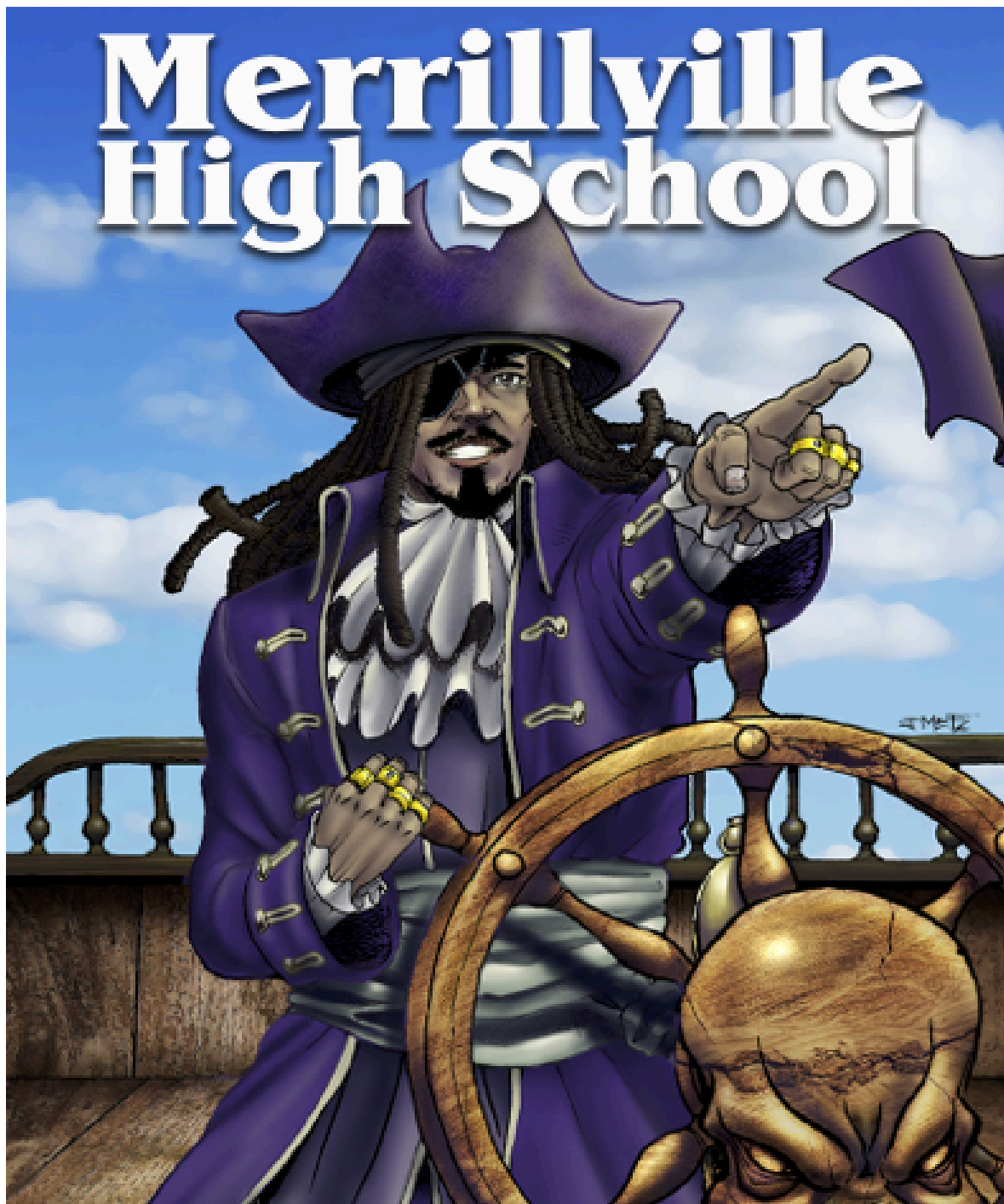




2026-2027
Student Handbook

Vision Statement
EVERY CHILD. EVERY DAY. WHATEVER IT TAKES.



2026-2027
STUDENT HANDBOOK

MERRILLVILLE HIGH SCHOOL
276 East 68th Place
Merrillville, IN 46410
(219)650-5307

Property of:_____

Address:_____

Phone #:_____

In case of emergency, please notify:

Name:_____ Phone #:_____

Merrillville Community School Corporation

2026 - 2027 School Calendar

<u>August, 2026</u> C 16, S 14 <u>September, 2026</u> C 21, S 21 <u>October, 2026</u> C 17, S 17 <u>November, 2026</u> C 18, S K-6=16, 7-12=17 <u>December, 2026</u> C 14, S 14 <u>January, 2027</u> C 19, S 19 Trimester 1 = 62 Trimester 2 = 59 Trimester 3 = 59	<u>August</u> 10 Organization Day/Conference on Instruction Students do not attend Aug 10 or 11 11 No Students / Teacher Work Day Only 12 Student 1st Day of School 25 AM at School; PM at Home E-Learning <u>September</u> 7 No School / Labor Day 8 AM at School; PM at Home E-Learning 8 Gr 9-12 Parent/Teacher Conf 3:30-6:30pm 22 AM at School; PM at Home E-Learning 22 Gr 7-8 Parent/Teacher Conf 3:30-6:30pm 25 1st Grading Period Ends (32 days) <u>October</u> 13 AM at School; PM at Home E-Learning 19-23 No School / Fall Break (Oct 19-23) 27 AM at School; PM at Home E-Learning <u>November</u> 3 Election Day / E-Learning Day 13 2nd Grading Period/Trimester 1 Ends (30 days) 16 No Students / Teacher Work Day Only 17 K-6 Parent/Teacher Conf 12:30-7:30pm 17 K-6 students DO NOT attend school 25-27 No School / Thanksgiving Holiday <u>December</u> 8 AM at School; PM at Home E-Learning 8 Gr 9-12 Parent/Teacher Conf 3:30 - 6:30pm 21-Jan 1 No School / Winter Holiday Dec 21-Jan 1 <u>January</u> 4 Return from Winter Holiday 12 AM at School; PM at Home E-Learning 12 Gr 7-8 Parent/Teacher Conf 3:30 - 6:30pm 15 3rd Grading Period Ends (31 days) 18 No School / Dr. Martin Luther King Day 26 AM at School; PM at Home E-Learning <u>February</u> 9 AM at School; PM at Home E-Learning 15 No School / President's Day 23 AM at School; PM at Home E-Learning 26 4th Grading Period/Trimester 2 Ends (28 days) <u>March</u> 1 Gr K-6 Regular School Day 1 Gr 7-12 No Students/Gr 7-12 Teacher Work Day 9 AM at School; PM at Home E-Learning 22-26 No School / Spring Break Mar 22-26 29 Return from Spring Break <u>April</u> 1 Gr 9-12 Parent/Teacher Conf 3:30 - 6:30pm 13 AM at School; PM at Home E-Learning 13 Gr 7-8 Parent/Teacher Conf 3:30 - 6:30pm 16 5th Grading Period Ends (29 days) 27 AM at School; PM at Home E-Learning <u>May</u> 4 Election Day / E-Learning Day 28 MHS Commencement/Graduation 28 6th Grading Period/Trimester 3 Ends (30 days) 28 Students Last Day of School unless make-up days are needed 28 Teacher Last Day unless make-up days are needed End of school year after May 28 may be used as make-up days if needed Merrillville High School Start Time: 7:30am - End Time 2:15pm Pierce Middle School Start Time: 7:30am - End Time 2:15pm Merrillville Intermediate School Start Time: 9:15am - End Time 3:45pm Elementary Schools Start Time: 8:25am - End Time 3:05pm	<u>February, 2027</u> C 19, S 19 <u>March, 2027</u> C 18, S K-6=18, 7-12=17 <u>April, 2027</u> C 22, S 22 <u>May, 2027</u> C 20, S 20 <u>June, 2027</u> C 0, S 0 C 184, K-6 180, 7-12 180 = First Day of School for Students = No School for Students and teachers = End of Grading Period = Parent / Teacher Conferences = Teacher Contract Day / No Students = at home e-learning
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Revised and Board
Approved April 21, 2026

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FOREWORD

MERRILLVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION

At the crossroads of Northwest Indiana, the Merrillville Community School Corporation creates a hometown feeling in a metropolitan area. This sprawling school community, nestled in comfortable neighborhood settings, offers attractive, well-maintained and safe schools and a comprehensive curriculum with state-of-the art technology. A wide range of educational programs and activities are equally available to all from preschoolers to senior citizens. Families are woven into a tapestry representing various ethnic, racial and religious traditions united by the common bond of seeking a quality education for the community.

People feel a close connection to the school system due to the emphasis on communication. Communication is the core that allows for a collaborative relationship among the school staff, parents and community. These relationships foster and support the learning experiences that challenge each student at a level appropriate to the individual's needs and interests.

Merrillville has long enjoyed a reputation for the professional competence and character of its faculty, staff and administration. The professional staff understands and accepts personal responsibility for achieving the mission of the school corporation. The school system is committed to designing an organization of learning that seeks continuous improvement and quality, resulting in highest student achievement.

Clearly written goals, aligned with rigorous academic standards, have been established that go far beyond the minimum standards required by the Indiana Department of Education. These goals also focus on developing independent, life-long learners and responsible, productive citizens.

Learning environments throughout the school corporation are energized by a sense of awe, curiosity, and enthusiasm generated by knowledgeable, caring adults who ignite and sustain the desire to learn. Students are inspired by teachers who use a wide range of teaching methods to ensure that students are active learners. Students find the content of their subjects to be meaningful and applicable to the next stage of their development as learners. Each student is motivated to take ownership for learning resulting in the mastery of basic skills, literacy in a wide range of subjects. And proficiency in the use of technology.

Students are able to make intelligent academic, personal and career choices as a result of individual counseling and community-based learning opportunities. Career exploration activities are provided through internships and mentoring with local business people, civic leaders and government officials. Other interests are pursued through participation in curricular and co-curricular activities. Upon graduation, students are then prepared to further their vocational and academic goals leading to productive and satisfying career choices.

Parents are actively involved in the education of their children and have entered into a highly functional partnership with the schools. The school system provides excellent communication to homes so that parents feel fully informed about their student's educational plan and progress toward its fulfillment. Exemplary programs are available to parents who seek more knowledge and skills related to effective, responsible parenting. Parents take responsibility for knowing and supporting school policies and classroom standards. They establish and maintain high expectations for scholarship and citizenship. Parents enthusiastically support their students in activities by attending school programs and events. They further support the schools by working as volunteers in a wide variety of ways that enrich the school district's capacity to provide opportunities for all its students.

Citizens served by the Merrillville Schools take pride in the cultural diversity of their school community. Individuals respect the heritage and traditions of the many groups living compatible together. People feel their school system provides equal opportunities for all, values everyone's input and is fair and just.

The Merrillville Community School Corporation exists to uphold this vision.

CORPORATION VISION STATEMENT

Every child. Every day. Whatever it takes.

MISSION STATEMENT

Merrillville Community School Corporation:

- Creates quality learning experiences by setting standards that engage students to reach their highest potential
- Provides learning environments that are enhanced through meaningful relationships that give students a global perspective
 - Empowers students to believe they can be successful

GOALS FOR STUDENTS, PARENTS, COMMUNITY

STUDENTS:

1. Communicate effectively utilizing the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.
2. Understand and apply both practical and analytical concepts and skills in mathematics and science.
3. Demonstrate higher-order thinking, goal-setting and problem-solving skills through analysis, synthesis, conceptual application and evaluation.
4. Demonstrate honesty, respect for others, respect for property and respect for our environment.
5. Demonstrate work habits such as punctuality, reliability, perseverance and good conduct essential for academic and employment success.
6. Develop a positive self-image.
7. Engage in independent and cooperative learning activities.
8. Understand and apply the rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship in a democracy.
9. Understand and appreciate the importance of fine and practical arts.
10. Exhibit a positive attitude towards lifetime fitness and wellness.
11. Understand other cultures, both past and present, and the growing interdependence of all nations.
12. Explore basic career processes involving aptitude/ability assessments; demonstrate skills necessary in utilization of career information services.
13. Know and comprehend significant people, places, events and concepts associated with the development of the American political and economic system.

PARENTS:

1. Participate in programs designed to help parents support the intellectual, emotional and physical development of their children.
2. Provide a home environment, which encourages students' academic effort and achievement.

COMMUNITY:

1. Utilize school system resources for education, vocational and recreational needs.
2. Support school activities and provide assistance where needed in both academic and extracurricular areas.

The Merrillville High School Student Handbook has been written to help students and their parents/guardians to become aware of and to understand the guidelines, regulations, and rules which are in place at MHS. Students are encouraged to take the time to read this handbook and to discuss its contents with parents/guardians.

Students are encouraged also to take advantage of the various opportunities available here at Merrillville, both academically and in our extracurricular programs. It is hoped that each student will grow intellectually and emotionally during their years at MHS and that each student will have fun and see MHS as a positive place with which to be associated.

It is hoped that the MHS handbook will help each student to work within a positive atmosphere and to contribute to an atmosphere conducive to learning. Best wishes are extended to all students enrolled at MHS.

PLEASE READ, SIGN AND RETURN THE FOLLOWING

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND VERIFICATION

Indiana State law requires that we request a student's parent or legal guardian, and any student in grade 9-12 to acknowledge in writing that they have received a copy of the school handbook containing the disciplinary policy.

Students: Please complete the form below, tear out, and return to the school.

I acknowledge and verify that I have received and am aware of the policies, rules and procedures contained in the Merrillville High School Handbook, including the Co-Curricular Rules and Policies, the Computer Users Code of Ethics and the Extracurricular Requirements.

Student's Signature: _____ **Grade**_____

We as parents or guardian of: _____

(PRINT) Student's Name

I acknowledge and verify that we have received and are aware of the policies, rules and procedures contained in the Merrillville High School Handbook, including the Co-Curricular Rules and Policies, the Computer Users Code of Ethics and the Extracurricular Requirements.

Parent/Guardian Signature:_____ **Date:**_____

DRUG TESTING PROGRAM CONSENT FORM

I have received, read, and understand a copy of “The Merrillville Random Drug Testing Policy”. I also have read and understand the “Pledge” as stated on pages 18-19. Having this information at my disposal,

I, _____ will participate in this program and do, hereby, voluntarily agree to subject to its terms. In an effort to promote and preserve the educational value of extracurricular activities and to set an example for others in an effort to promote a student environment free of drug use, I accept the method of obtaining urine samples, testing, and analysis of such specimen and all other aspects of this program. I also agree to cooperate in furnishing urine specimens that may be required if my name is randomly selected. I further agree and consent to the disclosure of the sampling, testing, and results provided for in this program. This consent is given pursuant to all state and federal privacy statutes, and is consent to disclosure of such test records and results to the extent of disclosure authorized in the program.

Custodial Parent/Guardian Signature

Student Signature

Address

Date

NOTE: THIS FORM MUST BE RETURNED TO THE COACH, SPONSOR, OR ADMINISTRATOR BEFORE PARTICIPATING IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES OR OBTAINING A SCHOOL DRIVING PERMIT.

Revised and Presented: 5/6/08

Adopted: 5/20/08

Revised and Presented: 10/16/13

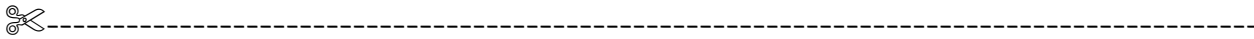
Adopted: 11/5/13

PARENTAL OPT-OUT PROCEDURE REGARDING MILITARY ACCESS TO STUDENT INFORMATION

Unless parents opt out, high schools are required to release student information that includes student name, address, and listed or published telephone number. Parents may elect to remove their child's name, address, and telephone number from the student information list. According to School Board Policy 5.47:

Indiana law requires a high school to provide access to student directory information to recruiting representatives of the military services. Military services include the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Army, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Marine Corps, the U.S. Navy and any reserve component of these military forces, any service academy of these military forces, the Indiana Air National Guard, and the Indiana Army National Guard. Student directory information for purposes of this requirement is the student's name, address and listed or published telephone number. A parent or student has the option to restrict the release of such information to the military service recruiting representatives upon written request to the high school principal.

Under federal law, the school corporation is required to release to military recruiters upon request a secondary student's name, address, and telephone listing. The parent of the student has the right to request in writing that such information not be released to military recruiters. (*Legal reference 20 U.S.C. 7908; 10 U.S.C. 503*)



Return this portion to the Merrillville High School Guidance Office **only** if you wish to opt out of providing directory information to the Military Services. If you wish to opt out, this form must be returned no later than October 1.

(Please Print)

Student Name: _____

Student Grade: _____

Parent Name: _____

I wish to have my child's directory information withheld from submission to the Military Services.

(Parent/Legal Guardian Signature)

(Date)

RESPONSIBLE USE POLICY CONSENT

Students at MCSC will be given usernames, email addresses, and passwords that will allow them access to the school network and the internet. Access to the network and internet is a privilege, and failure to comply with the responsible use policy will result in the loss of this privilege.

All students are expected to follow the rules and regulations documented in the RUP. Misuse of technology will be reported to the building principals, and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

Parents/Guardian

I have read and understand the Responsible Use Policy and the rules it lays out. I agree to allow my student access to use technology as stated.

Signature: _____

Merrillville Community School Corporation

STUDENT TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE AND SAFETY

Technology has fundamentally altered the ways in which information is accessed, communicated, and transferred in society. As a result, educators are continually adapting their means and methods of instruction, and the way they approach student learning, to incorporate the vast, diverse, and unique resources available through the Internet. The School Board provides Technology Resources (as defined in Bylaw 0100) to support the educational and professional needs of its students and staff. With respect to students, Corporation Technology Resources afford them the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge to learn effectively and live productively in a digital world. The Board provides students with access to the Internet for limited educational purposes only and utilizes online educational services/apps to enhance the instruction delivered to its students. The Corporation's computer network and Internet system do not serve as a public access service or a public forum, and the Board imposes reasonable restrictions on its use consistent with its limited educational purpose.

The Board regulates the use of Corporation Technology Resources by principles consistent with applicable local, State, and Federal laws, the Corporation's educational mission, and articulated expectations of student conduct as delineated in the Student Code of Conduct. This policy, its related administrative guidelines and the Student Code of Conduct govern students' use of Corporation Technology Resources and students' personal communication devices when they are connected to the Corporation computer network, Internet connection, and/or online educational services/apps, or when used while the student is on Corporation-owned property or at a Corporation-sponsored activity (see Policy 5136).

Users are prohibited from engaging in actions that are illegal (such as libel, slander, vandalism, harassment, theft, plagiarism, inappropriate access, and the like) or unkind (such as personal attacks, invasion of privacy, injurious comment, and the like) when using Corporation Technology Resources. Because its Technology Resources are not unlimited, the Board also has instituted restrictions aimed at preserving these resources, such as placing limits on use of bandwidth, storage space, and printers.

Users have no right or expectation to privacy when using Corporation Technology Resources (including, but not limited to, privacy in the content of their personal files, emails, and records of their online activity when using the Corporation's computer network and/or Internet connection).

First, the Corporation may not be able to limit access technologically, through its Technology Resources, to only those services and resources that have been authorized for the purpose of instruction, study, and research related to the curriculum. Unlike in the past, when educators and community members had the opportunity to review and screen materials to assess their appropriateness for supporting and enriching the curriculum according to adopted guidelines and reasonable selection criteria (taking into account the varied instructional needs, learning styles, abilities, and developmental levels of the students who would be exposed to them), access to the Internet, because it serves as a gateway to any publicly available file server in the world, opens classrooms and students to electronic information resources that may not have been screened by educators for use by students of various ages.

Pursuant to Federal law, the Board has implemented technology protection measures that protect against (e.g., filter or block) access to visual displays/depictions/materials that are obscene, constitute child pornography, and/or are harmful to minors, as defined by the Children's Internet Protection Act. At the discretion of the Board or the Superintendent, the technology protection measures may be configured to protect against access to other material considered inappropriate for students to access. The Board also utilizes software and/or hardware to monitor online activity of students to restrict access to child pornography and other material that is obscene, objectionable, inappropriate and/or harmful to minors. The technology protection measures may not be disabled at any time that students may be using the Corporation Technology Resources if such disabling will cease to protect against access

to materials that are prohibited under the Children's Internet Protection Act. Any student who attempts to disable the technology protection measures will be subject to discipline.

The Superintendent or Designee may temporarily or permanently unblock access to websites or online education services/apps containing appropriate material if access to such sites has been blocked inappropriately by the technology protection measures. The determination of whether material is appropriate or inappropriate shall be based on the content of the material and the intended use of the material, not on the protection actions of the technology protection measures.

Parents/Guardians are advised that a determined user may be able to gain access to services and/or resources on the Internet that the Board has not authorized for educational purposes. In fact, it is impossible to guarantee students will not gain access through the Internet to information and communications that they and/or their parents may find inappropriate, offensive, objectionable or controversial. Parents of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using the Internet.

Pursuant to Federal law, students shall receive education about the following:

- A. safety and security while using email, chat rooms, social media, and other forms of direct electronic communications
- B. the dangers inherent with the online disclosure of personally identifiable information
- C. the consequences of unauthorized access (e.g., "hacking", "harvesting", "digital piracy", "data mining", etc.), cyberbullying, and other unlawful or inappropriate activities by students online
- D. unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personally identifiable information regarding minors

Staff members shall provide instruction for their students regarding the appropriate use of technology and online safety and security as specified above. Furthermore, staff members will monitor the online activities of students while at school.

Monitoring may include, but is not necessarily limited to, visual observations of online activities during class sessions or use of specific monitoring tools to review browser history and network, server, and computer logs.

