence of any alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind:

1. On the school grounds during or immediately before or immediately after school hours;
2. On the school grounds at any other time when the school is being used by any school group;
3. Off the school grounds at a school activity, function, or event;
4. En route to and from school;
5. Off the school grounds while the student is in attendance at school or any school function, or is otherwise subject to jurisdiction of school authorities, or
6. En route to and from school functions, activities, or events.

**Student Drug Use**

The District places a high priority on the elimination of substance abuse in the schools and in the community. The use, possession or transmitting of illicit substances and the use of alcohol are wrong, harmful, and will not be tolerated. Violation of this policy will be met with firm and consistent disciplinary measures.

Students in MCSD are prohibited from possessing, using, selling, transmitting, intending to transmit, or being under the influence of alcohol or intoxicants of any kind, and any substances made illegal by the O.C.G.A § 16-30-70 *et. seq.* (Dangerous Drug Act) and O.C.G.A. § 16-13-20 *et. seq.* (Georgia Controlled Substance Act):

1. On the school grounds during, immediately before, or immediately after school hours;
2. On the school grounds at any other time when the school is being used by any school group;
3. Off the school grounds at a school activity, function, or event;
4. Within legal proximity to school grounds as designated under Georgia Statutes;
5. En route to and from school;
6. At any school-sponsored function, whether held during or after regular school hours, and whether held on or off school property;
7. En route to and from school functions, activities, or events; and
8. During any time that students are under the jurisdiction of school authorities.

Substances defined by local and state laws governing dangerous illegal substances are covered by this policy. Such substances include, but are not limited to:

A. Drugs including, but not limited to stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens, inhalants, THC, opiates, narcotic drugs, amphetamines, barbiturates, marijuana, cocaine, or any other contraband or controlled substance or prohibited drug;
B. Alcoholic beverages or intoxicants of any kind;
C. Prescription medicine or drugs, with or without medical cause or medical permission, unless such medications have been registered with the school according to the school's procedures. In all schools, medicines must be registered with the Principal or designee. Parental permission to have or use substances prohibited by this policy, including alcohol or prohibited substances does not exempt a student from this policy.

## Rule 3 – Weapons; Hazardous Objects; Unauthorized Items

A student shall not possess, use, handle, transmit, or control any object which is or may reasonably be considered as a weapon, hazardous object, or unauthorized item. This includes objects that may not be considered a weapon, hazardous object, or unauthorized item as defined below, but are used as a weapon against any other person.

"Weapon", while not meant to be all-inclusive, is any firearm, pistol, revolver, or any weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind, as defined in O.C.G.A. §16-11-127.1(a)(3), and any dangerous weapon, machine gun, rifle or shotgun, as defined in O.C.G.A. §16-11-121.

"Hazardous Object", while not meant to be all-inclusive, is any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straight-edge razor, razor blade, spring stick, knuckles, whether made from metal, thermoplastic, wood, or other similar material, blackjack, any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapon, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more ridged parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chahka, nunchuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any weapon of like kind, or any stun gun, taser, or any nonlethal air gun as defined in subsection (a) of O.C.G.A. §16-11- 106.

"Unauthorized Item", while not meant to be all-inclusive, is ammunition, BBs, paint pellets, CO2 cartridges, fireworks, matches, lighters, stink bombs, pepper spray, mace, or similar instruments/items. These instruments/items are disruptive to the function of the school and may pose a safety risk.

A student who wishes to bring an object which could be reasonably considered to be a Hazardous Object or Unauthorized Item on school grounds as a part of or in conjunction with a class assignment or other school project must first receive written permission from the office of the Principal. Weapons, as defined above, are not allowed on or in a school safety zone under any circumstances.

Where a student is determined by the MCSD Student Discipline Tribunal Panel to have brought a Weapon to school, that student shall be expelled from school for a period of not less than one calendar year; however, the local board of education may modify such expulsions on a case-by-case basis. The Discipline Tribunal or the Board of Education is authorized to place a student determined to have brought a weapon to school in an alternative educational setting.

Principals and Building Leaders have discretion in the school-level handling of all disciplinary events. At the discretion of the Principal, a student who is accused of violating this policy may be taken before the MCSD Discipline Tribunal, and police may be summoned to the campus.