Building principals are responsible for providing training so that Ed-Tech users under their supervision are knowledgeable about this policy and its accompanying guidelines. The Board expects that staff members will provide guidance and instruction to students in the appropriate use of Corporation Technology Resources. Such training shall include, but not be limited to, education concerning appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social media and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response. Users of Corporation Technology Resources (and their parents if they are minors) are required to sign a written agreement to abide by the terms and conditions of this policy and its accompanying guidelines.

Students will be assigned a school email account that they are required to utilize for all school-related electronic communications, including those to staff members, peers, and individuals and/or organizations outside the Corporation with whom they are communicating for school-related projects and assignments.

Students are responsible for good behavior when using Corporation Technology Resources - i.e., behavior comparable to that expected of students when they are in classrooms, in school hallways, on other school premises and at school-sponsored events. Communications on Education Technology are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communication apply. The Corporation does not approve any use of its Technology Resources that is not authorized by or conducted strictly in compliance with this policy and its accompanying guidelines.

Students may use Corporation Technology Resources to access or use social media only if it is done for educational purposes in accordance with their teacher's approved plan for such use.

Users who disregard this policy and its accompanying guidelines may have their use privileges suspended or revoked, and disciplinary action taken against them. Users are personally responsible and liable both civilly and criminally, for uses of Technology Resources that are not authorized by this Policy and its accompanying guidelines.

The Board designates the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum/Instruction and the Director of Technology as the administrator(s) responsible for initiating, implementing, and enforcing this Policy and its accompanying guidelines as they apply to students' use of Corporation Technology Resources.

STUDENT CHROMEBOOK USE POLICY

Chromebooks will be used in the Merrillville Community School Corporation and may be used at school and/or at home. This document will provide parents/guardians with information on policies, procedures, digital citizenship, and device care.

Chromebooks are a necessary part of education for all of our students in grades K-12 and are as essential as classroom textbooks. The Merrillville School Corporation will work to make the environment as safe as possible while using the Chromebook at school or at home.

All student access to the Internet will be filtered using our filtering product, which will be used both at school and on any Chromebook taken home. Teachers will also have access to adjust the filtering levels in their classrooms and to monitor Chromebook use during the day.

It will be the student's responsibility to report any problems with the device to their teacher. Students will receive instructions on how to use and care for the device. They will also be taught about positive digital citizenship.

Students who misuse their Chromebook or anyone else's in any way may face disciplinary consequences in accordance with the student handbook.

Policies

1. The Chromebook is the property of the Merrillville Community School Corporation (MCSC). It may be confiscated and inspected at any time. The student should have NO expectation of privacy of any materials found on any device owned by MCSC.
2. MCSC Chromebooks are provided as an educational tool for schoolwork.
3. The Chromebook comes equipped with both a camera and video capabilities. Students must request permission before recording an individual or group. The recording must be used appropriately for educational purposes. MCSC reserves all rights regarding the recording and/or publication of any student's or staff member's work or image. Students must obtain permission from the school to publish a photograph or video of any school-related activity.
4. Chromebooks must remain free of any writing, drawing, stickers, or labels that are not the property of the MCSC. District-affixed labels and tags shall not be removed from the Chromebook.
5. The adding or deleting of software is not permitted by students. The software will be installed/deleted through the Technology Department.
6. A student will not access another student's account, device, or electronic work.
7. The Chromebook will not be used to access, share, or download any documents, images, or material that are illegal to possess. Chromebooks will not be used to gain access to restricted network resources or to cause harm or interruption to any and all network services.

Procedures

1. Chromebooks will be assigned to the student at the beginning of the school year. The student is responsible for that device throughout the year.
2. Students and parents will be held financially responsible for any damage to a device.
3. Student devices staying at school will be picked up in the classroom and returned to the cart before the student leaves for the day. Students must report any damage to their device to their teacher immediately.
4. Student devices that are take-home will be kept with the student throughout the day and will be taken home when the student leaves.
 - a. Device must be brought to school every day
 - b. Device must be charged and ready to go when it gets to school
 - c. Devices must be kept in the case provided
5. It is the student's responsibility to keep the device secure and follow all policies. Students must report any damage to their device immediately.

Digital Citizenship

Students will receive Digital Citizenship training throughout the school year. It is very important for our students and parents/guardians to understand the importance of being safe on the internet. The goal is for our students to engage in learning inside and outside the classroom using technology, with an understanding of their digital footprint.

1. Inappropriate websites and images, including but not limited to: guns, weapons, inappropriate language, threatening language, drug, alcohol, or gang-related images, are not permitted and subject to classroom/school consequences.
2. All students should recognize and guard their personal and private information. While on the Internet, students shall not reveal personal information, including a home address or phone number, or the address or phone numbers of other students.
3. Social Media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. are not allowed unless being used with direct supervision of a classroom teacher for a specific project.

Care of the Chromebook

1. No food or drink is allowed next to your Chromebooks while it is in use.
2. Cords, cables, and removable storage devices must be inserted carefully into the Chromebook.
3. Students should never carry their Chromebook while the screen is open.
4. Chromebooks should be shut down when not in use to conserve battery life.
5. Chromebooks should never be shoved into a locker or wedged into a book bag, as this may break the screen.
6. Do not expose your Chromebook to extreme temperatures or direct sunlight for extended periods of time. Extreme heat or cold may cause damage to the laptop.
7. Always bring your laptop to room temperature prior to turning it on.
8. The protective shell of the Chromebook will only provide basic protection from everyday use. It is not designed to prevent damage from drops or abusive handling.

Screen Care

1. The Chromebook screen can be damaged if subjected to rough treatment. The screens are sensitive to damage from excessive pressure.
 - a. Do not lean on top of the Chromebook.
 - b. Do not place anything near the Chromebook that could put pressure on the screen.
 - c. Do not poke the screen.
 - d. Do not place anything on the keyboard before closing the lid.
2. Clean the screen with a soft, dry anti-static or micro-fiber cloth. Do not use window cleaner or any type of liquid or water on the Chromebook. You can also purchase individually packaged, pre-moistened eyeglass lens-cleaning tissues to clean the screen. These are very convenient and relatively inexpensive.

Part Repair/Replacement Pricing

Display	\$25.00
Touch Screen Display	\$50.00
Keyboard	\$25.00
AC Adapter	\$20.00
Touchpad	\$20.00
LCD Bezel	\$25.00
Replacement Chromebook	\$150.00

CORPORATION-ISSUED STUDENT EMAIL ACCOUNT

Students assigned a School Corporation-issued email account are required to utilize it for all school-related electronic communications, including those to staff members and individuals and/or organizations outside the Corporation with whom they are communicating for school-related projects and assignments. Further, as directed and authorized by their teachers, they shall use their assigned Corporation-issued email account when signing up/registering for access to various online educational services, including mobile applications/apps that will be utilized by the student for educational purposes.

This policy and any corresponding guidelines serve to establish a framework for students' proper use of email as an educational tool.

Personal email accounts on providers other than the Corporation's email system may be blocked at any time if concerns for network security, SPAM, or virus protection arise. Students are expected to exercise reasonable judgment and prudence and take appropriate precautions to prevent viruses from entering the Corporation's network when opening or forwarding any emails or attachments to emails that originate from unknown sources.

Students shall not send or forward mass emails.

Students are encouraged to keep their inbox and folders organized by regularly reviewing email messages and purging emails once they are read and no longer needed for school.

Unauthorized Email

The School Board does not authorize the use of its Technology Resources, including its computer network ("network"), to accept, transmit, or distribute unsolicited bulk email sent through the Internet to network email accounts. In addition, Internet email sent, or caused to be sent, to or through the network that makes use of or contains invalid or forged headers, invalid or non-existent domain names, or other means of deceptive addressing will be deemed to be counterfeit. Any attempt to send or cause such counterfeit email to be sent to or through the network is unauthorized. Similarly, email that is relayed from any third party's email servers without the permission of that third party, or which employs similar techniques to hide or obscure the source of the email, is also an

unauthorized use of the network. The Board does not authorize the harvesting or collection of network email addresses for the purposes of sending unsolicited email. The Board reserves the right to take all legal and technical steps available to prevent unsolicited bulk email or other unauthorized email from entering, utilizing, or remaining within the network. Nothing in this policy is intended to grant any right to transmit or send email to, or through, the network. The Board's failure to enforce this policy in every instance in which it might have application does not amount to a waiver of its rights.

Unauthorized use of the network in connection with the transmission of unsolicited bulk email, including the transmission of counterfeit email, may result in civil and criminal penalties against the sender and/or possible disciplinary action.

Authorized Use and Training

Pursuant to Policy 7540.03, students using the Corporation's email system shall acknowledge their review of, and intent to comply with, the Corporation's policy on acceptable use and safety by signing and submitting Form 7540.03 F1.

PLEDGE AND CONSENT

As a student participant in any extracurricular activities at Merrillville High School or as a student who is allowed to drive to school, I recognize and accept the fact that my participation is a privilege and an opportunity for me to make a significant contribution to my school, my community, and my personal development. Representing Merrillville Schools places many responsibilities upon me as an individual. Many people, including fellow students, faculty members, sponsors, coaches, school officials, and parents are giving many hours of time and a great deal of financial support to provide fine programs for me. In consideration of this, I agree to live by and conduct myself in accordance with the following pledge.

1. I will conduct myself so as to reflect only honor upon myself, my fellow students, my school, my parents, and my community at all times in all places.
2. I will keep myself mentally and physically alert so that I can contribute my best efforts and benefit myself, my fellow participants, my school, and my community.
3. I will not use unlawful illicit drugs while a student of Merrillville Schools.
4. I will actively discourage the use of drugs among youth in order to achieve drug-free schools.

MERRILLVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Merrillville High School chooses to be a community that is strengthened and enriched by the diversity of our students, families and staff. Through cultivating intellectual, social and emotional growth in an inclusive environment where diverse experiences and perspectives are essential, we work to instill the belief that every person is valued for his/her intrinsic worth and is to be treated with dignity and respect. We are committed to promoting equity, literacy, creativity, and critical

thinking as essential components of the rigorous education we provide. It is our mission to implement the highest quality education built upon a strong foundation of relationships, experiences and opportunities that empower students and prepare them for their future roles in a highly competitive and adapting world.

VISION

Merrillville High School will be a school that provides each student with challenging opportunities in a culture where creativity, respect and enthusiasm for learning exist, one where all strive to be responsible, motivated citizens of strong character, one that embraces the challenge of serving the needs of our diverse community, and one that promotes a passionate commitment to a championship attitude. We are Merrillville High School, and we carry with us always, our **Pirate Pride**.

STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

As a faculty, parents and students of Merrillville High School, we believe that in order to achieve our mission, we will:

- Respect the differences, individuality, and uniqueness of others
- Cultivate strong relationships among all students and all adults
- Maintain a safe and secure learning environment, enabling all stakeholders to foster positive learning opportunities
- Recruit, hire, retain and promote the highest quality faculty, staff and administration in the state of Indiana
- Engage students in the learning process by delivering an academic program that is rigorous, relevant, and challenging to ensure that each student develops the ability to think critically and problem solve
- Nurture appreciation for creativity and the performing arts.
- Enhance student access to curriculum through interdisciplinary collaboration, diverse thought and multiple perspectives
- Infuse cutting edge technology to enhance instruction and provide connectivity beyond the classroom
- Promote a strong work ethic in meeting academic milestones in order to instill a work ethic that will serve our students in their college and career paths
- Utilize data to develop curriculum, inform policy decisions and implement positive behavior interventions
- Advocate for high quality research-based best practices in professional development for faculty, staff and administration
- Graduate students who are intellectually and socially competent; globally aware and emotionally prepared to contribute in a positive way to society

-Adopted by faculty, students and parents
MHS, Revised 2013

NONDISCRIMINATION AND ACCESS TO EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Any form of discrimination or harassment can be devastating to an individual's academic progress, social relationship, and/or personal sense of self worth.

As such, the Board of School Trustees does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including transgender status, sexual orientation and gender identity), disability, age, religion, military status, ancestry, or genetic information which are classes protected by Federal and/or State law (collectively, "Protected Classes") occurring in the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs, and/or activities, or, if initially

occurring off Corporation grounds or outside the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs, and activities, affecting the Corporation environment.

The Board also does not discriminate on the basis of Protected Classes in its employment policies and practices as they relate to students, and does not tolerate harassment of any kind.

Equal educational opportunities shall be available to all students, without regard to the Protected Classes, age (unless age is a factor necessary to the normal operation or the achievement of any legitimate objective of the program/activity), place of residence within the boundaries of the Corporation, or social or economic background, to learn through the curriculum offered in this Corporation.

Educational programs shall be designed to meet the varying needs of all students. In order to achieve the aforesaid goal, the Superintendent shall:

A. Curriculum Content

review current and proposed courses of study and textbooks to detect any bias based upon Protected Classes ascertaining whether or not supplemental materials, singly or taken as a whole, fairly depict the contribution of both genders, various races, ethnic groups, etc. toward the development of human society;

B. Staff Training

develop an ongoing program of in-service training for school personnel designed to identify and solve problems of bias based upon the Protected Classes in all aspects of the program;

C. Student Access

1. review current and proposed programs, activities, facilities, and practices to ensure that all students have equal access thereto and are not segregated on the basis of Protected Classes in any duty, work, play, classroom, or school practice, except as may be permitted under State regulations;
2. verify that facilities are made available, in accordance with Board Policy 7510 – Use of School Facilities, for non-curricular student activities that are initiated by parents or other members of the community, including but not limited to any group officially affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America or any other youth group listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society;

D. Corporation Support

verify that like aspects of the Corporation program receive like support as to staff size and compensation, purchase and maintenance of facilities and equipment, access to such facilities and equipment, and related matters;

E. Student Evaluation

verify that tests, procedures, or guidance and counseling materials, which are designed to evaluate student progress, rate aptitudes, analyze personality, or in any manner establish or tend to establish a category by which a student may be judged, are not differentiated or stereotyped on the basis of Protected Classes.

The Superintendent shall appoint and publicize the name of the Compliance Officer(s) who is/are responsible for coordinating the Corporation's efforts to comply with applicable Federal and State laws and regulations, including the Corporation's duty to address in a prompt and equitable manner any inquiries or complaints regarding discrimination or denial of equal access. The Compliance Officer(s) also shall verify that proper notice of nondiscrimination for Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (as amended), Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended), is provided to students, their parents, staff members, and the general public.

Compliance Officer(s)

The following person(s) is/are designated as the Corporation's Compliance Officer(s) and, as such, shall handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies of the Corporation and address any complaint of discrimination:

Executive Director of Student Support Services
6701 Delaware Street
Merrillville, IN 46410
219-650-5300
cwaugh@mvsc.k12.in.us

Reports and Complaints of Unlawful Discrimination and Retaliation

Students are encouraged to promptly report incidents of unlawful discrimination and/or retaliation occurring in the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs and/or activities, or, if initially occurring off Corporation grounds or outside the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs and activities, affecting the Corporation environment to an administrator, supervisor, or other Corporation-level official so that the Board may address the conduct. Any administrator, supervisor, or other Corporation-level official who receives such a complaint shall file it with a Compliance Officer within two (2) business days.

Students who believe they have been unlawfully discriminated and/or retaliated against in the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs and/or activities, or, if initially occurring off Corporation grounds or outside the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs and activities, affecting the Corporation environment are entitled to utilize the complaint process set forth below. Initiating a complaint, whether formally or informally, in the Corporation and/or a concurrent criminal complaint will not adversely affect the complaining individual's educational status or opportunity. While there are no time limits for initiating complaints under this policy, individuals should make every effort to file a complaint as soon as possible after the conduct occurs while the facts are known and potential witnesses are available.

The Compliance Officer(s) will be available during regular school/work hours to discuss concerns related to unlawful discrimination/retaliation. The Compliance Officer(s) shall accept complaints of unlawful discrimination/retaliation directly from any member of the Corporation community or a visitor to the Corporation, and receive complaints that are initially filed with a school building administrator, supervisor or other Corporation-level official. Upon receipt of a complaint, either directly or through a school building administrator or other Corporation-level official, a Compliance Officer will begin either an informal or formal process (depending on the request of the person alleging the discrimination/retaliation or the nature of the alleged discrimination/retaliation), or designate a specific individual to conduct such a process.

The Compliance Officer will provide a copy of this policy to any person who files a complaint. In the case of a formal complaint, the Compliance Officer will prepare recommendations for the Superintendent or oversee the preparation of such recommendations by a designee. All members of the Corporation community must report incidents of discrimination/retaliation that are reported to them to the Compliance Officer within two (2) business days of learning of the incident/conduct.

Any Corporation employee who directly observes unlawful discrimination/retaliation is obligated, in accordance with this policy, to report such observations to one of the Compliance Officer(s) within two (2) business days. Additionally, any Corporation employee who observes an act of unlawful discrimination/retaliation is expected to intervene to stop the misconduct, unless circumstances make such an intervention dangerous, in which case the staff member should immediately notify other Corporation employees and/or local law enforcement officials, as necessary, to stop the misconduct. Thereafter, the Compliance Officer or designee must contact the employee within two (2) business days to advise him/her of the Corporation's intent to investigate the wrongdoing.

Complaint Procedures

Any student who believes that s/he has been subjected to unlawful discrimination or retaliation may seek resolution of his/her complaint through the procedures described below. The formal complaint procedures involve

an investigation of the individual's claims and a process for rendering a decision regarding whether the charges are substantiated at the lowest possible administrative level and in a prompt and equitable manner.

Due to the sensitivity surrounding complaints of unlawful discrimination or retaliation, timelines are flexible for initiating the complaint process; however, individuals should make every effort to file a complaint within thirty (30) calendar days after the conduct occurs. Once the formal complaint process is begun, the investigation will be completed in a timely manner (ordinarily, within fifteen (15) business days of the complaint being received).

In accordance with Federal and State law, students will be notified of their right to file an internal complaint regarding an alleged violation, misinterpretation or misapplication of Federal and/or State law pertaining to discrimination in education.

In addition, students will be notified of their right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights or the Indiana Civil Rights Commission, as well as a concurrent criminal complaint with the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction in the Corporation.

Informal Complaint Procedure

The goal of the informal complaint procedure is to quickly stop inappropriate behavior and facilitate resolution through informal means, if possible. The informal complaint procedure is provided as a less formal option for a student who believes s/he has been unlawfully discriminated or retaliated against in the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs and/or activities, or, if initially occurring off Corporation grounds or outside the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs and activities, affecting the Corporation environment. This informal procedure is not required as a precursor to the filing of a formal complaint or a concurrent criminal complaint.

The informal process is available only in those circumstances where the parties (the alleged target of the discrimination/retaliation and individual(s) alleged to have engaged in the discrimination) agree to participate in it.

Students who believe that they have been unlawfully discriminated/retaliated against in the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs and/or activities, or, if initially occurring off Corporation grounds or outside the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs and activities, affecting the Corporation environment may proceed immediately to the formal complaint process and individuals who seek resolution through the informal procedure may request that the informal process be terminated at any time to move to the formal complaint process.

All complaints involving a Corporation employee or any other adult member of the Corporation community against a student will be formally investigated, and a concurrent criminal complaint shall be filed.

As an initial course of action, if an individual feels that s/he is being unlawfully discriminated/retaliated against in the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs and/or activities, or, if initially occurring off Corporation grounds or outside the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs and activities, affecting the Corporation environment and s/he is able and feels safe doing so, the individual should tell or otherwise inform the person who engaged in the allegedly discriminatory/retaliatory conduct that it is inappropriate and must stop. The complaining individual should address the alleged misconduct as soon after it occurs as possible.

A/The Compliance Officer is available to support and counsel individuals when taking this initial step or to intervene on behalf of the individual if requested to do so.

An individual who is uncomfortable or unwilling to inform the person who allegedly engaged in the unlawful conduct of his/her concerns is not prohibited from otherwise filing an informal or a formal complaint and filing a concurrent criminal complaint if s/he desires to do so.

In addition, with regard to certain types of unlawful discrimination, such as sexual discrimination, the Compliance Officer may advise against the use of the informal complaint process.

An individual who believes s/he has been unlawfully discriminated/retaliated against in the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs and/or activities, or, if initially occurring off Corporation grounds or outside the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs and activities, affecting the Corporation environment may make an informal complaint, either orally or in writing: (1) to a building administrator; (2) directly to the Compliance Officer(s); and/or (3) to the Superintendent or other Corporation-level employee.

All informal complaints must be reported to the Compliance Officer(s) who will either facilitate an informal resolution as described below or appoint another individual to facilitate an informal resolution.

The Corporation's informal complaint procedure is designed to provide students who believe they are being unlawfully discriminated against and/or retaliated against with a range of options aimed at bringing about a prompt resolution of their concerns. Depending upon the nature of the complaint and the wishes of the individual claiming unlawful discrimination/retaliation, informal resolution may involve, but not be limited to, one or more of the following:

- A. Advising the individual about how to communicate his/her concerns to the person who allegedly engaged in the discriminatory/retaliatory behavior.
- B. Distributing a copy of Policy 2260 Nondiscrimination and Access to Equal Educational Opportunity as a reminder to the individuals in the school building or office where the individual whose behavior is being questioned works or attends school.
- C. If both parties agree, the Compliance Officer may arrange and facilitate a meeting between the individual claiming discrimination/retaliation and the individual accused of engaging in the misconduct to work out a mutual resolution.

While there are no set time limits within which an informal complaint must be resolved, the Compliance Officer or designee will exercise his/her authority to attempt to resolve all informal complaints within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the informal complaint.

Parties who are dissatisfied with the results of the informal complaint process may proceed to file a formal complaint. And, as stated above, parties may request that the informal process be terminated at any time to move to the formal complaint process.

The Compliance Officer will retain all materials that are generated as part of the informal complaint process in accordance with the Board's records retention policy. (See Policy 8310 or Policy 8330)

Formal Complaint Procedure

If a complaint is not resolved through the informal complaint process, if one of the parties requested that the informal complaint process be terminated to move to the formal complaint process, or if the individual elects to file a formal complaint initially, this formal complaint process shall be implemented.

An individual who believes that s/he has been subjected to unlawful discrimination/retaliation in the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs and/or activities, or, if initially occurring off Corporation grounds or outside the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs and activities, affecting the Corporation environment (hereinafter referred to as the "Complainant"), may file a formal complaint, either orally or in writing, with an administrator, the Compliance Officer(s), Superintendent, or other Corporation-level official, as well as file a concurrent criminal complaint with the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction.

Due to the sensitivity surrounding complaints of unlawful discrimination and retaliation, timelines are flexible for initiating the complaint process; however, individuals should make every effort to file a complaint within thirty (30) calendar days after the conduct occurs.

If a Complainant informs an administrator, Superintendent, or other Corporation-level official, either orally or in writing, about any complaint of discrimination/retaliation, the employee to whom the student complains must report such information to the Compliance Officer within two (2) business days.

Throughout the course of the process, the Compliance Officer should keep the parties informed of the status of the investigation and the decision-making process.

All formal complaints must include the following information to the extent it is available: the identity of the individual believed to have engaged in, or be engaging in, the discriminatory/retaliatory conduct; a detailed description of the facts upon which the complaint is based; a list of potential witnesses; and the resolution sought by the Complainant. If the Complainant is unwilling or unable to provide a written statement including the information set forth above, the Compliance Officer shall ask for such details in an oral interview. Thereafter, the Compliance Officer will prepare a written summary of the oral interview, and the Complainant will be asked to verify the accuracy of the reported complaint by signing the document.

Upon receiving a formal complaint, the Compliance Officer will consider whether any action should be taken in the investigatory phase to protect the Complainant from further discrimination or retaliation, including, but not limited to, a change of schedule for the Complainant and/or the person who allegedly engaged in the misconduct. In making such a determination, the Compliance Officer should consult with the Complainant to assess his/her agreement to the proposed action. If the Complainant is unwilling to consent to the proposed change, the Compliance Officer may still take whatever actions s/he deems appropriate in consultation with the Superintendent.

Within two (2) business days of receiving the complaint, the Compliance Officer, or a designee, will initiate a formal investigation to determine whether the Complainant has been subjected to unlawful discrimination/retaliation.

Simultaneously, the Compliance Officer, or a designee, will inform the individual alleged to have engaged in the discriminatory or retaliatory conduct (hereinafter referred to as the "Respondent"), that a complaint has been received. The Respondent will be informed about the nature of the allegations and provided with a copy of any relevant policies and/or administrative guidelines, including this policy. The Respondent also must be informed of the opportunity to submit a written response to the complaint within five (5) business days.

Although certain cases may require additional time, the Compliance Officer, or a designee, will attempt to complete an investigation into the allegations of discrimination/retaliation within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the formal complaint. The investigation will include:

- A. interview(s) with the Complainant;
- B. interview(s) with the Respondent;
- C. interviews with any other witnesses who reasonably may be expected to have any information relevant to the allegations; and,
- D. consideration of any documentation or other information presented by the Complainant, Respondent, or any other witness that is reasonably believed to be relevant to the allegations.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Compliance Officer, or the designee, shall prepare and deliver a written report to the Superintendent that summarizes the evidence gathered during the investigation and provides recommendations based on the evidence and the definition of unlawful discrimination/retaliation as provided in Board policy and State and Federal law as to whether the Complainant has been subjected to unlawful discrimination/retaliation. The recommendations must be based upon the totality of the circumstances. In determining if discrimination or retaliation occurred, a preponderance of evidence standard will be used (i.e., it is more likely than not that unlawful discrimination/retaliation occurred).

The Compliance Officer, or the designee, should consult with the Board's legal counsel before finalizing the report to the Superintendent.

Absent extenuating circumstances, within five (5) business days of receiving the report of the Compliance Officer or the designee, the Superintendent must either issue a decision regarding whether the charges have been substantiated or request further investigation. A copy of the Superintendent's decision will be delivered to both the Complainant and the Respondent.

If the Superintendent requests additional investigation, the Superintendent must delineate the additional information that is to be gathered, and such additional investigation must be completed within five (5) business days. At the conclusion of the additional investigation, the Superintendent must issue a written decision as described above.

If the Superintendent determines the Complainant was subjected to unlawful discrimination/retaliation, s/he must identify what corrective action will be taken to stop, remedy, and prevent the recurrence of the discrimination/retaliation. The corrective action should be reasonable, timely, age-appropriate, effective, and tailored to the specific situation.

A Complainant or Respondent who is dissatisfied with the decision of the Superintendent may appeal through a signed written request to the Board within five (5) business days of his/her receipt of the Superintendent's decision.

If the Superintendent is the Respondent, the appeal process will skip the review by the Superintendent and move directly to the Board. In such circumstances, the Compliance Officer, or the designee, shall prepare and deliver a written report to the Board that summarizes the evidence gathered during the investigation and provides recommendations based on the evidence and the definition of unlawful discrimination/retaliation as provided in Board policy and State and Federal law as to whether the Complainant has been subjected to unlawful discrimination/retaliation.

The Board shall meet with the concerned parties and their representatives within twenty (20) business days of the receipt of a written request to appeal. At this meeting, the parties have the right to present evidence, including testimony and/or exhibits, to the Board in support of their position. A copy of the Board's disposition of the appeal shall be sent to each concerned party within ten (10) business days of this meeting. The decision of the Board will be final.

The Board reserves the right to investigate and resolve a complaint or report of unlawful discrimination/retaliation regardless of whether the student alleging the unlawful discrimination/retaliation pursues the complaint. The Board also reserves the right to have the formal complaint investigation conducted by an external person in accordance with this policy or in such other manner as deemed appropriate by the Board or its designee.

The Complainant and the Respondent may be represented, at his/her own cost, at any of the above-described meetings/hearings.

The right of a person to a prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint shall not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies, such as the filing of a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights or the Indiana Civil Rights Commission, or the filing of a concurrent criminal complaint. Use of the complaint procedures is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies. Furthermore, the complaint must be investigated even if a separate investigation is being conducted by another agency, including but not limited to the local police department.

Privacy/Confidentiality

The Corporation will employ all reasonable efforts to protect the rights of the Complainant, the Respondent(s), and the witnesses to the extent possible, consistent with the Corporation's legal obligations to investigate, take appropriate action, and comply with any discovery or disclosure obligations.

All records generated under the terms of this policy shall be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law. Confidentiality, however, cannot be guaranteed.

All Complainants proceeding through the formal investigation process will be advised that their identities may be disclosed to the Respondent(s).

During the course of a formal investigation, the Compliance Officer or designee will instruct each person who is interviewed about the importance of maintaining confidentiality. Any individual who is interviewed as part of an investigation is expected not to disclose to third parties any information that s/he learns and/or provides during the course of the investigation.

Remediation

In cases where the complaint investigation results in a finding that the allegation of discrimination/retaliation is substantiated, action must be taken by the Compliance Officer to remedy the past effects of such discrimination/retaliation on a student. This may include but is not limited to providing a contact person to monitor the student, providing tutoring to the student, allowing the student to retake tests or assignments, and counseling.

Sanctions and Monitoring

The Board shall vigorously enforce its prohibitions against unlawful discrimination/retaliation occurring in the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs and/or activities, or, if initially occurring off Corporation grounds or outside the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs and activities, affecting the Corporation environment by taking appropriate action reasonably calculated to stop and prevent further misconduct.

While observing the principles of due process, a violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including the discharge of an employee. All disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with applicable State law and the terms of the relevant collective bargaining agreement(s), if any. With respect to violations of this policy by Respondents who are students, disciplinary action may be imposed up to and including expulsion from school, in accordance with applicable State law. Any discipline of students with disabilities will be in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") and the Federal and State regulations implementing the IDEA.

When imposing discipline, the Superintendent shall consider the totality of the circumstances involved in the matter. In those cases where unlawful discrimination/retaliation is not substantiated, the Board may consider whether the alleged conduct nevertheless warrants discipline in accordance with other Board policies, consistent with the terms of the relevant collective bargaining agreement(s), if any, and with Federal and State laws and regulations.

All sanctions imposed by the Board and/or Superintendent shall be reasonably calculated to end such conduct, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effect. Prior sanctions imposed on the Respondent(s) for similar past

conduct shall be considered in determining the appropriateness of the sanction(s) imposed for the present conduct.

The Board may appoint an individual, who may be an employee of the Corporation, to monitor the Respondent to ensure no further discrimination or retaliation occurs. Likewise, the Board may appoint an individual, who may be an employee of the Corporation other than the Respondent, to follow up with the Complainant to ensure that no further discrimination or retaliation has occurred and to take action to promptly address any reported occurrences.

Retention of Public Records, Student Records, and Investigatory Records and Materials

All individuals charged with conducting investigations under this policy shall retain all information, documents, electronically stored information ("ESI"), and electronic media (as defined in Policy 8315) created and received as part of an investigation, including but not limited to complaints, responses, witness statements, documentary evidence, audio, video and/or digital recordings, handwritten and contemporaneous notes, emails related to the investigation and allegations, printouts, letters, determinations, and summaries. The information, documents, ESI, and electronic media (as defined in Policy 8315) retained may include public records and records exempt from disclosure under Federal and/or State law (e.g., student records).

The information, documents, ESI, and electronic media (as defined in Policy 8315) created or received as part of an investigation shall be retained in accordance with Policy 8310, Policy 8315, Policy 8320, Policy 8330 and the Corporation's records retention schedule.

Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who (1) makes a report or files a complaint alleging unlawful discrimination occurring in the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs and/or activities, or, if initially occurring off Corporation grounds or outside the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs and activities, affecting the Corporation environment, or (2) participates as a witness in an investigation, is prohibited.

Specifically, the Board will not discriminate/retaliate against, coerce, intimidate, threaten or interfere with any individual because s/he opposed any act or practice made unlawful by Federal or State nondiscrimination laws, made a charge, testified, assisted or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under those laws, or exercised, enjoyed, aided or encouraged any other person in the exercise or enjoyment of any right granted or protected by those laws.

Individuals found to have engaged in retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or expulsion from school.

Training

The Compliance Officer(s) also will oversee the training of Corporation employees so that all employees understand their rights and responsibilities under Federal and State law and are informed of the Board's policies and practices with respect to fully implementing and complying with the requirements of Federal and State law.

Notice

Notice of the Board's policy on nondiscrimination in educational programs and the identity of the Compliance Officer(s) will be posted throughout the Corporation and published in any Corporation statement regarding the availability of educational opportunities, in any student handbooks, and in general information publications of the Corporation as required by Federal and State law and this policy.

The Superintendent shall annually attempt to identify children with disabilities, ages 3-22, who reside in the Corporation but do not receive public education. In addition, s/he shall establish procedures to identify students who are Limited English Proficient (LEP), including immigrant children and youth, to assess their ability to participate in Corporation programs and develop and administer a program that meets the English language and academic needs of these students. This program shall include procedures for student placement, services,

evaluation and exit guidelines and shall be designed to provide students with effective instruction that leads to academic achievement and timely acquisition of proficiency in English. As a part of this program, the Corporation will evaluate the progress of students in achieving English language proficiency in the areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing, on an annual basis (see AG 2260F).

PARENT AND FAMILY MEMBER PARTICIPATION IN TITLE 1 PROGRAMS

In accordance with the requirement of Section 1118 of Title I, as amended by Section 1010 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), programs supported by Title I funds must be designed and implemented in consultation with parents and family members of the students being served.

The Superintendent shall require that the Title I plan contain a written statement of guidelines which has been developed with, approved by, and distributed to parents and family members of participating students. The guidelines shall describe:

- A. the School Corporation's expectations and objectives for meaningful parent and family involvement in the program, including their participation in jointly developing the Corporation Title I plan and any State-mandated comprehensive support and improvement plans;
- B. how the Corporation will provide coordination, technical assistance and other support necessary to assist and build the capacity of all participating schools within the Corporation in planning and implementing effective parent and family involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance, which may include meaningful consultation with employers, business leaders, and philanthropic organizations or individuals with expertise in effectively engaging parents and family members in education;
- C. an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of all Title I schools to be conducted with meaningful involvement of parents and family members that include:
 - 1. identifying any barriers to greater parental involvement (such as limited English proficiency, limited literacy, economic disadvantage, disability, racial or ethnic minority background, etc.);
 - 2. determining the needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers; and
 - 3. devising strategies to support successful school and family interactions.
- D. how the Corporation will coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies under Title I with parent and family engagement strategies, to the extent feasible and appropriate, under other Federal, State, and local laws and programs;
- E. use of the findings of the annual evaluation referenced above to:
 - 1. design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental/family member involvement; and

2. revise the parent and family engagement guidelines, if necessary;
- F. involvement of parents and family members in the activities of Title I schools, which may include establishing a parent and family member advisory council comprised of a sufficient number and representative group of parents or family members served by the Corporation to adequately represent the needs of the population served by the Corporation for purposes of developing, revising and reviewing the parent and family engagement guidelines;
 - G. provide opportunities for the informed participation of parents and family members (including parents and family members who have limited English proficiency and/or disabilities, and parents and family members of migratory children), including providing information and school reports in a format, and to the extent practicable in a language, such parents can understand;
 - H. conduct meetings with parents and family members, including provisions for flexible scheduling and assistance to parents and family members to better assure their attendance at meetings;
 - I. develop agendas for parent/family member meetings to include review and explanation of the curriculum, means of assessments, and the proficiency levels students are expected to achieve and maintain;
 - J. provide opportunities for parents and family members to formulate suggestions, interact and share experiences with other parents/family members, and participate appropriately in the decision-making about the program and revisions in the plan;
 - K. involve parents and family members in the planning, review, and improvement of the Title I program;
 - L. communicate information concerning school performance profiles and their child's individual performance to parents and family members;
 - M. assist parents and family members in helping their children in achieving the objectives of the program by such means as ensuring regular attendance, monitoring television-watching, providing adequate time and the proper environment for homework, guiding nutritional and health practices, and the like;
 - N. provide timely responses to parental/family member questions, concerns, and recommendations;
 - O. coordinate and provide technical assistance and other support necessary to assist Title I schools to develop effective parent and family member participation activities to improve academic achievement;
 - P. conduct other activities as appropriate to the Title I plan and State and Federal requirements;
 - Q. other activities to be conducted as appropriate to the plan and State or Federal requirements.

The School Board will reserve the requisite percent of its allocation of Federal Title I funds to carry out the above-described activities. Parents and family members of children receiving Title I services shall be involved in the decisions regarding how the reserved funds are allotted for parent and family member involvement activities. Reserved funds shall be used to carry out activities and strategies consistent with the Board's parent and family engagement policy (Policy 2281), including at least one (1) of the following:

- A. Supporting schools and nonprofit organizations in providing professional development for the Corporation and school personnel regarding parent and family engagement strategies, which may be provided jointly to teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, early childhood educators, and parents and family members.

- B. Supporting programs that reach parents and family members at home, in the community, and at school.
- C. Disseminating information on best practices focused on parent and family engagement, especially best practices for increasing the engagement of economically disadvantaged parents and family members.
- D. Collaborating, or providing sub-grants to schools to enable such schools to collaborate, with community-based or other organizations or employers with a record of success in improving and increasing parent and family engagement.
- E. Engaging in any other activities and strategies that the Board determines are appropriate and consistent with its parent and family engagement policy.

The Superintendent also shall require that each Title I participating school develops a specific plan, with parent and family engagement, to:

- A. convene an annual meeting at a convenient time to which parents and family of low-income students are invited and encouraged to attend, to inform the parents/family members that the school receives Title I funds, receipt of these funds subjects the school to certain requirements, and the parents/family members have a right to be involved;
- B. offer a flexible number of engagement meetings at convenient times for families and describe assistance to encourage parental/family member involvement, such as child care, transportation, home visits, or similar aid;
- C. involve parents and family members in an organized, on-going and timely way in the development, review and improvement of parent/family member involvement activities, including the planning, review and improvement of the school parent and family engagement policy, and the joint development of the schoolwide program plan, if appropriate;
- D. provide parents and families with:
 - 1. timely information about Title I program and the school's parent and family engagement policy;
 - 2. an explanation of the curriculum and achievement levels the school uses;
 - 3. opportunities for regular meetings, upon request, to participate in decisions relating to their student's education and receive responses regarding the parents' and family members' suggestions about their student's education as soon as practicably possible;
- E. submit any parents' and family members' comments to the Superintendent when a written plan is not satisfactory to the parents/family members of participating children;
- F. develop jointly with parents and family members of low-income students a school-parent agreement which outlines the responsibilities of families, the school, staff, and students for improved student academic achievement and develop a partnership to help students achieve the State's high standards, including:
 - 1. a description of the school's responsibility to provide high quality curriculum, and instruction in a supportive, effective learning environment that enables students to meet the academic achievement standards and the ways in which each parent and family member will be responsible for supporting learning, including volunteering in their child's classroom and participating in decisions related to the education of their children;

2. the importance of communication between families and staff through, at a minimum, parent-teacher or family member-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the agreement/compact will be discussed as it related to the individual child's achievement; frequent progress reports to the parents/family members; and opportunities to volunteer in or observe their student's class;
 3. ensuring regular two-way meaningful communication between family members and school staff in a language they understand;
- G. ensure the effective involvement of parents and family members and support a partnership among the school, parents/family members and the community to improve student academic achievement by the following activities:
1. providing assistance to parents and family members in understanding the State's academic standards, State and local academic assessments, the requirements of Title I, and how to monitor a student's progress and work with educators;
 2. providing materials and training to help parents and family members to work with their students to improve their achievement;
 3. educating school personnel, with the assistance of parents and family members, in the value and utility of the contributions of parents/family members, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents/family members as equal partners;
 4. integrating engagement strategies with other Federal and State programs, including preschool programs;
 5. ensuring that information related to programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to parents and family members in a format and a language they can understand;
 6. providing other reasonable support for engagement activities;
 7. providing opportunities for the informed participation of families with limited English proficiency or disabilities and families of migratory children in a format and language they understand;
 8. providing reasonable support for parental/family member involvement activities as parents and family members request them;
 9. establishing a Corporation-wide Superintendent Advisory Team that may include student, parents or family members to improve parent and family engagement.
- H. Parents and family members of children receiving Title I services must be notified about their school's parent and family engagement policy in an understandable and uniform format, and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents/family members can understand. These policies also must be made available to the community.
- I. School-level parent and family engagement policies must be updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents/family members and the schools.

In order to involve parents and family members in the education of their children and to support a partnership among the school, parents/family members and the community for improving student academic achievement, the

Superintendent and building principals must include provisions in the Corporation and school-level parent and family engagement policies regarding:

- A. assisting parents and family members of children served under Title I in understanding such topics as the State academic standards, State and local academic assessments, Title I, and how to monitor their child's progress and how to work with educators to improve their child's achievement;
- B. providing materials and training to help parents and family members work with their children to improve achievement, such as literacy training and using technology (including education about the harms of copyright privacy);
- C. educating teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, school leaders (including principals), and other staff, with the assistance of parents and family members, about the value and utility of contributions of parents/family members, how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents/family members as equal partners, how to implement and coordinate parent/family member programs, and how to build ties between parents/family members and the school;
- D. to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordination and integration of parent/family member involvement programs and activities with other Federal, State and local programs (including public preschool programs), and conducting other activities that encourage and support parents and family members to more fully participate in the education of their children (e.g., parent resource centers);
- E. providing information related to school and parent/family member programs, meetings, and other activities to parents and family members of participating children in a format, and, to the extent practicable, in a language they can understand;
- F. providing such reasonable support for parent involvement activities as parents may request.

In order to build the Corporation's capacity for parent involvement, the Superintendent and building principals also may:

- A. involve parents and family members in the development of training for teachers and administrators and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training;
- B. provide necessary literacy training from Title I funds if the Corporation has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funding for such training;
- C. pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with parental/family member involvement activities to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions, including transportation and child care costs;
- D. train parents/family members to enhance the involvement of other parents and family members;
- E. arrange school meetings at a variety of times, or conduct in-house conferences between teachers or other educators who work directly with participating children, with parents and family members who are unable to attend such conferences at school, in order to maximize parental/family member involvement and participation;

- F. adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental/family member involvement;
- G. establish a Corporation-wide parent and family member advisory council to provide advice on all matters related to parental/family member involvement in Title I programs;
- H. develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parental/family member involvement activities.

NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX IN EDUCATION PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES

Introduction

The School Board of the Merrillville Community School Corporation (hereinafter referred to as “the Board” or “the Corporation”) does not discriminate on the basis of sex (including sexual orientation or gender identity) in its education programs or activities and is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and its implementing regulations not to discriminate in such a manner. The requirement not to discriminate in its education program or activity extends to admission and employment. The Board is committed to maintaining an education and work environment that is free from discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment.

The Board prohibits Sexual Harassment that occurs within its education programs and activities. When the Corporation has actual knowledge of Sexual Harassment in its education program or activity against a person in the United States, it shall promptly respond in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent.

Pursuant to its Title IX obligations, the Board is committed to eliminating Sexual Harassment and will take appropriate action when an individual is determined responsible for violating this policy. Members of the Corporation Community who commit Sexual Harassment are subject to the full range of disciplinary sanctions set forth in this policy. Third Parties who engage in Sexual Harassment also are subject to the disciplinary sanctions listed in this policy. The Board will provide persons who have experienced Sexual Harassment ongoing remedies as reasonably necessary to restore or preserve access to the Corporation’s education programs and activities.

Coverage

This policy applies to Sexual Harassment that occurs within the Corporation’s education programs and activities and that is committed by a member of the Corporation Community or Third Party.