## Rule 4 – Bullying

Incidents of bullying may be reported to any school MCSD employee and can be reported anonymously by calling 706-748-2267 or by filling out a 'silent report' form at your school.
**Reports can also be made to the State: 1-877-729-7867 or 1-877-SAY-STOP**

**Additional Bullying Reporting Options**:
MCSD Student Safety
Hotline: 706-748-2267
MCSD Bullying e-mail: Bully.free@muscogee.k12.ga.us

Vector Safe Schools Alert can be located at https://muscogee-ga.safeschoolsalert.com/

**Bullying behavior is prohibited and is defined by Georgia law as**:

A. Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; or

B. Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or

C. Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that:

1. Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of O.C.G.A. §16-5-23.1 or "visible bodily harm" as such term is defined in O.C.G.A. §16-5-23.1. Visible bodily harm is defined by 16-5-23.1 as bodily harm capable of being perceived by a person other than the victim;
2. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;or
3. Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment;
4. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

The term 'bullying' applies to acts which occur on school property, on school vehicles, at designated bus stops, or at school related functions or activities or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer systems, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system.

The term, as used in this Rule, also applies to cyberbullying, which is behavior that occurs through the use of electronic communication, including social media, whether or not such electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment, where such electronic communication:

A. Is directed specifically at students or school personnel;

B. Is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, and

C. Creates a reasonable fear of harm to the students' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose.

For the purposes of this Rule, electronic communication includes but is not limited to any transfer of signs, signals, writings, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system.

Upon a finding by a school administrator that a student has either committed a bullying offense or has been a victim of bullying, the student's parent or guardian will be notified.

Note that some student misconduct prohibited by this policy may also trigger responsibilities under the District's policies preventing harassment or discrimination and both sets of policies should be considered when addressing behaviors.

Where the Student Discipline Tribunal panel finds a student in grades six through twelve guilty of bullying behavior for the third time in one school year, that student must be assigned to an alternative school in keeping with Georgia law.

Retaliation against a reporter following a report of bullying is prohibited.

Parents / Guardians – Please be advised that the term "bullying" is defined specifically by Georgia law as noted above. The District takes all peer conflict and misconduct seriously and addresses these concerns as appropriate using the behavioral supports and responses outlined throughout this document, regardless of whether the behaviors would meet the legal definition of "bullying" under Georgia law.

## Rule 5 – Chronic Disciplinary Problem Students

A "Chronic Disciplinary Problem Student" is defined by law as a student who exhibits a pattern of behavioral characteristics which interfere with the learning process of students around them and which are likely to recur.

A student shall not willfully and persistently violate the student code of conduct.

**Procedure:**

Any time a teacher or Principal identifies a student as a chronic disciplinary problem student, the Principal shall notify the parent or guardian of the disciplinary problem by telephone call and by either certified mail or statutory overnight delivery with return receipt requested of first class mail, invite such parent or guardian to observe the student in a classroom situation, and request at least one parent or guardian to attend a conference with the Principal or the teacher to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan.

## Rule 6 – Sexual Misconduct or Inappropriate Display of Affection

**A student shall not:**

A. Indecently expose themselves, or engage in any inappropriate sexual actions or behaviors;
B. Molest or rape another person;
C. Engage in any form of inappropriate bodily contact or display of affection, such as fondling, making out, intercourse;
D. Participate in inappropriate activities such as mooning (pulling one's own pants down) or ankling or pantsing (pulling another student's pants down);
E. Possess, pose for, and/or transmit pornographic materials (magazines, pictures, images within cellular phone, websites, etc.); and/or
F. Take, show, distribute, or pose for any inappropriate photo or video, to include posts on social media by way of example, photos or videos while undressed or that expose breasts, buttocks, or genitals.

Students found guilty of the above actions may be suspended for not more than ten (10) days pending a referral to the Student Discipline Tribunal and/or may be referred to the law enforcement agencies.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to inform their children of the consequences, including potential criminal penalties, of underage sexual conduct.

Where appropriate, Sexual Discrimination and/or Harassment by students and which rises to the definition of a violation of Title IX requiring an investigation and determination under the law will be investigated pursuant to District policy, and any disciplinary action taken shall be determined upon the issuance of a Determination Letter by the District Decisionmaker.

**Rule 7 – Gangs** Gangs are herein described as clubs, groups, or organizations of limited membership, which are known to MCSD through its personal intelligence or through information furnished through local law enforcement officials, to advocate, practice, engage or participate in unlawful acts such as intimidation, violence, or destruction to property. Gangs shall not be permitted on school premises or in school facilities, or to conduct any activities, meetings, or gatherings on or about school facilities, premises, or property at any time. The presence of such gangs is a threat to the safety and well-being of the students and faculties of MCSD, and disruptive to the education process.

1. Membership in or affirmation with gangs as defined above shall not be permitted. Membership will be determined, by whatever means, from the existence of objective criteria. While not intended to be an all-inclusive list, and in addition to those items set forth in subpart (2) immediately below, criteria which can serve to indicate membership or affiliation with gangs include the following:

   (a)Direct admission of gang affiliation;
   (b)Documented information on gang membership;
   (c) Information from known gang affiliate;
   (d)Admission of former membership, with continued associations; and/or
   (e) Photographs indicating gang association, etc.

2. Wearing of any insignia, and/or uniforms, or other means of any gang identification, or using or making any signs, signals, or other means of gang communication or identification by any student or non-student visiting on the premises of any school facility shall not be permitted.

3. Any attempt to gather or commingle on school premises, facilities, or property for any purpose by gang members shall be prohibited.

4. No student shall use, employ, or rely upon his or her gang membership or affiliation to threaten, intimidate, or harass verbally or physically other students or MCSD employees.

5. All of the above prohibitions concerning gangs apply as well to any school functions or events conducted away from school facilities, property, or premises.

Any student who violates this policy or any subpart thereof shall be subject to discipline, including the sanction of expulsion if warranted under the particular circumstances of a violation.

## Rule 8 – Sexual Harassment

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other inappropriate oral, gestures, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature when made by a member of the school staff to a student or when made by any student to another student or system employee constitutes sexual harassment when:

A. Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's education;
B. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic decisions affecting that individual; or
C. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic professional performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive academic environment.

Sexual harassment further may include but is not limited to gestures, verbal harassment or abuse, pressure for sexual activity, repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications, unwelcome touching, suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, job, etc. Harassing or discriminatory conduct may take many forms, including verbal acts and name-calling; exclusionary acts; graphic and written statements, which may include the use of cell phones or the internet; or other conduct that may be physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating.

Where appropriate, Sexual Discrimination and/or Harassment by students and which rises to the definition of a violation of Title IX requiring an investigation and determination under the law will be investigated pursuant to District policy, and any disciplinary action taken shall be determined upon the issuance of a Determination Letter by the District Decisionmaker.

## Rule 9 – Disruption and Interference with School

**No student shall:**

A. Occupy any school building, gymnasium, school grounds, properties or part thereof with intent to deprive others of its use, or where the effect is to deprive others of its use;
B. Block the entrance or exit of any school building or property or corridor or room thereof as to deprive others of access thereto;
C. Prevent or attempt to prevent the convening or continued functioning of any school, class, activity or lawful meeting or assembly on the school campus;
D. Prevent students from attending a class or school activity;
E. Except under the direct instruction of the Principal, block normal pedestrian or vehicular traffic on a school campus or adjacent grounds;
F. Continuously and intentionally make noise or act in any other manner so as to interfere with the teacher's ability to conduct his/her class;
G. In any other manner, by the use of violence, force, noise, coercion, threat, intimidation, fear, passive resistance, or any other conduct, intentionally cause the disruption of any lawful mission, process or function of the school, or engage in any such conduct for the purpose of causing the disruption or obstruction of any such lawful mission, process or function;
H. Refuse to identify themself upon request of any teacher, Principal, Superintendent, school bus driver, or other authorized school personnel;
I. Use profanity or obscene language;
J. Use any electronics, including cell phones, computers, tablets, to access, post, or create any improper content, including pictures or social media posts, which causes an unsafe or disruptive school atmosphere; nor
K. Urge, encourage or counsel other students to violate any of the preceding paragraphs of this rule.

## Rule 10 - Off-Campus Misconduct

The school district has the authority to take disciplinary action regarding any off-campus actions taken by students, where those actions could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony (note: this rule applies whether or not the student is actually charged with any crime) and where those actions either make the student's continued presence on campus a potential danger to persons or property at the school or where the student's presence disrupts the educational process.