This policy does not apply to Sexual Harassment that occurs off school grounds, in a private setting, and outside the scope of the Corporation’s education programs and activities; such Sexual Misconduct / Sexual Activity may be prohibited by the Student Code of Conduct if committed by a student, or by Board policies and administrative guidelines, applicable State and/or Federal laws and/or Employee / Administrator Handbook(s) if committed by a Corporation employee.

Consistent with the U.S. Department of Education’s implementing regulations for Title IX, this policy does not apply to Sexual Harassment that occurs outside the geographic boundaries of the United States, even if the Sexual Harassment occurs in the Corporation’s education programs or activities. Sexual Harassment that occurs outside the geographic boundaries of the United States is governed by the Student Code of Conduct if committed by a student or by Board policies and administrative guidelines, applicable State and/or Federal laws and/or Employee/Administrator Handbook(s) if committed by a Corporation employee.

Complaints alleging sexual harassment and/or discrimination on the basis of sex also are covered by and subject to the investigation procedures in Board Policy 5517 - Anti-Harassment. Complaints not covered by this policy still may be governed by and subject to the procedures in Policy 5517 - Anti-Harassment.

Definitions

Terms used in this policy shall have those meanings defined herein; terms not defined herein shall be construed according to their plain and ordinary meanings.

Sexual Harassment: “Sexual Harassment” means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- A. A Corporation employee conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the Corporation on an individual’s participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (often called “quid pro quo” harassment);
- B. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the Corporation’s education program or activity; or
- C. “Sexual assault” as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), or “dating violence” as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), “domestic violence” as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or “stalking” as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30).

“Sexual assault” means any sexual act directed against another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent. Sexual assault includes rape, sodomy, sexual assault with an object, fondling, incest, and statutory rape.

- 1. Rape is penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of age or because of temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity. Attempted rape is included.
Rape is the carnal knowledge of a person (i.e., penetration, no matter how slight, of the genital or anal opening of a person), without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of age or because of temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.
- 2. Sodomy is oral or anal sexual intercourse with another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of age or because of temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.
- 3. Sexual Assault with an Object is using an object or instrument to unlawfully penetrate, however slightly, the genital or anal opening of the body of another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of age or because of temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity. An “object” or “instrument” is anything used by the offender other than the offender’s genitalia.
- 4. Fondling is the touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of age or because of temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.

5. Incest is sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by State law.
6. Statutory Rape is sexual intercourse with a person who is under the statutory age of consent as defined by State law.
7. Consent refers to words or actions that a reasonable person would understand as agreement to engage in the sexual conduct at issue. A person may be incapable of giving consent because of age or because of temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity. A person who is incapacitated is not capable of giving consent.
8. Incapacitated refers to the state where a person does not understand and/or appreciate the nature or fact of sexual activity due to the effect of drugs or alcohol consumption, medical condition, disability, or due to a state of unconsciousness or sleep.

“Domestic violence” includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by:

- A. A current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim;
- B. A person with whom the victim shares a child in common;
- C. A person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner;
- D. A person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime occurred; or
- E. Any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person’s acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime occurred.

“Dating violence” means violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim. The existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on consideration of the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

“Stalking” means engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to – (1) fear for the person’s safety or the safety of others; or (2) suffer substantial emotional distress.

Complainant: “Complainant” means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute Sexual Harassment.

Respondent: “Respondent” means an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute Sexual Harassment.

Formal Complaint: “Formal Complaint” means a document filed by a Complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging Sexual Harassment against a Respondent and requesting that the Corporation investigate the allegation(s) of Sexual Harassment. At the time of filing a Formal Complaint with the Corporation, a Complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the Corporation's education program or activity. A “document filed by a complainant” means a document or electronic submission (such as by electronic mail or through an online portal that the Board provides for this purpose) that contains the Complainant’s physical or digital signature, or otherwise indicates that the Complainant is the person filing the Formal Complaint. Where the Title IX Coordinator signs a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator is not a Complainant or a party to the

Formal Complaint and must not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent.

Actual Knowledge: “Actual knowledge” means notice of Sexual Harassment or allegations of Sexual Harassment to the Corporation's Title IX Coordinator, or any Corporation official who has authority to institute corrective measures on behalf of the Board, or any Corporation employee. The mere ability or obligation to report Sexual Harassment or to inform a student about how to report Sexual Harassment, or having been trained to do so, does not qualify an individual as one who has authority to institute corrective measures on behalf of the Corporation. “Notice” includes, but is not limited to, a report of Sexual Harassment to the Title IX Coordinator. This standard is not met when the only Corporation official with actual knowledge is the Respondent.

Supportive Measures: “Supportive measures” means non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the Complainant or the Respondent before or after the filing of a Formal Complaint or where no Formal Complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the Corporation's education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the Corporation's educational environment or deter Sexual Harassment. Supportive measures may include counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, school/campus escort services, mutual restrictions of contact between the parties, changes in work locations), leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus (including school buildings and facilities), referral to Employee Assistance Program, and other similar measures.

Education Program or Activity: “Education program or activity” refers to all operations of the Corporation, including but not limited to in-person and online educational instruction, employment, extracurricular activities, athletics, performances, and community engagement, and outreach programs. The term applies to all activity that occurs on school grounds or on other property owned or occupied by the Corporation. It also includes locations, events, and circumstances that take place off-school property/grounds over which the Board exercises substantial control over both the Respondent and the context in which the Sexual Harassment occurs.

Corporation Community: “Corporation Community” refers to students and Corporation employees (i.e., administrators and professional and classified staff), as well as Board members, agents, volunteers, contractors, and other persons subject to the control and supervision of the Board.

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

Inculpatory Evidence: “Inculpatory evidence” is evidence that tends to establish a Respondent’s responsibility for alleged Sexual Harassment.

Exculpatory Evidence: “Exculpatory evidence” is evidence that tends to clear or excuse a Respondent from allegations of Sexual Harassment.

Day(s): Unless expressly stated otherwise, the term “day” or “days” as used in this policy means business day(s) (i.e., a day(s) that the Board office is open for normal operating hours, Monday – Friday, excluding State-recognized holidays),

Eligible Student: “Eligible Student” means a student who has reached eighteen (18) years of age or is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

Title IX Coordinator(s)

The Board designates and authorizes the following individual(s) to oversee and coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX and its implementing regulations:

Executive Director of Personnel
6701 Delaware Street
Merrillville, IN 46410

(219) 650-5300
ramones@mvsc.k12.in.us

Assistant Superintendent of Business
6701 Delaware Street
Merrillville, IN 46410

The Title IX Coordinator shall report directly to the Superintendent except when the Superintendent is a Respondent. In such matters, the Title IX Coordinator shall report directly to the Board Attorney. Questions about this policy should be directed to the Title IX Coordinator.

The Superintendent shall notify applicants for admission and employment, students, parents or legal guardians of elementary and secondary school students, Corporation employees, and all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the Board of the following information:

The Board of the Merrillville Community School Corporation does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education program or activity and is required by Title IX and its implementing regulations not to discriminate in such a manner. The requirement not to discriminate in its education program or activity extends to admission and employment. The Corporation's Title IX Coordinator(s) is/are:

Executive Director of Personnel
6701 Delaware Street
Merrillville, IN 46410
(219) 650-5315
ramones@mvsc.k12.in.us

Chief Financial Officer
6701 Delaware Street
Merrillville, IN 46410
(219) 650-6033
mdamron@mvsc.k12.in.us

Any inquiries about the application of Title IX and its implementing regulations to the Corporation may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator(s), the Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both.

The Board has adopted a grievance process that provides for the prompt and equitable resolution of student and employee complaints alleging any action that is prohibited by Title IX and/or its implementing regulations. The grievance process is included in Policy 2266 – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities, which is available at: www.mvsc.k12.in.us The grievance process specifically addresses how to report or file a complaint of sex discrimination, how to report or file a formal complaint of Sexual Harassment, and how the Corporation will respond.

The Superintendent also shall prominently display the Title IX Coordinator's contact information – including Name(s) and/or Title(s), Phone Number(s), Office Address(es), and Email Address(es) – and this Policy on the Corporation's website and in each handbook or catalog that the Board makes available to applicants for admission and employment, students, parents or legal guardians of elementary and secondary school students, Corporation employees, and all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements.

Grievance Process

The Board is committed to promptly and equitably resolving student and employee complaints alleging Sexual Harassment. The Corporation's response to allegations of Sexual Harassment will treat Complainants and Respondents equitably, including providing supportive measures to the Complainant and Respondent, as appropriate, and following this Grievance Process before the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions or other actions, other than supportive measures, against the Respondent.

The Title IX Coordinator(s), along with any investigator(s), decision-maker(s), or any person(s) designated to facilitate an informal resolution process, shall not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent.

If a determination of responsibility for Sexual Harassment is made against the Respondent, the Board will provide remedies to the Complainant. The remedies will be designed to restore or preserve equal access to the Corporation's education program or activity. Potential remedies include, but are not limited to, individualized services that constitute supportive measures. Remedies also may be disciplinary or punitive in nature and may burden the Respondent.

The Process described herein relates exclusively to complaints brought under this Policy. The Corporation will continue to handle complaints subject to the Corporation's other nondiscrimination and anti-harassment policies, including Policy 5517 - Anti-Harassment; Policy 5517.01 - Bullying; Policy 2260 - Nondiscrimination and Access to Equal Educational Opportunity; Policy 2260.01 - Section 504/ADA Prohibition Against Discrimination Based on Disability; 1422/3122/4122 - Nondiscrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity; and 1662/3362/4362 - Anti-Harassment.

Report of Sexual Discrimination/Harassment

Any person may report sex discrimination, including Sexual Harassment (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination or Sexual Harassment), in person, by mail, by telephone, or by electronic mail, using the Title IX Coordinator's(s') contact information listed above, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's oral or written report. Reports may be made at any time (including during non-business hours), by using the telephone number(s) or electronic mail address(es), or by mail to the office address(es), listed for the Title IX Coordinator(s). Anonymous reports may be submitted using the hotline reporting number (219-650-5499).

Students, Board members, and Corporation employees are required, and other Corporation Community members and Third Parties are encouraged, to report allegations of sex discrimination or Sexual Harassment promptly to the/a Title IX Coordinator or to any Corporation employee, who will, in turn, notify the/a Title IX Coordinator. Reports can be made orally or in writing and should be as specific as possible. The person making the report should, to the extent known, identify the alleged victim(s), perpetrator(s), and witness(es), and describe in detail what occurred, including date(s), time(s), and location(s).

If a report involves allegations of Sexual Harassment by or involving the Title IX Coordinator, the person making the report should submit it to the Superintendent, or another Board employee who, in turn, will notify the

Superintendent of the report. The Superintendent will then serve in place of the Title IX Coordinator for purposes of addressing that report of Sexual Harassment.

The Board does business with Third Parties who are not students or employees of the Board. Notwithstanding any rights that a given Third-Party Respondent may have under this policy, the Board retains the right to limit any vendor's, contractor's, or Third Party's access to school grounds for any reason. The Board further retains all rights it enjoys by contract or law to terminate its relationship with any Third Party irrespective of any process or outcome under this policy.

A person may file criminal charges simultaneously with filing a Formal Complaint. A person does not need to wait until the Title IX investigation is completed before filing a criminal complaint. Likewise, questions or complaints relating to Title IX may be filed with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights at any time.

Any allegations of Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Activity not involving Sexual Harassment will be addressed through the procedures outlined in Board policies and/or administrative guidelines, the applicable Student Code of Conduct, or Employee/Administrator Handbook(s).

Because the Board is considered to have actual knowledge of Sexual Harassment or allegations of Sexual Harassment if any Corporation employee has such knowledge, and because the Board must take specific actions when it has notice of Sexual Harassment or allegations of Sexual Harassment, a Corporation employee who has independent knowledge of or receives a report involving allegations of sex discrimination and/or Sexual Harassment must notify the/a Title IX Coordinator within two (2) days of learning the information or receiving the report. The Corporation employee must also comply with mandatory reporting responsibilities regarding suspected abuse, abandonment or neglect of a child pursuant to I.C. 31-33-5-1 and Policy 8462– Student Abuse and Neglect, if applicable. If the Corporation employee's knowledge is based on another individual bringing the information to the Corporation employee's attention and the reporting individual submitted a written complaint to the Corporation employee, the Corporation employee must provide the written complaint to the Title IX Coordinator.

If a Corporation employee fails to report an incident of Sexual Harassment of which the Corporation employee is aware, the Corporation employee may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

When a report of Sexual Harassment is made, the Title IX Coordinator shall promptly (i.e., within two (2) days of the Title IX Coordinator's receipt of the report of Sexual Harassment) contact the Complainant (including the parent/guardian if the Complainant is under eighteen (18) years of age or under guardianship) to discuss the availability of supportive measures, consider the Complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures, inform the Complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a Formal Complaint, and explain to the Complainant the process for filing a Formal Complaint. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the effective implementation of supportive measures. Any supportive measures provided to the Complainant or Respondent shall be maintained as confidential, to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality will not impair the ability of the Corporation to provide the supportive measures.

Emergency Removal: Subject to limitations and/or procedures imposed by State and/or Federal law, the Corporation may remove a student Respondent from its education program or activity on an emergency basis after conducting an individualized safety and risk analysis. The purpose of the individualized safety and risk analysis is to determine whether the student Respondent poses an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of Sexual Harassment that justifies removal. If the Corporation determines the student Respondent poses such a threat, it will notify the student Respondent and the student Respondent will have an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal. See Policy Policy 5605 – Suspension and Expulsion of Students with Disabilities 5610 – Suspension and Expulsion of Students, Policy 5611 – Due Process Rights, and 5620 – Court Assisted Resolution of Suspension and Expulsion.

If the Respondent is a non-student employee, the Corporation may place the Respondent on administrative leave during the pendency of the grievance process.

For all other Respondents, including other members of the Corporation Community and Third Parties, the Board retains broad discretion to prohibit such persons from entering onto its school grounds and other properties at any time and for any reason, whether after receiving a report of Sexual Harassment or otherwise.

Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment

A Formal Complaint may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, or by electronic mail, by using the contact information set forth above. If a Formal Complaint involves allegations of Sexual Harassment by or involving the Title IX Coordinator, the Complainant should submit the Formal Complaint to the Superintendent, who will designate another person to serve in place of the Title IX Coordinator for the limited purpose of implementing the grievance process with respect to that Formal Complaint.

When the Title IX Coordinator receives a Formal Complaint or signs a Formal Complaint, the Corporation will follow its Grievance Process, as set forth herein. Specifically, the Corporation will undertake an objective evaluation of all relevant evidence, including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence, and will not make credibility determinations based solely on a person's status as a Complainant, Respondent, or witness.

It is a violation of this policy for a Complainant(s), Respondent(s), and/or witness(es) to knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process, including intentionally making a false report of Sexual Harassment or submitting a false Formal Complaint. The Board will not tolerate such conduct, which is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and the Employee/Administrator Handbook.

The Respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.

Timeline

The Corporation will seek to conclude the grievance process, including resolving any appeals, within ninety (90) days of receipt of the Formal Complaint.

If the Title IX Coordinator offers informal resolution processes, the informal resolution processes may not be used by the Complainant or Respondent to unduly delay the investigation and determination of responsibility. The timeline, however, may be subject to a temporary delay of the grievance process or a limited extension for good cause with written notice to the Complainant and the Respondent of the delay or extension and the reasons for the action. Good cause may include considerations such as: the absence of a party, a party's advisor, or a witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; and the need for language assistance or accommodation of disabilities. The Title IX Coordinator will provide the parties with reasonable updates on the status of the grievance process.

Upon receipt of a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will provide written notice of the following to the parties who are known:

- A. Notice of the Board's grievance process, including any informal resolution processes;
- B. Notice of the allegations of misconduct that potentially constitute Sexual Harassment as defined in this policy, including sufficient details known at the time and with sufficient time to prepare a response before any initial interview. Sufficient details include the identities of the parties involved in the incident, if known, the conduct allegedly constituting Sexual Harassment, and the date and location of the alleged incident, if known. The written notice must:
 - 1. include a statement that the Respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility will be made at the conclusion of the grievance

process;

2. inform the parties that they may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney, and may inspect and review evidence.
3. inform the parties of any provision in the Student Code of Conduct, this policy, and/or Employee/Administrator Handbook that prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process.

If, during the course of the investigation, the investigator becomes aware of allegations about the Complainant or Respondent that are not included in the original notice provided to the parties, the investigator will notify the Title IX Coordinator, and the Title IX Coordinator will decide whether the investigator should investigate the additional allegations; if the Title IX Coordinator decides to include the new allegations as part of the investigation, the Title IX Coordinator will provide notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.

Dismissal of a Formal Complaint

The Corporation shall investigate the allegations in a Formal Complaint, unless the conduct alleged in the Formal Complaint:

- A. would not constitute Sexual Harassment (as defined in this policy) even if proved;
- B. did not occur in the Corporation's education program or activity; or
- C. did not occur against a person in the United States.

If one of the preceding circumstances exist, the Title IX Coordinator shall dismiss the Formal Complaint. If the Title IX Coordinator dismisses the Formal Complaint due to one of the preceding reasons, the Corporation may still investigate and take action with respect to such alleged misconduct pursuant to another provision of an applicable code of conduct, Board policy, and/or Employee / Administrator Handbook.

The Title IX Coordinator may dismiss a Formal Complaint, or any allegations therein, if at any time during the investigation

- A. a Complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the Complainant would like to withdraw the Formal Complaint or any allegations therein;
- B. the Respondent is no longer enrolled in the Corporation or employed by the Board; or
- C. specific circumstances prevent the Corporation from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the Formal Complaint or allegations therein.

If the Title IX Coordinator dismisses a Formal Complaint or allegations therein, the Title IX Coordinator promptly must send written notice of the dismissal and the reason(s) therefore simultaneously to the parties.

Consolidation of Formal Complaints

The Title IX Coordinator may consolidate Formal Complaints as to allegations of Sexual Harassment against more than one Respondent, or by more than one Complainant against one or more Respondents, or by one party against the other party, where the allegations of Sexual Harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances.

Where a grievance process involves more than one Complainant or more than one Respondent, references in this policy to the singular “party,” “Complainant,” or “Respondent” include the plural, as applicable.

Informal Resolution Process

Under no circumstances shall a Complainant be required as a condition of enrollment or continuing enrollment, or employment or continuing employment, or enjoyment of any other right, to waive any right to an investigation and adjudication of a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment. Similarly, no party shall be required to participate in an informal resolution process.

If a Formal Complaint is filed, the Title IX Coordinator may offer to the parties an informal resolution process. If the parties mutually agree to participate in the informal resolution process, the Title IX Coordinator shall designate a trained individual to facilitate an informal resolution process, such as mediation, that does not involve a full investigation and adjudication. The informal resolution process may be used at any time prior to the decision-maker(s) reaching a determination regarding responsibility.

If the Title IX Coordinator is going to propose an informal resolution process, the Title IX Coordinator shall provide to the parties a written notice disclosing:

- A. the allegations;
- B. the requirements of the informal resolution process, including the circumstances under which it precludes the parties from resuming a Formal Complaint arising from the same allegations; and
- C. any consequences resulting from participating in the informal resolution process, including the records that will be maintained or could be shared.

Any time prior to agreeing to a resolution, any party has the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the grievance process with respect to the Formal Complaint.

Before commencing the informal resolution process, the Title IX Coordinator shall obtain from the parties their voluntary, written consent to the informal resolution process.

During the pendency of the informal resolution process, the investigation and adjudication processes that otherwise would occur are stayed and all related deadlines are suspended.

The informal resolution process is not available to resolve allegations that a Corporation employee or another adult member of the Corporation Community or Third Party sexually harassed a student.

The informal resolution process is not available to resolve allegations regarding a sexual assault involving a student Complainant and a student Respondent.

Investigation of a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment

In conducting the investigation of a Formal Complaint and throughout the grievance process, the burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility is on the Corporation, not the parties.

In making the determination of responsibility, the decision-maker(s) is/are directed to use the clear and convincing evidence standard. The decision-maker(s) is charged with considering the totality of all available evidence, from all relevant sources.

The Corporation is not permitted to access, consider, disclose, or otherwise use a party's records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in the professional's or paraprofessional's capacity or assisting in that capacity, and which are made and maintained in connection with the provision of treatment to the party, unless the party provides the Corporation with voluntary, written consent to do so; if a student party is not an Eligible Student, the Corporation must obtain the voluntary, written consent of a parent.

Similarly, the investigator(s) and decision-maker(s) may not require, allow, rely upon or otherwise use questions or evidence that constitute, or seek disclosure of, information protected under a legally recognized privilege, unless the person holding such privilege has waived the privilege in writing.

As part of the investigation, the parties have the right to:

- A. present witnesses, including fact and expert witnesses, and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence; and
- B. have others present during any grievance proceeding, including the opportunity to be accompanied to any related meeting or proceeding by the advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney. The Corporation may not limit the choice or presence of an advisor for either the Complainant or Respondent in any meeting or grievance proceeding.

Neither party shall be restricted in their ability to discuss the allegations under investigation or to gather and present relevant evidence.

The Corporation will provide to a party whose participation is invited or expected written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all investigative interviews or other meetings, with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate. The investigator(s) and decision-maker(s) must provide a minimum of one (1) days' notice with respect to investigative interviews and other meetings

Both parties shall have an equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in the Formal Complaint, including the evidence upon which the Corporation does not intend to rely in reaching a determination regarding responsibility and inculpatory or exculpatory evidence whether obtained from a party or other source so that each party can meaningfully respond to the evidence prior to the conclusion of the investigation.

Prior to completion of the investigative report, the Title IX Coordinator will send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, the evidence subject to inspection and review in an electronic format or a hard copy, and the parties will have at least ten (10) calendar days to submit a written response, which the investigator will consider prior to completion of the investigative report.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the investigator shall create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence and send the report to each party and the party's advisor, if any, for their review and written response. The investigator will send the investigative report in an electronic format or a hard copy, at least ten (10) calendar days prior to the decision-maker(s) issuing a determination regarding responsibility.

Determination of Responsibility

The Title IX Coordinator shall appoint a decision-maker(s) to issue a determination of responsibility. The decision-maker(s) cannot be the same person(s) as the Title IX Coordinator(s) or the investigator(s).

After the investigator sends the investigative report to the parties and the decision-maker(s), and before the decision-maker(s) reaches a determination regarding responsibility, the decision-maker(s) will afford each party the opportunity to submit written, relevant questions that a party wants asked of any party or witness, provide each party with the answers, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party. The decision-maker(s) must explain to the party proposing the questions any decision to exclude a question as not relevant.

Questions and evidence about the Complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant unless such questions and evidence about the Complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the Respondent committed the conduct alleged by the Complainant or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the Complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the Respondent and are offered to prove consent.

Determination regarding responsibility: The decision-maker(s) will issue a written determination regarding responsibility. To reach this determination, the decision-maker(s) must apply the clear and convincing evidence standard.

The written determination will include the following content:

- A. Identification of the allegations potentially constituting Sexual Harassment pursuant to this policy;
- B. A description of the procedural steps taken from the receipt of the Formal Complaint through the determination, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, [and] methods used to gather other evidence ;
- C. Findings of fact supporting the determination;
- D. Conclusions regarding the application of the applicable code of conduct to the facts;
- E. A statement of, and rationale for, the result as to each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility, any disciplinary sanctions the decision-maker(s) is recommending that the Corporation impose on the Respondent(s) and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to the Corporation's education program or activity should be provided by the Corporation to the Complainant(s); and
- F. The procedures and permissible bases for the Complainant(s) and Respondent(s) to appeal.

Informal or formal disciplinary sanctions/consequences may be imposed on a student Respondent who is determined responsible for violating this policy (i.e., engaging in Sexual Harassment):

- A. Informal Discipline
 - 1. writing assignments;
 - 2. changing of seating or location;
 - 3. before-school, lunchtime, and after-school detention;
 - 4. in-school discipline;
 - 5. Saturday school.

B. Formal Discipline

1. suspension of bus riding/transportation privileges;
2. removal from co-curricular and/or extra-curricular activity(ies), including athletics;
3. emergency removal;
4. suspension for up to ten (10) school days;
5. expulsion for up to one (1) year; and
6. any other sanction authorized by the Student Code of Conduct.

If the decision-maker(s) determines the student Respondent is responsible for violating this policy (i.e., engaging in Sexual Harassment), the decision-maker(s) will recommend appropriate remedies, including disciplinary sanctions/consequences. The Title IX Coordinator will notify the Superintendent of the recommended remedies, so an authorized administrator can consider the recommendation(s) and implement an appropriate remedy(ies) in compliance with Policy 5600 – Student Discipline, Policy 5605 – Suspension/Expulsion of Students with Disabilities, Policy 5610 – Suspension and Expulsion of Students, Policy 5610.02 – In-School Discipline, and Policy 5611 – Due Process Rights. Discipline of a student Respondent must comply with the applicable provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as amended, and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1972, and their respective implementing regulations.

Disciplinary sanctions/consequences may be imposed on an employee Respondent who is determined responsible for violating this policy including but not limited to (i.e., engaging in Sexual Harassment):

- A. oral or written warning;
- B. written reprimands;
- C. performance improvement plan;
- D. required counseling;
- E. required training or education;
- F. demotion;
- G. suspension with pay;
- H. suspension without pay;
- I. termination;
- J. any other sanction authorized by any applicable Employee/Administrator Handbook and/or applicable collective bargaining agreement.

If the decision-maker(s) determines the employee Respondent is responsible for violating this policy (i.e., engaging in Sexual Harassment), the decision-maker(s) will recommend appropriate remedies, including disciplinary sanctions/consequences. The Title IX Coordinator will notify the Superintendent of the recommended remedies,

so an authorized administrator can consider the recommendation(s) and implement an appropriate remedy(ies) in compliance with applicable due process procedures, whether statutory or contractual. If the Superintendent is the Respondent, the Title IX Coordinator will notify the Board Attorney

Discipline of an employee will be implemented in accordance with Federal and State law, Board policy, and applicable provisions of any relevant collective bargaining agreement.

Disciplinary sanctions/consequences may be imposed on a non-student/non-employee member of the Corporation Community or a Third Party who is determined responsible for violating this policy (i.e., engaging in Sexual Harassment), including but not limited to:

- A. oral or written warning;
- B. suspension or termination/ cancellation of the Board's contract with the third-party vendor or contractor;
- C. mandatory monitoring of the third party while on school property and/or while working/interacting with students;
- D. restriction/prohibition on the third party's ability to be on school property; and
- E. any combination of the same.

If the decision-maker(s) determines the third party Respondent is responsible for violating this policy (i.e., engaging in Sexual Harassment), the decision-maker(s) will recommend appropriate remedies, including imposition of sanctions. The Title IX Coordinator will notify the Superintendent of the recommended remedies, so appropriate action can be taken.

The decision-maker(s) will provide the written determination to the Title IX Coordinator who will provide the written determination to the parties simultaneously.

In ultimately imposing a disciplinary sanction/consequence, the Superintendent (or the Board when the Superintendent is the Respondent) will consider the severity of the incident, previous disciplinary violations (if any), and any mitigating circumstances. If the Respondent is a Member of the Board, s/he shall be excluded from any determination regarding the imposition of a disciplinary sanction/consequence by the remaining School Board members.

The Corporation's resolution of a Formal Complaint ordinarily will not be impacted by the fact that criminal charges involving the same incident have been filed or that charges have been dismissed or reduced.

At any point in the grievance process and procedures, the Superintendent (or the Title IX Coordinator if the Superintendent is the Respondent) may involve local law enforcement and/or file criminal charges related to allegations of Sexual Harassment that involve a sexual assault.

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for effective implementation of any remedies.

Appeal

Both parties have the right to file an appeal from a determination regarding responsibility, or from the Title IX Coordinator's dismissal of a Formal Complaint or any allegations therein, on the following bases:

- A. Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter (e.g., material deviation from established procedures);

- B. New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made that could affect the outcome of the matter; and
- C. The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against Complainants or Respondents generally or the individual Complainant(s) or Respondent(s) that affected the outcome of the matter.
- D. The recommended remedies (including disciplinary sanctions/consequences) are unreasonable in light of the findings of fact (i.e., the nature and severity of the Sexual Harassment).

The Complainant(s) may not challenge the ultimate disciplinary sanction/consequence that is imposed.

Any party wishing to appeal the decision-maker(s)'s determination of responsibility or the Title IX Coordinator's dismissal of a Formal Complaint or any allegations therein must submit a written appeal to the Title IX Coordinator within five (5) days after receipt of the decision-maker(s)'s determination of responsibility or the Title IX Coordinator's dismissal of a Formal Complaint or any allegations therein.

Nothing herein shall prevent the Superintendent (or the Board when the Superintendent is the Respondent) from imposing any remedy, including disciplinary sanction, while the appeal is pending.

As to all appeals, the Title IX Coordinator will notify the other party in writing when an appeal is filed and implement appeal procedures equally for both parties.

The decision-maker(s) for the appeal shall not be the same person(s) as the decision-maker(s) that reached the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal, the investigator(s), or the Title IX Coordinator(s). The decision-maker(s) for the appeal shall not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against Complainants or Respondents generally or an individual Complainant(s) or Respondent(s) and shall receive the same training as required of other decision-makers.

Both parties shall have a reasonable, equal opportunity to submit a written statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome.

The parties' written statements in support of, or challenging, the determination of responsibility must be submitted within five (5) days after the Title IX Coordinator provides notice to the non-appealing party of the appeal.

The decision-maker(s) for the appeal shall issue a written decision describing the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result. The original decision-maker's(s)' determination of responsibility will stand if the appeal request is not filed in a timely manner or the appealing party fails to show clear error and/or a compelling rationale for overturning or modifying the original determination. The written decision will be provided to the Title IX Coordinator who will provide it simultaneously to both parties. The written decision will be issued within five (5) days of when the parties' written statements were submitted.

The determination of responsibility associated with a Formal Complaint, including any recommendations for remedies / disciplinary sanctions, becomes final when the time for filing an appeal has passed or, if an appeal is filed, at the point when the decision-maker(s) for the appeal's decision is delivered to the Complainant and the Respondent.

Retaliation

Neither the Board nor any other person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, its implementing regulations, or this policy, or because the individual made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under this policy. Intimidation, threats,

coercion, or discrimination, including charges against an individual for code of conduct violations that do not involve sex discrimination or Sexual Harassment, but arise out of the same facts or circumstances as a report or complaint of sex discrimination, or a report or Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, its implementing regulations, or this policy, constitute(s) retaliation. Retaliation against a person for making a report of Sexual Harassment, filing a Formal Complaint, or participating in an investigation, is a serious violation of this policy that can result in the imposition of disciplinary sanctions/consequences and/or other appropriate remedies.

Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to the grievance process set forth above.

The exercise of rights protected under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution does not constitute retaliation prohibited under this policy.

Charging an individual with a code of conduct violation for making a materially false statement in bad faith in the course of a grievance proceeding under this policy shall not constitute retaliation, provided, however, that a determination regarding responsibility, alone, is not sufficient to conclude that any party made a materially false statement in bad faith.

Confidentiality

The Corporation will keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of sex discrimination, including any individual who has made a report or filed a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment, any Complainant, any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination, any Respondent, and any witness, except as may be permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), 20 U.S.C. 1232g, or FERPA's regulations, 34 CFR part 99, or as required by law, or to carry out the purposes of 34 CFR part 106, including the conduct of any investigation, hearing, or judicial proceeding arising thereunder (i.e., the Corporation's obligation to maintain confidentiality shall not impair or otherwise affect the Complainant's and Respondent's receipt of the information to which they are entitled related to the investigative record and determination of responsibility).

Application of the First Amendment

The Board will construe and apply this policy consistent with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In no case will a Respondent be found to have committed Sexual Harassment based on expressive conduct that is protected by the First Amendment.

Training

The Corporation's Title IX Coordinator, along with any investigator(s), decision-maker(s), or person(s) designated to facilitate an informal resolution process, must receive training on:

- A. the definition of Sexual Harassment (as that term is used in this policy);
- B. the scope of the Corporation's education program or activity;
- C. how to conduct an investigation and implement the grievance process, appeals and informal resolution processes, as applicable; and
- D. how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interests, and bias.

All Corporation employees will be trained concerning their legal obligation to report Sexual Harassment to the Title IX Coordinator. This training will include practical information about how to identify and report Sexual Harassment.

Recordkeeping

As part of its response to alleged violations of this policy, the Corporation shall create, and maintain for a period of seven (7) calendar years, records of any actions, including any supportive measures, taken in response to a report or Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment. In each instance, the Corporation shall document the basis for its conclusion that its response was not deliberately indifferent and document that it has taken measures designed to restore or preserve equal access to the Corporation's education program or activity. If the Corporation does not provide a Complainant with supportive measures, then the Corporation will document the reasons why such a response was not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances. The documentation of certain bases or measures does not limit the Corporation in the future from providing additional explanations or detailing additional measures taken.

The Corporation shall maintain for a period of seven (7) calendar years the following records:

- A. Each Sexual Harassment investigation including any determination regarding responsibility, any disciplinary sanctions recommended and/or imposed on the Respondent(s), and any remedies provided to the Complainant(s) designed to restore or preserve equal access to the Corporation's education program or activity;
- B. Any appeal and the result therefrom;
- C. Any informal resolution and the result therefrom; and
- D. All materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process.

The Corporation will make its training materials publicly available on its website.

Outside Appointments, Dual Appointments, and Delegations

The Board retains discretion to appoint suitably qualified persons who are not Corporation employees to fulfill any function of the Board under this policy, including, but not limited to, Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, decision-maker for appeals, facilitator of informal resolution processes, and advisor.

The Board also retains discretion to appoint two or more persons to jointly fulfill the role of Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, decision-maker for appeals, facilitator of informal resolution processes, and advisor.

The Superintendent may delegate functions assigned to a specific Corporation employee under this policy, including but not limited to the functions assigned to the Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, decision-maker for appeals, facilitator of informal resolution processes, and advisor, to any suitably qualified individual, and such delegation may be rescinded by the Superintendent at any time.

Discretion in Application

The Board retains discretion to interpret and apply this policy in a manner that is not clearly unreasonable, even if the Board's interpretation or application differs from the interpretation of any specific Complainant and/or Respondent.

Despite the Board's reasonable efforts to anticipate all eventualities in drafting this policy, it is possible unanticipated or extraordinary circumstances may not be specifically or reasonably addressed by the express policy

language, in which case the Board retains discretion to respond to the unanticipated or extraordinary circumstance in a way that is not clearly unreasonable.

The provisions of this policy are not contractual in nature, whether in their own right, or as part of any other express or implied contract. Accordingly, the Board retains discretion to revise this policy at any time, and for any reason. The Board may apply policy revisions to an active case provided that doing so is not clearly unreasonable.

3.43 NOTICE OF PARENTAL RIGHTS REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

The following rights are those afforded to the parent/guardian of a student who is believed to be disabled under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:

1. Your child will be evaluated before any decision is made regarding the initial placement or a subsequent significant change in placement in a regular or special education program. You have the right to an independent evaluation at your expense.
2. Any placement decision will be made by a group of persons who are knowledgeable about your child, the meaning of the evaluation data and the placement options within the school corporation.
3. In addition to any evaluation data, the group will consider such other information as aptitude and achievement tests, teacher recommendations, physical condition, social or cultural background and adaptive behavior when making any placement decision.
4. Any placement of the student will be with persons who are not disabled to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of your student.
5. You have the right to examine your child's education records and to exercise all other rights granted to you in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Your child will not be suspended or expelled for more than ten (10) days unless a group of persons knowledgeable about your child and data meet to determine that the behavior is not a manifestation of your child's disability.
6. You have the right to request a hearing regarding any decision made by the school corporation with respect to the identified disability, evaluation, or educational placement of your child.
7. Upon receipt of a request for a hearing, the school corporation will appoint an impartial hearing officer (one who is knowledgeable about Section 504 and who does not have a direct interest in the outcome of the hearing). The hearing officer will advise you within a reasonable period of time of the date, time and place for the hearing. You have the right to be represented by legal counsel or any other representative at this hearing at your own expense.

A copy of the Section 504 regulations will be given to you along with this notice. Any questions regarding your rights should be directed to the Superintendent or designee of this school corporation:

Merrillville Community School Corporation
6701 Delaware Street
Merrillville, IN 46410
PH: 219-650-5300, FX: 219-650-5320
Email: superintendent@mvsc.k12.in.us

SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

Before a Section 504 placement can be considered, the school corporation must evaluate the student. A full evaluation is not required when neither the school corporation nor the parents believe that the child is in need of special education or related services.

In interpreting evaluation data and making placement decisions, the school corporation must draw upon information from a variety of sources; assure that all information is documented and considered; ensure that the

placement decision is made by a group of persons including those who are knowledgeable about the child, the meaning of the evaluation data and placement options; ensure that the student is educated with his/her non-handicapped peers to the maximum extent appropriate.

SECTION 504 REFERRAL PROCEDURES

1. General education interventions should be the first alternative for students suspected of having academic or behavioral difficulties. A referral should be made to the Teacher Assistance Team and the General Education Intervention Plan followed. If general education interventions are not effective, the team will determine whether additional evaluations should be pursued.
2. An evaluation referral is to be completed and submitted to the building principal. The principal will ensure that an evaluation is completed and if necessary, involve the Northwest Indiana Special Education Cooperative diagnostic team.
3. The parent will sign permission for an evaluation. The parent's rights will be explained at that time.
4. A team of persons who have knowledge of the child's physical and/or mental condition will participate in the evaluation of the student. The team will determine the extent of testing that needs to be completed in order to establish eligibility for services.
5. After completing the evaluation, the team will establish;
 - a. Whether the physical or mental impairment substantially limits one of the major life activities, such as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, caring for one's self, or performing manual tasks; or
 - b. If there is a history of such an impairment, such as a student who is in the recovery stages of cancer; or
 - c. If the child is regarded as having such impairment, such as a student who has tested positive for the HIV virus but has no physical effects from it.
6. The parent will be notified and a Section 504 committee conference will be held to review the evaluation results and discuss possible programming options.
 - a. If the child qualifies for special education services under Indiana Article 7, a placement in special education will be discussed and procedures for placement in special education programs will be followed.
 - b. If the child does not qualify for special education services, the conference committee will determine if the child qualifies for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
 - c. The Section 504 committee will outline the intervention plan on the form provided, listing the strategies, the chief implementers, and showing the monitoring dates.
 - d. The Section 504 Parents' Rights will be explained and a copy given to the parents.
7. Each case for students eligible for services under Section 504 should be reviewed annually to ensure implementation and needs for alternation. Students should be re-evaluated every three (3) years or if there is any significant change in placement (see #5, prior section).
8. Students reentering school after having been temporarily placed in a private setting (medical facility, rehabilitation center, clinic) will have a referral initiated for Section 504 eligibility. Parent/Guardian may request 504 forms from the Superintendent's Office.

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Each morning at the end of the 1st hour, the announcements will be communicated over the PNN. Announcements are made about school affairs and matters of school interest only. Announcements must be turned

in to the secretary to the assistant principals by 7:20 am in order to be communicated that day. Those turned in after 7:20am will be communicated on the following day's announcements. All student requests for announcements must be sent by teacher or sponsor to the main office secretary. Announcement reminders may be made at the beginning of the 5th hour on a daily basis.

AWARDS CEREMONY

Shortly before the completion of the school year, an awards ceremony is scheduled to honor those students who have demonstrated outstanding academic achievement during the year. Various awards and citations are distributed. Parents are encouraged to attend this program which is normally held in the evening.

BOOK RENTAL AND FEES

At the beginning of each school year, students must pay rental fees which are a percentage of the cost of the books used in their courses. Charges are also made for workbooks, test sheets, consumable items, Physical Education Uniforms and some course projects.

At the end of the year the books are collected by the issuing teacher. If a book has had excessive wear, the student is charged an additional fee. The original cost of books will be available in the office. All fees are to be paid by the last day of the first trimester. **UNPAID TEXTBOOK RENTAL FEES WILL BE TURNED OVER FOR COLLECTIONS.**

BOOK STORES

The bookstores are open during all lunch hours for students to purchase school supplies, order an ID or service a chromebook. Bookstores are located outside the cafeterias in both the freshman wing and main building.

BULLYING

The School Board is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all of its students. The Board encourages the promotion of positive interpersonal relations between members of the school community. Bullying behavior toward a student, whether by other students, staff, or third parties, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. This prohibition includes physical, verbal, and psychological abuse as provided herein. The Board will not tolerate any gestures, comments, threats, or actions which cause or threaten to cause bodily harm or personal degradation. Engaging in "cyberbullying," which is bullying that occurs through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or cellular telephone or other wireless or cellular communications device also is prohibited. This policy applies when a student is on school grounds immediately before or during school hours, immediately after school hours, or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group; off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event; traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event; or, using property or equipment provided by the school. Additionally, this policy applies regardless of the physical location when:

- A. the individual committing the bullying behavior and any of the intended targets of the bullying behavior are students attending a school within the School Corporation; and
- B. the bullying behavior results in substantial interference with school discipline or an unreasonable threat to the rights of others to a safe and peaceful learning environment.

Bullying as defined in State law means overt, unwanted, repeated acts or gestures, including verbal or written communications or images transmitted in any manner (including digitally or electronically), physical acts

committed, aggression, or any other behaviors committed by a student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the other student and create for the targeted student an objectively hostile school environment that:

- A. places the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to the targeted student's person or property;
- B. has a substantially detrimental effect on the targeted student's physical or mental health;
- C. has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's academic performance; or
- D. has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, and privileges provided by the school.

This type of behavior is a form of harassment, although it need not be based on any of the legally protected characteristics, such as sex, race, color, national origin, marital status, or disability. It includes, but is not limited to, such behaviors as stalking, intimidation, menacing behavior, coercion, name-calling, taunting, making threats, and hazing. It also includes the use of digital or electronic communications to engage in such behaviors.

However, Indiana law exempts the following from the definition of "bullying":

- A. Participating in a religious event.
- B. Acting in an emergency involving the protection of a person or property from an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or substantial danger.
- C. Participating in an activity consisting of the exercise of a student's rights protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or Article I, Section 31 of the Constitution of the State of Indiana, or both.
- D. Participating in an activity conducted by a nonprofit or governmental entity that provides recreation, education, training, or other care under the supervision of one or more adults.
- E. Participating in an activity undertaken at the prior written direction of the student's parent.
- F. Engaging in interstate or international travel from a location outside Indiana to another location outside Indiana.

Any student who believes s/he has been or is currently the victim of bullying should immediately report the situation to the building principal or assistant principal or the Superintendent. The student also may report concerns to a teacher or counselor who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate administrator or Board official. This report may be made anonymously. Complaints against the building principal should be filed with the Superintendent. Complaints against the Superintendent should be filed with the Board President. A parent may file a complaint on behalf of a student in the same manner.

Every student is encouraged, and every staff member is required, to report any situation that they believe to be bullying behavior directed toward a student. Reports may be made to those identified above. Staff members who fail to report bullying or who fail to conduct an investigation when assigned that duty are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

All complaints about bullying behavior that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated according to the timeline established by the Superintendent's administrative guidelines.

If, during an investigation of reported acts of bullying and/or harassment, the investigator believes that the reported misconduct may have created a hostile learning environment and may have constituted unlawful discriminatory harassment based on sex, race, color, national origin, religion, or disability, the investigator will report the act of bullying and/or harassment to one (1) of the Compliance Officers so that it may be investigated in accordance with the procedures set forth in Policy 5517 - Anti-Harassment.