## Rule 11 – Disregard of Directions or Commands

A student shall not ignore or fail to comply with directions or commands of teachers, student teachers, substitute teachers, para- professionals, Principals, Assistant Principals, school bus drivers or other school personnel.

## Rule 12 – Bus Conduct

All Rules in this Code of Conduct and handbook apply to students while on the bus, at the bus stop, at any school activities or en route to or from school or any school activities or on any district-provided transportation.
Students who fail to respond to the direction of the bus driver or the bus monitor will be reported to the school Principal, who is authorized to deny the student bus transportation.

Any bus driver who believes that a student's continued presence on the bus will imperil or endanger other students or district personnel may bring this to the attention of the Principal first, and then, if the Principal does not remove the student from the bus, may appeal to his or her transportation department supervisor and ultimately to the School Board. Students are prohibited from using electronic devices, including cell phones, on school buses during operation, and this includes activities like listening to music without wearing earbuds/headphones. Students are prohibited from talking on an electronic device, including cell phones, on school buses during operation, it can be a distraction for both students and the bus driver, potentially leading to accidents or unsafe situations.

It is unlawful for any person to disrupt or interfere with the operation of any public-school, public-school bus, or public-school bus stop. Such interference is considered trespassing and law enforcement will be contacted.

## Rule 13 – Tobacco/Nicotine Products and Electronic Smoking Devices in the Schools

Students enrolled in the Muscogee County public schools shall not possess, transmit, or use tobacco or nicotine in any form.

Any electronic cigarette (or e-cigarette), vapes of all types, electronic-vaping device, personal vaporizer (PV), electronic nicotine delivery system (ENDS), or any other nicotine or tobacco delivery system are prohibited as outlined above.

## Rule 14 – Damage or Destruction or Theft of School Property

A student shall not recklessly, willfully or maliciously cause or attempt to cause damage or destruction of school property. A student shall not steal or attempt to steal school property. Parents of students who violate this Rule and damage or deface school property will be required to make restitution for all damage as part of the discipline process.

## Rule 15 – Damage or Destruction or Theft of Private Property

A student shall not recklessly, willfully, or maliciously cause or attempt to cause damage or destruction to the property of anyone at school or on school property. Students shall not steal or attempt to steal private property of others.

## Rule 16 - Dress and Grooming

Bona fide religious attire will be permitted.

A student shall not dress, groom, or wear or use emblems, insignias, badges, or other symbols where the effect thereof is to distract unreasonably the attention of other students or otherwise to cause disruption or interference with the operation of the school.

In addition to the District-wide dress code, Principals have authority and discretion to set school-specific dress codes and uniform codes at each school.

**District Wide Dress Code**:

In addition to the language above and in the Student Handbook regarding dress and uniform codes:

- Bona fide religious attire is permitted. Chests, backs, and midriffs must be covered. Transparent items do not constitute cover.
- Shorts, dresses, skirts, skorts or other garments may be no shorter than three (3) inches above the top of the knee. Tights or leggings must be accompanied by another garment that is no shorter than three (3) inches above the top of

the knee.

- Pajamas may not be worn to school unless permitted by the school Principal.
- Undergarments are not to be visible at any time. Outer garments are to be worn in a manner which will cover up all undergarments. Transparent items do not constitute cover.
- All pants and slacks and skirts must be worn at the waist.
- No pants, shorts, or skirts may have holes above the knee.
- Blankets are not permitted in school.
- Hats, caps, sunglasses, rollers, combs, bandanas, durags, bonnets, balaclava, and hoods are not to be worn in the building during the school day. Principals may use discretion as to head coverings that are not listed here.
  **Note:** students may be required to wear a hairnet and/or other hair restraints in technology classes, laboratory, swimming, and instructionally related activities or advised by the teacher.
- Shoes must be secured to the foot in the front and/or the back. House slippers and shoes with cleats are prohibited.
- Gang-related tattoos, badges, insignias, and colors are prohibited.
- Logos or symbols which denigrate racial, social, or ethnic groups are prohibited.
- Attire that may damage school property or cause personal injury to others (such as chains or studded items) is prohibited.
- Clothing items which advertise alcoholic beverages, sex, tobacco, obscene, crude suggestive messages, or use profanity or slurs pertaining to race, gender, ethnicity, religion, or national origins are prohibited. Clothing that suggests or portrays violence or illegal actions is prohibited.
- Clothing that causes a distraction from the learning environment or a disruption to the operation of the school is not permitted.
- "Fake" alcohol or drug advertisement is prohibited.

**Dress Code for New and Transfer Students**

New and transferring students will be given five (5) school days before being required to comply with a school-specific uniform dress code.

## Rule 17 – Leaving School or Assigned Area without Permission

No student may leave school or an assigned area at any time during the school day without permission of the Principal or designee.

## Rule 18 - Unexcused Absences

A student shall not be absent from school or from any class or other required school function during required school hours except for illness or other providential cause, except with written permission of the parent, guardian, teacher, Principal, or other duly authorized school official, nor shall any student encourage, urge or counsel other students to violate this rule.

## Rule 19 – Trespassing and Loitering on School Property is Prohibited

A student shall not enter any school district property without permission when neither school nor a school-related activity is in session; remain on school district property when directed to leave by the Principal or designee; or enter upon school district property or attend a school-sponsored function (whether or not on school property) while under expulsion, Out of School Suspension, In-School Suspension or assignment to the alternative school.

Students are not allowed to enter the premises of a school other than his/her school unless prior permission is received from an administrator of the school to be visited or unless the school is hosting a school-related function, such as an academic or athletic activity. A student and/or non-student will be in violation of this rule and subject to discipline and/or legal consequences if the student fails to leave school district property or a school event after being ordered to leave by the Principal or designee.

It is unlawful for any person to remain within the school safety zone when that person does not have a legitimate cause or need to be present thereon. It is unlawful for any person to disrupt or interfere with the operation of any public-school, public-school bus, or public- school bus stop.

## Rule 20 – Incitement of Student

A student shall not incite, advise, or counsel others to engage in prohibited acts.

## Rule 21 – Falsifying Reports of Alleged Inappropriate Behavior by Teacher/School Personnel

A student shall not falsify, misrepresent, omit, or erroneously report information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior of a teacher, administrator, or other school employees toward a student.

## Rule 22 – Acts of Misconduct

A student may be suspended for acts of misconduct, not specifically cited herein, that are deemed to affect the health and safety of other students or school personnel and/or disrupt the educational process.

## Rule 23 - Gambling

A student shall not gamble or solicit others to gamble:

A On the school grounds at any time;
B Off the school grounds at a school activity, function or event; or
C Under the jurisdiction of school district transportation.

Gambling includes betting on any game or event, shooting dice, matching or other games of chance played for money and/or things of value. Participating in a raffle or bingo game sponsored by a school-related support group such as a PTA or Booster Club will not violate this rule when the student is accompanied by his or her parent or guardian or by another parent who has permission in writing from the student's parent or guardian to supervise that student at the fundraiser.

## Rule 24 – Academic Integrity

Students must be honest and submit only their own original work. Cheating, forgery and plagiarism are strictly prohibited. Examples of violations of this rule include, but are not limited to:

A. Copying or "borrowing" from another source and submitting it as one's own work
B. Seeking or accepting unauthorized assistance on tests, projects or other assignments
C. Fabricating data or resources
D. Providing or receiving test questions in advance without permission
E. Working collaboratively with other students when individual work is expected
F. Forging signatures or altering grades

Given that academic integrity is an expectation of all students, consequences may be applied if cheating incidences occur on any work submitted by students in an event or contest or during any athletic or other competition in which they represent the school system.

## Rule 25 - Counterfeit Currency

Any attempted use of imitation currency produced without the sanction of the governmental authority is prohibited.

## Rule 26 - Recording Student Fights or other Misbehavior is Prohibited

Possession of a personal electronic device by a student at school during school hours is a privilege that may be forfeited by any student who breaks a District rule or otherwise abuses the privilege. The use of a personal electronic device for non-educational purposes including but not limited to the recording of District staff or students without their express permission is prohibited.

Students are not permitted to access personal electronic devices while on school premises during school hours, including but not limited to cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, e-readers, headphones, earbuds, and other devices with functionalities such as wireless communication, internet access, messaging, video recording, gaming, social media access, or data transmission during school hours. It is prohibited for any student to use a personal electronic device to record other students breaking District rules, including but not limited to recording student altercations or fights, and recording other students' misbehavior will subject the student to disciplinary action at the Principal's discretion.