If the investigator finds an instance of bullying behavior has occurred, prompt and appropriate action or responses shall be taken to address the behavior wherever it occurs including, as appropriate, disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion for students, discharge for employees, exclusion for parents, guests, volunteers, and contractors, and removal from any official position and/or a request to resign for Board members. Bullying acts shall be reported to law enforcement officials immediately upon determining that a report to law enforcement is necessary.

The parents of the targeted student and the reported bully shall be notified of the alleged bullying incident at the beginning of the investigation, the findings of the investigation at the conclusion of the investigation, and, as appropriate, any remedial action that has been or will be taken to the extent disclosure is permitted by law. In addition to discipline, remedial action may include support services for the targeted student and bullying education for the bully, among other actions.

Retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning allegations of bullying is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of Board policy and independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as bullying. Making intentionally false reports about bullying for the purpose of getting someone in trouble is similarly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Retaliation and making intentionally false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

For a definition of and instances that could possibly be construed as hazing, consult Policy 5516.

The Corporation shall maintain a link on its internet website containing information and protocols for reporting a bullying incident as well as a link to the internet website resource page maintained by the Indiana Department of Education that provides parents and school officials with resources or best practices regarding the prevention and reporting of bullying and cyberbullying.

Confidentiality

To the extent appropriate and/or legally permitted, confidentiality will be maintained during the investigation process. However, a proper investigation will, in some circumstances, require the disclosure of names and allegations.

Safe School Committee

In accordance with State law, there shall be a Safe School Committee in each school within this Corporation (see Policy 8400 - School Safety).

The Superintendent is directed to develop administrative guidelines to implement this policy. Guidelines shall include reporting and investigative procedures, as needed. The complaint procedure established by the Superintendent shall be followed.

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Legal

I.C. 5-2-10.1, 20-20-8-8, 20-30-5-5.5, 20-33-8-0.2, 20-33-8-13.5, 20-34-6-1

BUS FOR CNA/ ECE/Ed Professions

The Merrillville Community School Corporation provides a bus to and from the respective locations for our CNA, ECE, and education professions students and the students are to ride the bus. STUDENTS ARE NOT TO DRIVE THEIR CARS OR RIDE WITH ANYONE IN A CAR..

BUS RULES

The driver has the responsibility to maintain order and discipline on the bus. Whenever a problem occurs which is beyond his control, the driver will inform the school principal or director of transportation, in writing, of the circumstances involving violation of rules of conduct. When an investigation has determined the guilt of the participants, the school principal or his representative or director of transportation will notify the parent either by telephone or by letter explaining what occurred and the decision that has been made. If the problems continue after the first incident, the student may be suspended from the school for a period of up to five days and a parent conference may be requested. Misbehavior may result in the decision by the building level administrator that we withhold bus riding privileges.

Students are expected to adhere to the following regulations:

- A. Each student shall seat himself or herself immediately upon entering the bus in the place assigned by the driver.
- B. Students shall not stand or move from place to place during the trip.
- C. Students shall not tease, scuffle, trip, hold, hit, or use their hands or feet or body in any other objectionable manner.
- D. Windows will not be opened or closed except by permission of the driver.
- E. Students shall not enter or leave the bus until it has come to a complete stop and the door has been opened by the driver.
- F. Students should be waiting at the boarding station when the school bus arrives, preferably five (5) minutes prior to normal pick-up time. The driver is responsible to maintain his schedule and cannot wait for tardy students.
- G. For just cause and upon the recommendation of the bus driver, school authorities may deny the privilege of riding on the school bus to any student.
- H. The student should observe classroom conduct (except for ordinary conversation) while getting on or off and while riding the bus. Loud, boisterous, or profane language or indecent conduct shall not be tolerated.
- I. Students are to obey the driver and to report promptly to the school official when instructed to do so by the driver.
- J. Students should warn the driver of approaching danger, if there is a reason to believe the driver is not aware of the danger.
- K. There is to be **no talking** when a bus is near a railroad crossing.
- L. Younger brothers or sisters who are not in school will not be allowed on the bus for transportation to school.
- M. Livestock such as animals, insects, reptiles, and birds will not be transported on a school bus.
- N. Students will be discharged in the P.M. from a bus only where they were picked up in the A.M.
- O. Students shall not smoke on the school bus.
- P. Stay off the traveled roadway at all times while waiting for a bus.
- Q. Wait until the bus comes to a stop before attempting to get on or off.
- R. Enter or leave the bus only at the front door after the bus has come to a stop except in case of an emergency or a drill.
- S. No eating on the bus to and from school
- T. Cross the traveled roadway, if necessary, after leaving the bus in the following manner:
 1. Make certain the bus is not moving
 2. When leaving, go to the front of the bus at least 8 to 10 feet or within sight of the driver and wait for the proper signal for crossing.

3. Upon signal from the driver look both to the right and the left and proceed across the highway in front of the bus (never cross a roadway from the back of the bus).
 4. Walk (do not run) in front of the bus when crossing the highway.
- U. Keep hands and head inside the bus at all times.
- V. When possible, inform the driver when absence is expected from school.
- W. Report to the driver at once any damage to the bus that is observed.
- X. When known; report to the driver any lights that may be out.
- Y. Help keep the bus clean, sanitary, and orderly.

CAFETERIA AND LUNCH PERIOD

Lunch time should be an enjoyable and relaxing time for students. Lunches are served in the main and freshman cafeterias, and include regular lunches as well as a la carte items. Students may bring their own lunch from home. Students eating in the cafeteria must consume their food in the cafeteria. Students are expected to keep the cafeteria clean and to put all scraps in the waste cans which are provided. Trays are to be returned to the tray return. Failure to return trays to tray return will result in a referral. During the lunch periods students must remain in the cafeteria unless given permission to go elsewhere. All other areas of the building are off limits during students' lunch time. Students who are in unauthorized areas during the lunch period without a pass will be assigned detention time when they are referred to an administrator. Food from restaurants is not to be eaten in the cafeteria and is not to be brought or delivered to school.

Visitors are not allowed to eat lunch with students. MHS has a closed campus during lunch hours; no students are allowed to leave the building.

CELL PHONES/WIRELESS COMMUNICATION

A. Definition of Terms

Wireless communication devices include, but are not limited to: cellular phones, smartwatches, tablets, laptops, personal gaming devices, earbuds, headphones, smart glasses and any other personal electronic device capable of sending, receiving, or accessing communication or digital content.

B. Universal Student Expectations

To maintain a focused learning environment, students are not permitted to access or use wireless communication devices during the school day. Any cell phone, smart watch, earbud, or similar device in a student's possession must remain powered off, stored out of sight, and inaccessible from the beginning of the school day until the final dismissal bell.

- **Storage Locations:** Devices must be securely stored out of sight in student backpacks (in elementary buildings) or assigned student lockers (in intermediate, middle, and high school buildings). Devices are not permitted to be kept in student desks or on a student's person.
- **Strictly Prohibited Times & Areas:** Personal wireless communication devices are not permitted during the school day which includes bringing, using, or possessing such items on one's person in the following areas:
 - classroom instruction
 - passing periods
 - lunch periods
 - study halls and school assemblies
 - restrooms and locker rooms
 - including any other building locations during the school day unless authorized by school personnel.

MERRILLVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR LOST, STOLEN, OR DAMAGED PERSONAL WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICES BROUGHT ONTO SCHOOL PROPERTY OR SCHOOL-SPONSORED TRANSPORTATION.

C. Approved Exceptions

In strict alignment with Indiana state law, students will only be permitted to access or operate personal wireless communication devices under the following specific, documented circumstances:

1. **Educational Plans:** When explicitly required as part of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 Plan.
2. **Medical Needs:** When required by a documented, verified medical condition (e.g., continuous blood glucose monitoring).
3. **Translation Services:** When approved by administration for language translation support services.
4. **Emergency Situations:** During a health or safety emergency, or when authorized explicitly by the Superintendent or a building administrator.
5. **Audio Note-Taking:** Students may use an unobtrusive, audio-only recording device for personal educational assistance *only* if pre-approved by building administration. The device must remain fully visible to staff, cannot capture imagery/video, cannot livestream/broadcast, and cannot be used for evaluative or disciplinary purposes.

Note: Teacher directed technology use within classrooms will occur exclusively via school issued Chromebooks/devices or approved school sanctioned equipment. Personal student devices are not permitted for general classroom assignments.

D. Prohibited Conduct & Disciplinary Action

Personal devices may never be used for cheating, academic dishonesty, harassment, bullying, cyberbullying, intimidation, threats, or any activity that violates the Student Code of Conduct.

Unauthorized photographing, audio/video recording, livestreaming, or distribution of media involving students, staff members, or school activities during the school day is strictly prohibited.

In instances where a student's device is visible or active during restricted times, the item will be confiscated by a staff member and turned over to the appropriate administrator. Confiscated devices will only be released directly to a properly identified parent/guardian who must come to the school to reclaim it. Refusal to surrender a device upon request will be deemed insubordination and will result in immediate disciplinary referrals, up to and including suspension.

E. Notice Regarding Device Content

Sending, sharing, viewing, or possessing pictures, text messages, emails, or other material of a sexual or illegal nature in electronic or any other form, including the contents of a cell phone or other electronic device, is strictly prohibited on school grounds or school sponsored events. Possessing or distributing such items will be grounds for immediate disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from school.

- **Child Abuse/Neglect Law:** Indiana law requires school personnel to report to law enforcement or child protective services whenever there is reason to believe that any student is involved with "child exploitation" or "child pornography" as defined by Indiana Criminal Statutes.
- **Child Exploitation (I.C. 35-42-4-4(B)):** It is a felony for any person/student to exhibit, photograph, or create a digitized image of any incident that includes "sexual conduct" by a child under the age of 18; or to disseminate, exhibit, or offer to distribute matter depicting "sexual conduct" by a child under 18.
- **Child Pornography (I.C. 35-42-4-4(C)):** It is a felony for any person/student to knowingly possess a photograph, motion picture, digitized image, or pictorial representation depicting "sexual conduct" by a child who is or appears to be less than 16 years of age.
- **Sexual Conduct (I.C. 35-42-4-4(a)):** Defined to include sexual intercourse, exhibition of uncovered genitals intended to satisfy or arouse sexual desires, or fondling/touching of a child by another person.

Indiana Sex Offender Registration (I.C. 11-8-8-7 & I.C. 35-42-4-11): Requires individuals convicted of or adjudicated as a juvenile delinquent for violating Child Exploitation statutes to register as a sex offender. Given that student cell phones across various Indiana school districts have contained evidence of "sexual conduct" as defined above, parents and students must remain fully aware of these severe legal and disciplinary consequences.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER

Parents should update Skyward immediately of any change in home address or telephone number.

CHARGES BY A STUDENT

When a student or his parent believes that the student is being improperly denied participation in any educational function of the school corporation, or is being subjected to an illegal rule or standard, as provided by the statutes of the State of Indiana or applicable statute of the United States, or by the Constitutions of the State of Indiana or of the United States, he shall, if unable to work out his problems with the members of the administrative staff, be entitled to initiate a hearing by filing a charge with the superintendent in the same manner as a charge is initiated by the principal under hearing provisions described below. The ruling of the hearing examiner and determination of the superintendent shall with respect to participation in an educational function be denied, granted in whole, or granted subject to limitations, and with respect to that validity of a rule or standard or its application, to a recommendation that it be changed. An appeal from such decision and determination may be made to the Board either by the student or by the superintendent, such appeal to be undertaken within thirty (30) days. In any case involving the validity of a rule or standard, or its application, the matter shall be automatically appealed to the Board which shall make the final administrative determination. Nothing in this section shall limit the power of the Board from hearing petitions of students, parent, teachers, taxpayers, or other interested persons, to change the rules, or limit the power of the Board to make or change any rule or standard on its own motion, all subject to such rules relating to administrative procedure as the Board shall adopt in connection therewith. In the event the Board changes a rule or standard, or its application, it shall not be limited to the record.

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM POLICY

CHEATING includes but is not limited to, such unauthorized activities as:

1. COPYING homework.
2. COPYING on quizzes, tests, etc.
3. LOOKING AT another person's work during quizzes, tests, etc.
4. TALKING during a test or quiz without teacher permission.
5. Willingly PROVIDING unauthorized aid to another person.
6. PLAGIARIZING- A serious form of cheating, defined as presenting another writer's works, sentences, or ideas as their own (this includes any form of AI). More specifically, intentionally or accidentally using undocumented sources from any writer (or four or more consecutive words) without quoting the source.
7. Using ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) tools to generate, complete, or substantially modify assignments and then submitting that work as your own without explicit teacher permission constitutes academic dishonesty and will be treated as cheating under the school's academic integrity policy.

PENALTIES

1. The first incident of cheating: The student receives a zero for the work.
2. The second incident of cheating: The student receives a Friday Extension Program, in addition to a zero for the work.
3. The third incident of cheating: The student will be withdrawn from the class with a grade of "F" for the trimester.

For PLAGIARISM the first incident results in a zero for the work and a Friday Extension Program; other penalties are the same as for the general cheating policy.

CIVILITY POLICY

8.95 MERRILLVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION CIVILITY POLICY

(To be considered inclusive for harassment, bullying and use of profane language)

This policy requires mutual respect, civility and orderly conduct among MCSC students, parents, employees and the public. Civility does not deprive any person of his/her right to freedom of expression, but serves only to maintain, to the extent possible and reasonable, a safe, harassment-free workplace for students and staff.

In the interest of presenting adults as positive role models to the children of this school corporation, as well as the community. MCSC encourages positive communication and will not tolerate volatile or hostile actions and/or abusive language by any student, parent, guardian, employee or patron (hereafter known as “person”).

Any person who disrupts or threatens to disrupt normal school and/or office operations; threatens the health and safety of anyone through harassment or bullying; willfully causes property damage; uses offensive language; or who otherwise establishes a continued pattern of unauthorized entry on school property, will be dealt with either according to student disciplinary procedures, or if an adult, will be asked to cease such behavior or be directed to leave school property. If any person uses obscenities or speaks in an abusive manner, the administrator or employee to whom the remarks are directed will politely request that person to communicate in a courteous manner. If corrective action is not taken by the person, the employee will verbally notify him/her that the meeting, conference or telephone conversation is terminated and will refer the person to the building principal or designee. For students, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken according to the student handbook. For adults, the Superintendent or designee will inform the person that he/she will not be allowed on school property for an amount of time commensurate with the violation of this policy.

CORPORATION RESPONSIBLE USE POLICY (RUP)

Purpose

The Responsible Use Policy (RUP) provides students with guidelines for the appropriate use of technology in the Merrillville Community School Corporation (MCSC). MCSC provides technology to its staff and students to develop 21st-century skills, prepare students for college and careers, and enable collaboration and data sharing among students, staff, and the world. The guidelines provided are not all-encompassing, and the expectation is that all users will exhibit good judgment and follow school rules when making decisions. School computers, networks, tablet devices, and other technologies are all covered within the RUP.

This policy is reviewed annually and is intended to comply with applicable state and federal law, including the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and Indiana law governing student use of wireless communication devices (IC 20-26-5, as amended).

School Technology Prohibited Use Rules

Students may not engage in any of the following. Violations are subject to discipline under the student handbook, up to and including loss of technology privileges, and may be referred to law enforcement where applicable.

- Using computer-related technology with the intent to damage, harm, or render unusable any services, information, data, data storage systems, or computer resources.
- Using technology in any way to bypass MCSC security with the intent of gaining access to any unauthorized system.
- Cyberbullying will not be tolerated. Harassing, denigrating, impersonating, and cyberstalking are all examples of cyberbullying. Do not send emails, post comments, or send messages through any platform (including social media, gaming, or messaging apps) with the intent of scaring, hurting, or intimidating others. Engaging in these behaviors, or in any online activities intended to harm another person (physically or emotionally), will result in severe disciplinary action and loss of privileges. In some cases, cyberbullying can be a crime under Indiana law (IC 35-45-2-2 and related statutes). Remember that your activities are monitored and retained.

- Deliberately using computer-related technology for any purpose that violates any individual school or MCSC rule or regulation, including any conduct that would result in discipline under the student handbook.
- Using technology off school property for any purpose that would violate the student handbook if it had been committed on school property.
- Unauthorized use of computer-related technology for commercial purposes not specifically authorized by the school board or the superintendent.
- Using computer-related technology and/or MCSC-provided Internet access to transmit, upload, download, view, or distribute any illegal files.
- Using computer-related technology for the purpose of plagiarism, including submitting work generated by another person or by an artificial intelligence (AI) tool as one's own. See the Artificial Intelligence section below.
- Misappropriating, misusing, or wasting consumable supplies.
- Misappropriating, misusing, or wasting any computer-related technology resources.
- Knowingly allowing, promoting, assisting, or causing any other person to violate any provision of this policy.
- Using any computer-related technology for the purposes of gambling.
- Using anonymous proxies, VPNs, or other tools to circumvent content filtering or monitoring.
- Installing or using any Internet-based file-sharing program designed to facilitate the sharing of copyrighted material.
- Reading, altering, changing, blocking, executing, or deleting files, communications, program inventories, or histories belonging to another user.

Personal Wireless Communication Devices (Cell Phones and Similar Devices)

This section is added to comply with Indiana law (IC 20-26-5, as amended by Senate Enrolled Act 78, signed March 5, 2026, effective July 1, 2026), which requires every Indiana school corporation to adopt and enforce a wireless communication device policy. MCSC has adopted a no-device-out policy during the school day (Bell to Bell), as described below.

Covered devices. “Wireless communication device” includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, and other wearable devices capable of communication; tablets and laptops not issued by MCSC; gaming devices; and wireless earbuds or headphones.

Students may not have personal wireless communication devices out or use them on school property during the school day. The “school day” means the entire time a student is on campus for instruction, from arrival (first bell) to dismissal (last bell), and includes passing periods, lunch, study halls, and any other non-instructional time during the day. Any device a student needs for transportation safety must be powered off and stored out of sight (for example, in a backpack) for the entire school day and may not be accessed at any time during the school day.

Permitted exceptions. Use or possession of a personal device may be permitted only in the following circumstances, consistent with Indiana law:

- A documented medical or disability-related need identified in a student's individualized education program (IEP), Section 504 plan, or other plan of care, where the device is necessary to monitor or manage a health condition.

- An emergency, when use is expressly authorized by the principal or superintendent (or a designee).
- Language translation for a student with limited English proficiency, provided that MCSC-managed devices are used for this purpose whenever available.
- Other uses expressly directed and supervised by a teacher or administrator for a specific educational purpose, consistent with law and this policy.

Before and after school. This policy applies only during the school day. Personal device use before and after the school day and at before- and after-school activities is governed by the student handbook and the supervising staff member's rules.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

Generative AI tools (for example, chatbots and image, audio, or video generators) may be used by students only when a teacher expressly permits their use for a specific assignment or purpose. When the use of AI is permitted, students must follow the teacher's instructions, including any requirements to cite or disclose AI assistance.

Submitting AI-generated work as one's own, without permission and disclosure, constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty and is subject to disciplinary action under this policy and the student handbook. Students must not enter personal, private, or confidential information about themselves or others into AI tools, and must not use AI tools to create content that would otherwise violate this policy (for example, harassing, threatening, or inappropriate content).

Teachers and the Technology Department determine which AI tools, if any, are approved for use on MCSC devices and networks.

Digital Citizenship and Responsible Use

Students in the Merrillville Community School Corporation are exposed to technology at all grade levels. With this exposure to technology, we also want students to learn to become good Digital Citizens. Much like we have rules for the way we behave in society, we have rules for how we should behave in our digital society. Student expectations for technology use are in place to help create the best possible technology environment. Students will learn about internet safety, cyberbullying, digital footprint, and other important aspects of digital citizenship.

It will be the student's responsibility to report any problems with the device to their teacher. Students will receive instructions on how to use and care for the device. Students misusing their device(s) in any way will face disciplinary consequences in accordance with the student handbook.

Expectations

- Students will receive the device in their classroom and return it to the cart before they leave. Students must report any damage to their device immediately to their teacher. Students and parents will be held financially responsible for any intentional damage to a device.
- All students should recognize and guard their personal and private information. While on the Internet, students shall not reveal personal information, including home address or phone number, or the address or phone numbers of other students.
- The device comes equipped with both a camera and video recording capabilities. Students must request permission before recording an individual or group. Recording must be used appropriately in an

educational manner. MCSC reserves all rights concerning any recording and/or publishing of any student or staff member's work or image. Students must obtain permission from the school to publish a photograph or video of any school-related activity.

- Devices must remain free of any writing, drawing, stickers, or labels that are not the property of MCSC. District-affixed labels and tags shall not be removed from the Chromebook, written on, or destroyed.
- Inappropriate websites and images, including, but not limited to, guns, weapons, inappropriate language, threatening language, drugs, alcohol, or gang-related images, are not permitted and are subject to disciplinary action.
- The addition or deletion of software, apps, or plug-ins is not permitted by students without the permission of the teacher or the Technology Department. Failure to comply may result in restricted access to the device.
- Social media platforms (such as social networking, video-sharing, and similar sites) are not allowed unless used under the direct supervision of a classroom teacher for a specific project. Students should also be aware that Indiana law now restricts minors' use of certain social media platforms and may require verifiable parental consent to create or maintain an account; see the Social Media section below.
- Students will use the device assigned to them and only that device. Students must not share usernames or passwords with other students. The device should be secured at all times. Never place any objects between the keyboard and screen.
- The device is the property of the Merrillville Community School Corporation. It may be confiscated and inspected at any time. Students do not have any right to privacy of any data found on any device or cloud storage system owned or managed by MCSC.
- Students must follow copyright laws and should store data only on devices where it is legal to do so.
- The device will be used in the classroom or at home to do classwork and other activities approved by the teacher.

Social Media

While social media has its place in society, it needs to be used with respect and with the understanding that everything posted is permanent and may be seen by others. With that in mind, these guidelines suggest proper ways to use social media and how to avoid the pitfalls.

Indiana law restricts minors' access to certain social media platforms. Depending on the platform, a Hoosier minor may need verifiable parental or guardian consent to create or maintain an account, and platforms may be required to apply additional protections to minors' accounts. Students and parents are responsible for complying with these requirements; MCSC is not the enforcing party but expects students to follow the law.

- Use proper discretion when posting to any social media platform. Posts are permanent. Do not post anything that you wouldn't want your parents, friends, teachers, future college boards, or future employers to see.
- Never give out personal information about yourself or anyone else when posting.
- Make sure not to violate any copyright laws by posting pictures, videos, etc. that are the intellectual property of someone else.
- Represent yourself with respect when posting; remember that others will be able to read these.
- If you see anything that you feel is inappropriate and may harm others, report it to your school principal. There is no safety in silence.
- Never pretend to be someone else or misrepresent yourself when posting to social media networks.

Internet Access

Internet access is provided to all students and staff at MCSC. MCSC provides filtering of obscene, pornographic, and harmful content on the internet in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). MCSC uses a subscription service to provide daily-updated filter content and also receives input from staff and students about sites that may need to be blocked or recategorized. This, however, does not always prevent determined users from accessing information that may be objectionable. Internet privacy and security are the user's responsibility. Students and staff who choose to work around filters and security are in direct violation of this policy and will face discipline in accordance with the handbook.

Monitoring and privacy.

Students and staff should have no expectation of privacy in their use of MCSC devices, networks, accounts, or storage. MCSC monitors and retains technology activity for safety, security, and compliance purposes, consistent with applicable data privacy law.

CRIMINAL GANGS AND CRIMINAL GANG ACTIVITY IN SCHOOLS. 8.96

The Board of School Trustees of the Merrillville Community School Corporation prohibits gang activity and similar destructive or illegal group behavior on school property, on school buses, and/or at school sponsored functions. The board prohibits reprisal or retaliation against individuals who report gang activity and similar destructive or illegal group behavior. The board further prohibits reprisal or retaliation of victims, witnesses, bystanders, or other people with reliable information about an act of gang activity and similar destructive or illegal group behavior.

The following definitions apply to this policy:

Criminal Gang means a group with at least three (3) members that specifically:

1. Either
 - a. Promotes, sponsors, or assists in; or
 - b. Participates in, or
1. Requires as a condition of membership or continued membership the commission of a felony or an act that would be a felony if committed by an adult or the offense of battery.

Gang activity means a student who knowingly or intentionally solicits, recruits, entices, or intimidates another individual to join a criminal gang.

Per state law, a school employee shall report any incidents of suspected criminal gang activity, criminal gang intimidation, or criminal gang recruitment to the principal and the director of security. The principal and the director of security may take appropriate action to maintain a safe and secure school environment, including providing appropriate intervention services. Appropriate consequences and remedial actions are those that take into consideration the severity of the offenses and consider both the developmental ages of the student offenders and the student's histories of inappropriate behaviors per the code of conduct.

Any corporation and school employee who promptly reports an incident of suspected gang activity and who makes the report in compliance with the school corporation procedures is immune from a cause of action for damages arising from any failure to remedy the reported incident.

The principal or designee shall conduct a thorough and complete investigation for each report of suspected gang activity. The investigation shall be initiated by the principal or the principal's designee within one school day of the report of the incident. The principal may appoint additional personnel and request the assistance of law enforcement to assist in the investigation. The investigation shall be completed and the written findings submitted to the principal as soon as possible, but not later than five school days from the date of the report of the alleged incident of criminal gang activity.

The principal shall take any appropriate disciplinary actions based upon the findings of the investigation, in accordance with the code of conduct. The superintendent of the school corporation is authorized to define the range of ways in which school staff and the principal or the principal's designee shall respond once an incident of criminal gang activity is confirmed, according to the code of conduct. Consequences for a student who engages in gang activity may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

The principal shall provide the parents of the students who were investigated with information about the investigation. The information to be provided to parents includes the nature of the investigation, whether the corporation found evidence of criminal gang activity, and whether consequences were imposed or services provided to address the activity. This information is to be provided in an expedited manner.

As appropriate to the investigation findings, the principal also shall provide intervention and or relevant support services. The principal shall inform the parents of all students involved in alleged incidents and discuss the availability of counseling and other intervention services.

Support services may include one or more of the following:

1. Gang awareness education that shows promise of effectiveness based on research. The gang awareness education information should be revised and updated regularly to reflect current trends in gang and gang-like activity.
2. Culturally and/or linguistically appropriate services/supports for parents and families.
3. Counseling coupled with mentoring for students and their families.
4. Community and faith-based organizations and civic groups.
5. Viable, sustainable after-school programs developed in collaboration with other stakeholders.
6. Job training and employment opportunities as both a deterrent to gang involvement and an incentive to leave gang involvement.
7. School sanctioned/facilitated extracurricular activities.

The principal shall submit the report to the superintendent of the school corporation within ten (10) school days of the completion of the investigation. The superintendent or his/her designee shall report the results of the investigation to the School Board on a quarterly basis during regularly scheduled board meetings.

Each school within the school corporation shall record the number of investigations disposed of internally and the number of cases referred to local law enforcement, desegregated by race, ethnicity, age, and gender. Each school shall report this information to the school corporation superintendent who shall submit a written report to the Indiana Department of Education by June 2 of each year.

The policy shall be annually disseminated to all parents who have children enrolled in school within the school corporation. Notice of this policy must be published in student handbooks and all other publications of the school corporation that set forth the rules and procedures for schools within the school corporation.

School officials are encouraged to collaborate with stakeholders to provide gang prevention and intervention services and programs, including but not limited to:

1. Provide training for staff and teachers on gang prevention and intervention resources within a jurisdiction on a periodic basis. The gang awareness information should be revised and updated regularly to reflect current trends in gang activity.
2. Create formalized collaboration plans between local school administration and community-based prevention and intervention providers (possibly using the existing County Safe School Commissions as points of contact). The formalized collaborations should make effective, coordinated, and maximized use of federal funding a priority.
3. Coordinate resources and funding opportunities to support gang prevention and intervention activities.
4. Consider integrating the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) Program into curricula.

Adopted: June 7, 2016

LEGAL REFERENCE: IC 20-26-18, IC 20-33-9-10.5, IC 35-45-9-1

DELIVERIES (During School Hours)

MHS prohibits the acceptance of deliveries for students from outside sources. This includes flowers, balloons, food, candy and stuffed animals. It is our school policy that we will not accept any delivery for students in the Main Office or Student Services. If you want to send your son or daughter balloons or flowers, we ask that you please have them delivered at home.

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Students in the Merrillville Community School Corporation are exposed to technology at all grade levels. With this exposure to technology we also want students to learn to become good Digital Citizens. Much like we have rules for the way we behave in society we have rules for how we should behave in our digital society. Student expectation while using technology is in place to help create the best technology environment possible. Students will learn about Internet safety, cyberbullying, digital footprint and other important aspects of digital citizenship.

Expectations:

- Be responsible when using any technology devices in the corporation
- Do not install or remove any program or applications on a device without permission of your teacher
- Devices should be handled with care and returned to their assigned location at the end of the day
- Devices may be used by multiple students, make sure that you leave devices in working condition
- Use devices for education purposes
- Refrain from posting any information on the internet and remember to keep private and personal information to yourself
- Social media should only be used under the supervision of a teacher
- Report damage immediately to our teacher

DRESS CODE

In addition to educational responsibilities, the school system accepts the obligation of developing positive student attitudes toward personal hygiene and appropriate attire. Without such positive attitudes, students will not be able to make the best use of their academic skills in the world of work and society in general.

We ask for the support of our parents in ensuring that students come to school properly groomed and dressed. Proper attire is defined as clothing that is clean, modest, which does not create a health or safety hazard, and which is not distracting or demeaning to other students.

The following items are considered unacceptable and are not to be worn while attending school or school sponsored activities.

- Hats, bandanas, visors, and other head coverings.
- Clothing, jewelry, or accessories advertising/containing references in writing or pictures to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and/or which contains foul or suggestive language/pictures, etc.
- Jackets and coats, which are normally worn outdoors (These items are to be placed in lockers during the school day)
- Form fitting clothing: leggings, tight athletic pants, tube skirts, stretch pants, jeggings, yoga pants, etc. unless covered by a loose-fitting knee length top
- Clothing that is primarily constructed of spandex or spandex like material as an outer garment
- Chains excessive in length and thickness will be confiscated
- Sleeveless shirts and blouses that expose the shoulders (tops must include sleeves and cover the shoulders)
- Tank tops, crop-tops, belly shirts or exposed midriffs
- See through clothes that reveal undergarments or skin

- Dresses that are transparent, excessively tight, have slits up the side, or that do not fall below the knee
- Clothing that reveals underwear or private body parts. Examples include: see through and mesh shirts or blouses; undone clothing or accessories (belts, zippers, blouses, snaps, etc.), dresses with slits up the side, sagging pants; low cut tops; short shorts
- Sagging: Pants/shorts worn under the hip, exposing a student's undergarments or skin. If a student is bending over, and any of the above shows, it will be a violation of the “No Sagging” rule. Students who are in violation of this rule will be sent to Student Services and assigned an in-school suspension.

DRESS CODE AIR FORCE JUNIOR ROTC

The Air Force Junior ROTC (AFJROTC) course is an elective program that Merrillville students may choose to take. Two significant parts of the AFJROTC program are wearing the uniform and wellness. Each of these is required once a week unless otherwise specified by one of the AFJROTC instructors. Once a student has been issued the necessary uniforms they are required to be worn once a week. The following procedures apply for each:

The “blue” AFJROTC uniform is required to be worn on designated uniform-wear days, usually every Wednesday. Cadets are expected to wear the uniform ALL DAY, from the beginning of the first-hour to the end of the fifth-hour. Additionally, cadets are expected to wear the uniform properly ALL DAY. Cadets will be inspected during their AFJROTC class and graded on their uniform wear. Cadets may lose points from uniform infractions observed or reported during the day. These uniforms are provided to cadets at no cost. However, cadets must provide a \$20.00 cleaning deposit to cover the professional cleaning of the entire uniform at the end of the year.

The “wellness” (physical training/PT) uniform consists of athletic shorts, athletic t-shirt, and athletic shoes that the cadets can use to workout in. The athletic shorts and t-shirt will be issued to cadets. On wellness days, normally Friday, cadets are provided time and separate areas to change into their wellness uniform. At the end of the class period they are again provided time and areas to change back to their “street” clothes. The wellness uniform (shorts and shirt) is provided to cadets at no cost.

The consequences for not wearing the uniform (either “blues” or wellness) will follow the same procedures as non-completed homework. AFJROTC instructors will use the “homework” slip to document non-wear of either AFJROTC uniform. When either uniform is not worn:

1st Time-Teacher warns student

2nd Time-Teacher phones parents/guardian(s) and gives student a detention slip

3rd Time-Teacher sends student to Student Services-student assigned one Friday Extension Program

4th Time-Teacher sends student to Student Services-student will be removed from the class and the AFJROTC program with a grade of F

Teachers’ guidelines will be followed regarding the make-up of missed uniform wear.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES/WIRELESS COMMUNICATION (see CELL PHONES p. 56)

Electronic/wireless communication devices include, but are not limited to: cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, laptops, personal gaming devices, earbuds, headphones, META AI glasses and any other personal electronic device capable of sending, receiving, or accessing communication or digital content. These electronic/wireless communication devices are **NOT** to be used, displayed, or visible during the school day. In instances where a student's device is visible or active during restricted times, the item will be confiscated by a staff member and turned over to the appropriate administrator. Confiscated devices will only be released directly to a properly identified parent/guardian who must come to the school to reclaim it. Refusal to surrender a device upon request will be deemed insubordination and will result in immediate disciplinary referrals, up to and including suspension.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS OR DELAYS

In the event of an emergency or severe weather, early dismissals or school closings will be reported on local radio stations WZVN-107FM, WJOB-1230 AM and WAKE-1500AM; Chicago radio stations WGN-720 AM and WBBM-780 AM; and TV stations WYIN (Channel 56 or Cable 12), CBS (channel 2), news Channel 5, ABC (Channel 7), WGN (channel 9), FOX (Channel 32 or Cable 6), and CLTV News (Cable 32). Parents may also call the school, or check www.cancellations.com

Students, parents, faculty, etc., may call the Emergency Closing Center to check on the status of school at the cost of 95 cents per minute. Call 1-900-407-SNOW (1-900-47-7669) and enter the school corporation's main number, 219-650-5300, for the latest information. You may call Merrillville High School at 650-5307 to listen to the recorded message. Call Merrillville High School as the last resort; lines may be busy.

ERRANDS DURING SCHOOL TIME

In the rare event a teacher approves a student leaving the school building for a class related reason (ex: go out to the student lot to grab an assignment accidentally left in the car), the student must report to the Student Services Office to call his/her parents/guardians for their permission to leave the building. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL STUDENTS BE PERMITTED TO LEAVE THE BUILDING WITHOUT ONE OF THE OFFICE PERSONNEL TALKING WITH THE PARENT/GUARDIAN AND RECEIVING PERMISSION FOR THE STUDENT IN QUESTION TO LEAVE.

EXPENDITURES

In the fall of each school year, students are given the opportunity to purchase such items as pictures, class rings, graduation announcements, etc. The only required payment for items of this nature comes in the senior year when seniors participating in commencement exercises are **required** to purchase a cap and gown depending on the current contract arrangement.

Freshmen, sophomores and juniors are given the opportunity to purchase pictures at the time their pictures are taken for the yearbook. All students' pictures appear in the yearbook, regardless of whether or not they purchase the pictures. Freshmen, sophomores, and juniors are also given the opportunity to purchase class rings through a company under contract with the school, although students are free to purchase rings, if they wish to do so, whenever they choose.

Commencement announcements and other graduation memorabilia are ordered by those seniors wishing to do so in the fall of the year. Again, there is **no requirement** on the part of the students to purchase any of these items.

The amount of money that a student spends on the above items varies greatly from student to student. Students receive information about the items and their prices prior to the date on which orders must be placed and are encouraged to discuss any purchases with their parents in advance of this date.

Prom attendance requires that all debts be paid in full before tickets may be purchased. No exceptions.

FIELD TRIPS

Students are to pick up a STUDENT FIELD TRIP PERMISSION SLIP from the teacher/staff member sponsoring an approved field trip. THIS SLIP MUST BE SIGNED BY ALL TEACHES WHOSE CLASSES WILL BE MISSED PRIOR TO THE FIELD TRIP. If teachers don't sign next to their class period approving a student to be out of their class, the student is not allowed to attend the field trip. Any teachers who enter "NO" next to their class period on the field trip slip indicate that a student does not have permission to miss their class to attend the field trip in question. If a teacher(s) enters "NO", the student may appeal to their grade level Principal/Building Principal for a final decision.

FIELD TRIP STUDENT MAKE-UP WORK

Field trip days are not “free days” from the work to be done in classes which are missed due to the field trips. Students who attend field trips are responsible for asking teachers for work BEFORE attending the field trip. Teachers may require you to do work which will be missed either BEFORE or after attending the field trip; it must be ready THE DAY AFTER THE FIELD TRIP. Field trips are considered a regular school day and are not reason for extra make-up days.

FIELD TRIP: STUDENT NON-PARTICIPATION

Students who decide not to participate in an approved field trip are to attend classes as usual or be counted TRUANT. If a teacher enters “NO” that you have not been given permission to leave their class and a student attends a field trip anyway, the student may be counted TRUANT.

FINANCIAL AID

Colleges, State, and Federal Governments and Corporations offer scholarships, grants and loans of various sorts. Financial Aid documentation is sometimes required to qualify for these monies.

- Scholarships are posted on a weekly or biweekly schedule. Hard copies of the posting may be obtained in the Guidance Office in a bin under the television monitor.
- Scholarship postings are also found on the Merrillville High School Guidance and Counseling website at <https://www.mvsc.k12.in.us/1/departments/56>
- Early college applications are essential where merit aid is concerned. Seniors are strongly advised to apply for college admission early, certainly before November. Applications for scholarships should be sent even earlier in some cases. Parents and students should refer to the college websites to determine scholarship and deadline dates.
- Deadlines are rarely negotiable, it is imperative to submit applications in a timely fashion.

FIRE DRILL

A fire evacuation plan is posted in each room. Students should study the plans for the rooms which they use and become familiar with them. When the fire horn sounds, students are to stand immediately and form lines as they leave the room. Students should keep their place in line, refrain from talking and avoid running toward their assigned exit. The first students to reach outside doors are to hold doors open until all students assigned to that particular exit have left the building. Once outside, students are to remain at least fifty (50) feet away from the building until the signal is given by the principal, or another authorized person, to return.

FOOD ALLERGIES

Any student with a food allergy must complete the Special Dietary Needs Medical Statement Form which requires a physician signature. This form will be on file in the nurse's office and the allergy will be listed in Skyward. Any form without a physician signature will not be acknowledged. Any medications required for the allergy, must also have a physician's order. Any changes in food allergies will require a subsequent note from the student's physician to initiate the change. Due to students with food allergies, NO homemade snacks will be distributed to Merrillville students. Approved store-bought snacks are allowed and must have ingredients clearly listed on the label in order to be served to students in the Merrillville Community School Corporation. Approved snacks can be found on the school nutrition website. Any student that needs a special accommodation due to religious or social preferences, should also fill out the Special Dietary Needs Medical Statement Form. Under the Disability/Medical Need of Student, write the explanation by the other box. Religious or social preferences DO NOT require a physician signature.

HEALTH SCREENING PROCEDURES

All screenings will be completed in accordance with state requirements.

Vision screening will be completed in Kindergarten, 1st, 3rd 5th, and 8th grades on all students new to the corporation, and any student suspected of having vision problems. Modified Clinical Technique vision screening will be completed on all 1st grade students. Hearing screenings will be completed in Kindergarten, 1st, 4th, 7th,

and 10th grades, on all students new to the corporation, and any student suspected of having a hearing problem. Parents will be notified of any problem identified during the above screenings.

HOMEROOM/SRT

All students will be assigned to a homeroom. Homerooms will typically be in session on Tuesday's, with the exception of early release days. During homeroom students will choose their SRT schedules for the week (Wed-Mon), and participate in guidance, student government, literacy, and character development activities. Students and staff will be notified when there are interruptions to the homeroom/SRT schedules in advance. Attendance rules apply and students will be issued a tardy or unexcused absence when applicable. SRT (Student Resource Time) should be utilized in a productive manner - school work, tutoring, projects, studying or extra-curricular activities only. Students not meeting expectations will be subject to disciplinary action.

ID CARDS

All staff members need to know if a young person that is in the school or is at a Merrillville activity, is in fact a student at Merrillville High School. The ID card allows the student to identify himself/herself as a Merrillville student. It will also help in an emergency to be able to identify the name of the student.

An ID card will be issued at the beginning of each school year or when he/she becomes a student at Merrillville High School. All students must wear/display the ID card on school days. Photo ID must be suspended from the neck, fully visible from a distance. ID's are not to be worn on any other part of the body. **One** Merrillville Pirate breakaway lanyard and **one** photo ID card will be given to students, one per year per student. Additional lanyards will be available for purchase in Student Services.

Special note: Any student choosing not to wear a MHS breakaway lanyard will assume all responsibility and expense if injured.

Consequences: Forgetting your ID card is not an acceptable excuse.

Teachers will refer any student who does not display their ID to Student Services to have a replacement made.

After the second occurrence of "no ID", the student may be referred to the assistant principal for disciplinary consequences. **Consistently forgetting or refusing** to wear the ID card or consistently wearing the ID in an inappropriate place, is considered insubordination, and will result in referral to Student Services for further disciplinary consequences.

1st referral	After School Detention
2nd referral	Friday Extension Program
3rd referral	One day out-of-school suspension, parent contact/conference

Replacement Lanyards cost: \$4.00

Replacement ID's cost: \$6.00

IMMUNIZATION

2026-2027 School Year Immunization Requirements

	REQUIRED		RECOMMENDED
Pre-K	3 Hepatitis B 4 DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus & Pertussis) 3 Polio	1 Varicella (Chickenpox) 1 MMR (Measles, Mumps & Rubella) 2 Hepatitis A	Annual influenza COVID-19
K - 5th Grade	3 Hepatitis B	2 Varicella	Annual influenza

	5 D'TaP 4 Polio	2 MMR 2 Hepatitis A	COVID-19
6th - 11th Grade	3 Hepatitis B 5 D'TaP 4 Polio 2 Varicella	2 MMR 2 Hepatitis A 1 MCV4 (Meningococcal) 1 Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria & Pertussis)	Annual influenza 2/3 HPV (Human papillomavirus) COVID-19
12th Grade	3 Hepatitis B 5 D'TaP 4 Polio 2 Varicella	2 MMR 2 Hepatitis A 2 MCV4 1 Tdap	Annual influenza 2/3 HPV 2 MenB (Meningococcal) COVID-19

Indiana Law IC 20-8.1-7-10.1 that a school corporation shall require parents of a child who has enrolled in a school corporation to furnish no later than the first day of school a documented statement of the child's immunization record. The parent/guardian must assume responsibility for obtaining the records. A waiver may be granted in certain circumstances and additional documentation will be required (Please see the school Nurse). Children can and will be excluded from school if proper immunization documentation is not received.

Indiana State Department of Health, Immunization Division (800) 701-0704

INSIGNIAS

Only organizations approved by the MHS school administration may display or wear insignias, crests, designs, slogans, sayings, etc., while on school property or while attending home or away school functions.