## Rule 27 – Student Personal Electronic Devices Prohibited – "Bell-to-Bell"

Students are not permitted to access personal electronic devices while on school premises during school hours, including but not limited to cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, e-readers, headphones, earbuds, and other devices with functionalities such as wireless communication, internet access, messaging, video recording, gaming, social media access, or data transmission during school hours. Any student found in violation of this policy and/or its procedures during the school day shall be subject to progressive discipline consequences.

This policy applies to all students on school premises, during school hours. At the discretion of each school's Principal, with prior permission, devices may be accessed during school day activities, such as trips, athletic events, or extracurricular activities. Personal devices may be accessed on school transportation, before and after school hours.

A student whose Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or medical plan explicitly mandates the use of a personal electronic device shall be permitted access to the device as necessary to fulfill the requirements of the respective program or plan. Parents wishing to reach their child during school hours may contact the respective school's front office.

## Rule 28 –Students Must Comply With Acceptable Use Board Policy IFBG

Students who violate the Board Policy IFBG regarding internet use will receive a disciplinary consequence at the discretion of the school administrator.

Students are prohibited from accessing social media platforms through the use of computer equipment, communications services, or internet access that is operated, owned, leased, and made available to students by the District, except with prior documented permission and exactly as authorized by school personnel, for the exclusive purpose of accessing and utilizing age-appropriate educational resources, or under the supervision of such school personnel, and during the course of a school-related activity.

## Teacher and Principal Removal of Student

The Superintendent fully supports the authority of Principals and teachers to remove a student from the classroom pursuant to Georgia law at O.C.G.A. §20-2-738.

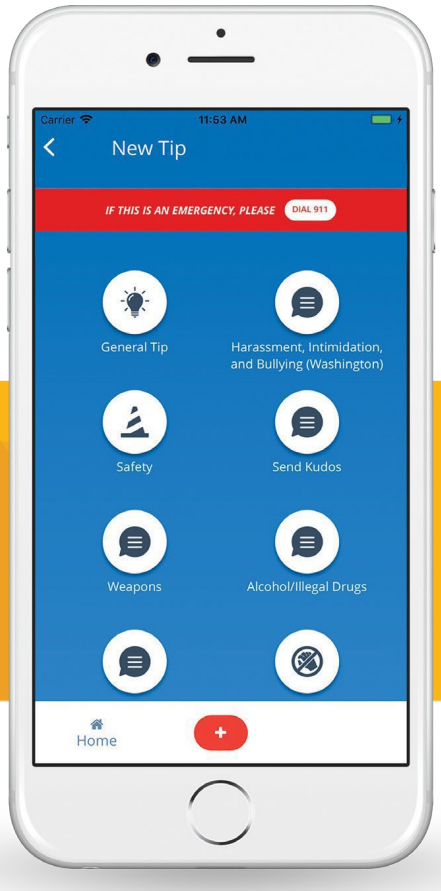
# NOTES

VectorSolutions™
Vector Alert

Muscogee County School District

# Report It

Vector Alert is our district's tip reporting service. If you have information about a threat to our safety, do your part and report it! And remember, you can remain anonymous.




## SUBMIT USING OUR APP

Available on the iPhone App Store

ANDROID APP ON Google play

## FOR EMERGENCIES, PLEASE CALL 911

## EASY WAYS TO REPORT

Visit the website
**http://1897.alert1.us**

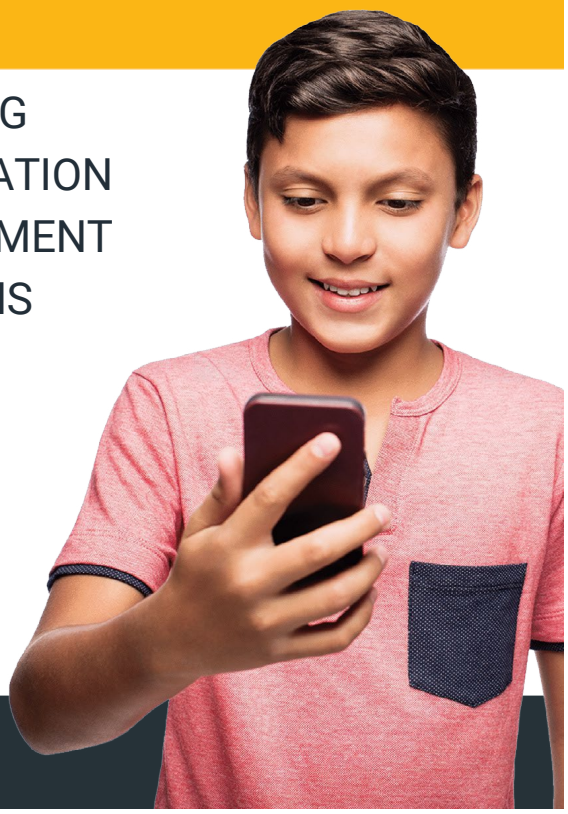
Email your Tip to
**1897@alert1.us**

Call to report your tip
**762.583.9079**

Text your Tip to
**762.583.9079**

## REPORT ON:

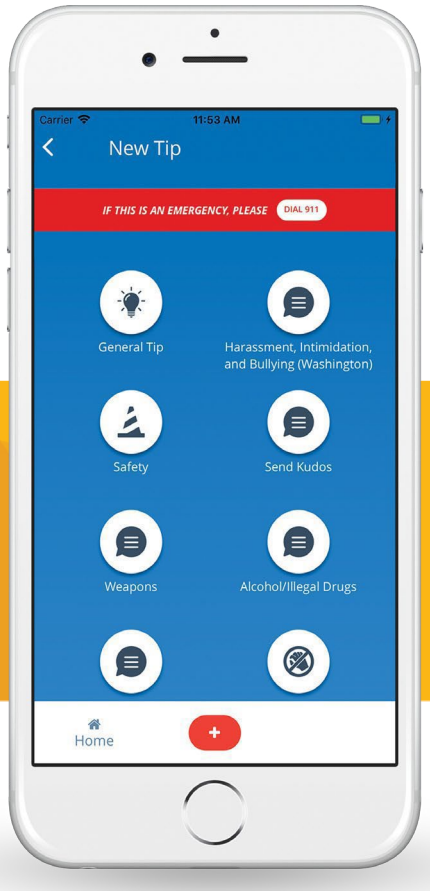
- BULLYING
- INTIMIDATION
- HARASSMENT
- WEAPONS
- DRUGS
- OTHER



VectorSolutions™
Vector Alert

Muscogee County School District

# ¡Denúncielo!




Vector Alert es el servicio de denuncias de nuestro distrito. Si tienes información sobre una amenaza a nuestra seguridad, ¡haz tu parte y denúnciala! Y recuerda que puedes permanecer en el anonimato.

## ENVÍA CON NUESTRA APLICACIÓN

Available on the iPhone App Store

ANDROID APP ON Google play

## EN CASO DE EMERGENCIAS, LLAMA AL 911

## FORMAS FÁCILES DE DENUNCIAR

Visita el sitio web
**http://1897.alert1.us**

Envía un correo electrónico para hacer tu denuncia
**1897@alert1.us**

Llama para hacer tu denuncia
**762.583.9079**

Envía un mensaje de texto para hacer tu denuncia
**762.583.9079**

## DENUNCIA:

- BULLYING
- INTIMIDACIÓN
- ACOSO
- ARMAS
- DROGAS
- OTRO

CRIME STOPPERS

**Call in your Anonymous tips to (706) 653-3188**

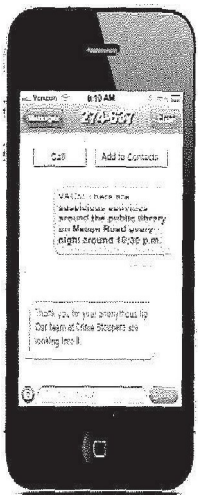
**Scan the Bar Code to Submit your Anonymous tip**

CRIME STOPPERS

Crime Doesn't Pay ... But Crime Stoppers Does!

**Text VACS plus your message to 274637 (CRIMES).**

Standard rates may apply



# Our Mission

To inspire and equip all students to achieve unlimited potential.

# Our Vision

The Muscogee County School District is a Beacon of Educational Excellence where all are known, valued and inspired.

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**Muscogee County School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender, disability status, or age in its programs and activities. It provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.**

Additional information about the District's anti-discrimination policies, procedures, coordinators is provided inside this Handbook.