LEAVING SCHOOL

Any student leaving school during the school day must sign out with the nurse (for illness only) or the Student Services Office before leaving or he/she will be considered truant. If a student signs out to see a doctor, he/she must bring a note from his/her doctor and present it to the Student Services Clerk on the first day back to school. Any student who fails to bring a doctor's note to the Student Services Clerk upon his/her return to school will be considered truant and the appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. Appointments with doctors and dentists are included in this procedure. Students will receive an admit slip from the Student Services Clerk when they return, which will allow them back into their assigned class.

LEGAL RESIDENCY

Students who attend Merrillville Schools must be legal residents of the school corporation. Legal residency for students requires that parents of students reside in Ross Township. The rare exceptions to this rule involve home construction and incapacitate parents' issues and special exemptions granted to some twelfth-grade students under limited circumstances. All exception requests must be submitted to and approved by the building principal or assistant principals.

Fraudulent enrollments will be treated as follows:

1. Recommended for expulsion.
2. Tuition may be charged for the entire period the student has attended Merrillville Schools (approximately \$3000 per school year).
3. If tuition payment is not received within thirty days of billing, the bill will be turned over to a professional collection agency for not only payment of tuition, but also for all legal fees and collection agency charges associated with collection of tuition charges.

All citizens of Ross Township are requested to assist the school corporation in identifying fraudulent enrollments. If you have reason to believe that student is not a legal resident of the school corporation please notify the principal of the school the student is attending or call the Administration Office at 650-5300.

LICE SCREENING PROCEDURES

Due to the CDC recommendations, Merrillville Community School Corporation will no longer follow a NO nit policy. If a student is found by the school nurse with an active case of live head lice, the parent will be notified to pick the student up from school. Parents will then be instructed on how to treat the Lice, housekeeping details, and will receive a copy of the MCSC pamphlet (according to CDC guidelines). Students will be rechecked by the school nurse one week after treatment. Parents will be informed if live lice have been found upon exam and the process will repeat.

LOCKER CLEAN UP

Each student is assigned a locker for storage of books and equipment. Only that student's belongings are to be in his/her locker. It is the student's responsibility to see that his/her locker is kept locked and in order at all times. If a student's locker is jammed or needs repair a report needs to be made to the Guidance Department. Since lockers are a permanent part of the building, students are expected to keep them in good condition. Lockers are not to be shared by students.

Get study materials for your morning classes when you arrive in the morning, and materials needed for the afternoon during the lunch period. No one should leave class to go to his locker except during an emergency.

In those buildings providing facilities for the temporary storage of student possessions such facilities shall be made available for the convenience of and as a service to the student. The provisions of the facilities shall in no way be interpreted as diminishing or abrogating the principal's authority or control over the use of the lockers. The principal or assistant principal shall possess the authority to examine the contents of any locker located on school premises when he has reasonable suspicion to believe that the contents of the locker may include elements which:

1. Present an immediate threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students or staff.
2. Are illegal to possess.
3. Would contribute to the disruption of the normal educational program.
4. Have been reported stolen or lost.

The student is presumed to have no expectation of privacy in that locker or its contents.

Students desiring to make use of school lockers will be advised at the time of acquiring the privilege of locker use, that such use is privilege granted by the school system, and of the conditions specified for such use. Failure to comply with the conditions of use will result in revocation of the student's permission to use a locker.

The decision to examine a student's locker will be made by the principal, and/or his designated representative. The principal (or his representative) who conducts the search shall, whenever possible, do so in the presence of the student and at least one adult witness. In the event of an emergency that threatens the physical safety of students, the principal (or his representative) may search lockers without students being present. Discovery of illegal or dangerous materials will be reported to the parent, the superintendent of the schools and, if necessary in the opinion of school officials, to law enforcement officials.

LOST AND FOUND

Students who find lost articles are asked to bring them to the Security Office. Students who have lost articles are requested to claim them in the Security Office. Students who have lost textbooks should check with the subject teacher or in the Student Services Office.

MAKE-UP WORK

All class work missed because of an excused absence:

1. Assignments given prior to the student's absence are due when the student returns.
2. If the student is absent at the time the assignment is given-the student shall have the same number of day(s) as he/she was absent to complete the assignment. **(Example: If the student is absent for 2 days, upon return, the student will have two school days to complete the assignment which will be due during class on the third day.)**

MEAL CHARGE POLICY

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) requires school food authorities to establish written administrative guidelines and policy for meal charges. Merrillville Community School Corporation will adhere to the following meal charge policy: 1. A student may charge up to three (3) meals maximum (one charge per meal) as long as they establish and maintain a good credit history of making payments on their food service accounts. 2. A staff member may charge the total cost of \$3.00 as long as they establish and maintain a good credit history of making payments on their food service accounts. 2. A student who has charged a meal may not charge or purchase “ala carte” item(s), including extra main entrees. 4. If a student repeatedly comes to school with no lunch and no money, food service employees must report this to the building administrator. It could be a sign of abuse or neglect and the proper authorities should be contacted. 5. The food service manager or other school personnel will coordinate communications with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to resolve the matter of unpaid charges. 6. If food and nutrition services staff suspect that a student may be abusing this policy, written notice will be provided to the parent(s)/guardian(s) that if he/she continues to abuse this policy, the privilege of charging meals will be refused. 7. The food service manager will also send home letters each week to parents of elementary students who carry negative balances \$6.00 and above. Parents of secondary students will receive emails once a week with negative balance information. 8. All accounts must be settled by the last student day as designed on the school calendar. Letters will be sent home mid-March to students who have any negative balances. Negative balances of more than \$20.00 not paid in full by the last student day of school will force the District to take action to collect unpaid funds by means of collection agencies, small claims court, or any other legal method deemed necessary by the District. Under the National School Lunch Program, the Food and Nutrition Program is not allowed to write-off debt. 9. Students who graduate or withdraw from the district and have \$15.00 or more left in the food service account will be notified by mail by the district Food and Nutrition Department Office at the end of the school year and given the option to transfer the funds to another student or to receive a refund. If no response is received within thirty (30) days, the student’s food service account will be closed and the funds will no longer be available.

Presented: 07/18/2017

Adopted: 08/01/2017

MEDIA CENTER

The Instructional Media Center (IMC) is a centrally organized, readily accessible collection of many kinds of material that enrich and support the educational program. Its resources include books, magazines, and other printed instructional material as well as audio books, DVD’s video tapes, and CD-ROM databases.

There is no eating or drinking in the Media Center, no moving furniture or chairs from assigned tables, and no unnecessary talking. Feet should be kept on the floor. Media resources should be used with care and returned promptly to their proper places or to the check-out desk.

Books may be checked out for a two-week period. Reference material and current magazines may be checked out for overnight use. Overdue notices will be sent out periodically. Items that are renewed or returned late will be charged an overdue fine of 5 cents per day/per item. The maximum fine on each item is \$2.00. All items that have reached the \$2.00 fine limit will be considered lost and parents will be billed for the cost of the item. In order to enter or check out any materials from the Media Center all students must have their school ID displayed around their neck on a lanyard.

The Audio-Visual Center is part of the Instructional Media Center and the staff is responsible for providing all services for teachers and students which are connected with audio-visual materials.

A student who uses a computer belonging to the Merrillville Community School Corporation must sign and return to the school a copy of the Rules and Code of Ethics for Computer Users form.

MEDICATION

MERRILLVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION- MEDICATION POLICY

1. No medication (not limited to prescription medications but including over-the-counter medications such as aspirin) shall be administered to a student without the written and dated consent of the student’s parent and physician.

2. The consent of the parent and physician shall be valid only for the period specified on the consent form and in no case longer than the current school or program year.
3. Prescription medication must be in a prescription bottle labeled with the child's name, doctor's name, name of medication, dosage, and the time to be given. Over the counter medication must be in the original bottle, labeled with the child's name, dosage, and the time to be given.
4. If the medication is to be terminated prior to the date on the prescription, the written and dated consent or withdrawal of consent of the parent is required.
5. Principal or his/her designee shall cooperate in giving any medication so prescribed. The school cannot be responsible for the effects of medication administered as directed.
6. If students are receiving medication at home, parents are encouraged to contact the school principal or school nurse with such information.
7. No student shall be allowed to keep medicine at school. Any medicine to be administered to a student shall be brought to either the principal's office or school nurse's office where it will be kept in a secure location. Unused medicine by students in kindergarten through grade 8 must be sent home only through the student's parents or an individual who is at least 18 years old and is designated in writing by the student's parents to receive the medication. For students in grades 9 thru 12, unused medicine may be sent home with the student only with the written permission of the student's parents.
8. Exception to the rule: a student with a chronic disease or medical condition may possess and self-administer prescribed medication for the disease or condition if the student's parent has filed a written authorization with the building principal. The written authorization must be filed annually and must include the following information:
 - a. Physician's statement that the student has an acute or chronic disease or medical condition for which the medication has been prescribed.
 - b. The nature of the disease or medical condition requires emergency administration of the prescribed medication.
 - c. The student has been instructed in how to self-administer the prescribed medication.
 - d. The student is authorized to possess and self-administer the prescribed medication.

NEWSPAPER

Merrillville High School students publish a newspaper. *The Mirror* newspaper is published online at: <https://mhsmirrornews.com/>

NURSE

Merrillville Community Schools have registered nurses who are on duty all day. As a rule, the Nurse's Office in the High School is open from 7:15 am to 2:45 pm.

Students should report to the Student Service Office when the nurse is not available.

NO STUDENT IS TO REPORT TO THE NURSE'S OFFICE WITHOUT THE PROPER PASS, EXCEPT IN THE CASE OF AN EMERGENCY.

The principals, nurse and office personnel are the only people who have the authority to send students home for apparent sickness or injury.

THE NURSE SHOULD NOT BE USED AS A PERSONAL PHYSICIAN; SHE SHOULD BE SEEN ONLY FOR INJURY OR ILLNESS OCCURRING AT SCHOOL.

Students may be excluded from school for the following conditions and diseases. A physician's release is required to return to school for those marked with an asterisk*:

1. Conjunctivitis-bacterial and viral*
Students with conjunctivitis or "pinkeye" may not return to school until the eyes are clear and without drainage or on antibiotics for 24 hours and a doctor's release to return to school is presented in the nurse's office.

2. Diarrhea (exclude until diarrhea is gone)
3. Fifth Disease (may exclude if fever present)
4. Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease*
5. Herpes Zoster (Shingles)*
6. Hepatitis A *
7. Impetigo
8. Infectious Mononucleosis
9. Measles (Rubeola)*
10. Meningitis-bacterial and viral*
11. Mumps (Infectious Parotitis)*
12. Pediculosis Capitis (Lice) students with Pediculosis (head lice) may return to school when the hair is free from active lice
13. Pertussis (whooping cough)
14. Pinworms (Enterobiasis) return after 24 hours of treatment
15. Roseola (Exanthem Subitum)*
16. Rubella (German Measles)*
17. Scabies*
18. Scarlet Fever (may return after 24-48 hours of antibiotic treatment and fever free for 24 hours)
19. Staphylococcal Infections *
20. Streptococcal Infections (may return after 24-48 hours of antibiotic treatment and fever free for 24 hours)
21. Temperature of 100° or above (Students must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. A temperature of 100° Fahrenheit or above is considered a fever. Temperature should be taken without the use of a fever reducing medication).
22. Tinea Capitis (Ringworm of the scalp)*
23. Undiagnosed skin condition*
24. Varicella-Zoster Virus (Chicken Pox) exclude until all vesicles have scabbed
25. Bed Bugs (school nurse assessment required to return to school; severe cases require physicians release)
26. Any other condition in which the school feels a physician's note for readmission is necessary to protect the student population

In addition, a release from the physician will be required for absences due to any extended reason. A physician's release is needed regarding hospitalization for any reason, and any newly diagnosed condition including, but not limited to: cardiac or heart conditions, orthopedic problems, (including conditions involving a splint, cast, crutches, or use of wheelchair or elevator), diabetes and the use of glucometers, asthma, and seizures. If you are in doubt about the length of time to keep children home after the occurrence of other common childhood diseases, please contact the school nurse. If a child cannot participate in gym class due to physical restrictions per the physician, then he/she may not participate in recess until medically released.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Students whose parents show an active and supportive interest in their **daily** school work are more likely to achieve success at school. Parents are expected to cooperate with the school in the areas of academic progress, dress, discipline, and character development. Parents should encourage children to take responsibility for their homework. The responsibility for basic behavior development rightfully belongs with the individual and the parents. The school will not accept sole responsibility for the actions of students. Parents should assist the school in promoting and maintaining acceptable social and moral standards of conduct. Interest in the instructional program can be demonstrated by parents backing the school and supporting reasonable rules and regulations.

1. Parents should support school rules and regulations.
2. Parents must take an active interest in the academic program and the progress of their child.
3. Parents need to work with the child to develop a systematic approach to successfully completing homework assignments.
4. Parents need to provide a quiet place to study and proper time to study at home.

5. Parents should participate in restorative circles when appropriate.
6. Parents should provide instruction in citizenship, patriotism, respect for authority, honesty, integrity, courtesy, regard for the rights of others, and personal responsibility.
7. Parents should try to make the monthly CIC meetings scheduled for 1:10 pm to 2:15 pm in the Main Office Conference room. Speak with the building principal to find out how to join.
8. Parents should sign up and login to Skyward at least once a week to check student attendance and academic progress in classes

There is a very strong correlation between time spent in the classroom and student achievement. Regular attendance most certainly contributes to successful results in all classes.

Students are expected to attend school regularly and to arrive punctually. If an absence is unavoidable, it is the student's responsibility to complete make-up work.

Parents should make every effort to schedule a student's doctor and dental appointments outside of the school day. If your child is absent from school for any reason it is important that you call the school by 10:00 am that day.

Parents need to be partners with the schools in educating their children-active partners. Parents should make a habit of checking the type of homework assignment and the quality of work being done. Neatness and accuracy are important. If no homework is being brought home, call your child's teacher(s) and "see" what is being assigned.

Teach by example at home. Read books, magazines, and newspapers regularly. Shut off the television and socialize with your children. Speak proper, grammatically correct sentences to them. Develop listening and conversation skills which they'll need. Talk about world, national, and local events, geographic locations, political leaders, and possible reasons for what's happening in our world and what these events might mean to you and your children. Help them to think critically, to ask questions, and to study possible results of their actions.

Teach your children about physical fitness, proper eating habits, and personal health. Remember, even though you say nothing, they are watching you and learning from you.

Finally, expect high academic achievement. Set goals and keep them in mind. When goals are reached, set new ones so that there is always something "out there" for your children to try to reach.

PASS PROCEDURES

A major portion of the learning process occurs in the classroom. Being out of the classroom should only occur when situations arise that cannot be handled before school, between classes, lunch time, or after school.

When leaving the class students must have their ID displayed by a lanyard and the school approved teacher's pass on a lanyard.

Any student in the halls during class time without an ID displayed by a lanyard and the school approved teacher's pass will be referred to student services.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION DRESS CODE

Physical Education students must wear a Merrillville High P.E. uniform to class as required. The consequences for not wearing the uniform are as follows:

1. Warning (8 participation points deducted from grade);
2. Warning (8 participation points deducted from grade) and a phone call home to parent;
3. Suspend from class (8 participation points deducted from grade);
4. Removal from class with a W

REASONABLE AFFECTION

At Merrillville High School, during the school day, affection will be limited to holding hands. At dances and other activities other appropriate expressions of affection are not acceptable. Inappropriate expressions will be subject to disciplinary action.

RELEASE OF STUDENT INFORMATION

The school corporation may release certain “student information”, including the student’s name, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, date of attendance, awards received, and other similar information without parental consent to newspapers, magazines, radio and television colleges, civic organizations or similar groups, or publish such information in its own publications, programs, yearbooks. Student information/picture may be displayed on school website, PNN, cable, video production, or by other means unless the parent notifies the school corporation by the third Monday in September of each school year that he/she does not waive any or certain designated student information released to such parties without their express prior written consent. According to the state law “student information” will be provided to the military. However, parents may request student’s information to be withheld. The withhold form can be obtained in the Guidance Office.

RESTROOMS

Students may use the restrooms during passing times, lunch (restrooms in commons area only), before and after school. **Use of restrooms during class time is for emergency situations.** Any student that goes into a washroom of the opposite gender will receive a minimum of five (5) days suspension and/or will be subject to a change of placement. **More than one person in a restroom stall** will result in disciplinary referral to the appropriate administrator. Restrooms are **NOT** hang out or meet up spots.

NON CURRICULAR STUDENT ACTIVITY FEE

Students will be assessed a fee per year for the online high school newspaper, *The Mirror*, ID, and breakaway lanyards.

STUDENT ASSISTANTS

Student assistants must be under the direct supervision of the supervising teacher at all times. Student assistants are assigned an identification badge which is to be worn whenever they are sent on an errand out of the direct supervision of their supervising teacher. Student assistants who violate school rules, guidelines established for assistants, or who are involved in other activities which are not in line with the expectations of assistants will receive one (1) warning from the Student Services Office and upon the second referral to the Student Services Office will lose their position as an assistant and will be assigned to study hall.

STUDENT INSURANCE

The Merrillville Community School Corporation does not have health insurance coverage for accidents that happen to students at school. The Central Office can provide you with a brochure that explains a secondary insurance policy that the corporation offers to our students. The brochure explains the costs for 24 hours, school time, extended dental and football plans. It is important to note that the school time insurance covers the student directly to and from school sponsored and supervised events in which they are a participant. This includes all athletic participation (except football in grades 9-12) as well as all day at school. The football plan is separate and information regarding football insurance may be obtained from the Merrillville High School Athletic Trainer.

STUDENT MASTERY OF INDIANA STANDARDS

A. Guarantee to Employers:

The Merrillville Community School Corporation will provide free-of-charge essential skills instruction, on school system premises, to any Merrillville High School graduate referred by an employer as deficient in an essential learning skill. Such instruction shall be provided until the deficiency is remedied to the satisfaction

of the employer. The only exception to this policy shall be those graduates possessing an individualized education plan which identifies a handicap preventing the normal acquisition of basic learning skills.

B. Essential Skills Minimum requirements:

Beginning with the class of 2022, the SAT assessment taken at the end of grade 11 is designated as the Merrillville High School graduation examination. All Grade 11 students should pass this assessment at the minimum State proficiency level in order to receive fulfill box 3 of Indiana Graduation Pathways.

C. Required Remedial Action:

1. Where Grade 11 students perform below the minimum state proficiency level, they will have additional opportunities to retake the exam..
2. If a student has not met the minimum state proficiency level by the Fall of Grade 12, the student will be enrolled in other avenues to fulfill box 3 of grad pathways. This will take place in the first, second and third trimester of Grade 12 or during the ensuing summer.
3. If a student has not met the minimum state proficiency level by the Fall of Grade 12, the student will be enrolled in special remediation classes in either the second or third trimester.

D. Essential Skills Requirements for Graduation:

1. State law provides that a student may graduate without passing the graduation examination if a student's principal certifies, within one month of the student's graduation date, that the student has "successfully completed" all components of the Core 40 curriculum: as defined by State board policy.
2. Students certified as learning handicapped within the definition of Article 7 of the Indiana State Board of Education Administrative Rules will be eligible to receive a graduation diploma based on State rules governing learning handicapped students who either meet or do not meet the minimum state proficiency level on the ECA.

STUDENT MESSAGES

Messages to the students from their parent(s) will only be delivered during Morning Announcements to maximize the instructional time of the classroom. This will be limited for emergency situations approved by the Administrator.

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS POLICY

1. Printed materials or other items may not be distributed in the school building, on the school grounds, on the school buses, or at any school scheduled activity without approval of the principal. School equipment, supplies, and/or time will not be used to work on unauthorized publications.
2. Publications should always adhere to good journalistic practices. Publications should be free of libelous or obscene statements. Direct personal attacks on any person or organization are prohibited. Criticism of school board policy, administrative policy, etc., should be constructive in nature. Constructive criticism implies an obligation on the part of the author to offer intelligent alternatives to the policy/actions which are being criticized.
3. Advertisements should be appropriate for senior high school students. School board policy prohibits advertisements for political candidates.

STUDENT RECORDS

The Family Educational Right and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. 12329, accomplishes three things concerning students' rights to privacy in the area of their school records.

It provides parents with access to their children's records.

It provides for a hearing in which parents may challenge the contents of such records.

It spells out who may have access to records without parental permission and when parental permission is required.

During the student's school career, the school system collects and records data concerning the student. The school system recognizes that the collection, maintenance, and limited dissemination of such data is essential in school operations, but also that preserving the rights of privacy of the student and parents, and the student's or parents' right to correct inaccurate data is necessary. The school system has adopted this policy to comply with the provisions of the "Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974" (20 U.S.C. 12329).

Right of Access

A parent of a student (a) who is under the age of eighteen (18) years of age, and who (b) is currently enrolled, or (c) whose records are otherwise maintained by the school system, has a right to inspect and review such student's record or any part thereof.

Record of Access to Student Records Each student cumulative record folder, and each student record maintained separately from the folder, shall contain as part thereof a written form upon which any person examining such records shall indicate the following:

- A. The identity of such person;
- B. The specific record examined;
- C. Purpose of examination;
- D. In the case of a person whose job within the school system requires repeated examinations, the period of time over which such examinations were made.

STUDY HALL

Everyone who elects or is assigned to study hall is to:

1. Remain quiet during the period.
2. NO disruptions such as tossing paper, engaging in unnecessary movement, etc.
3. Come prepared to study with books, paper, pens, pencils, and a charged chromebook.
4. NO food or drinks into the study halls.
5. Follow the study hall supervisor's rules regarding seating assignments, movement around the room, etc. to help ensure a good study environment.

NOTE: A lack of cooperation/compliance with the study hall guidelines will result in disciplinary action.

TELEPHONE USE

Students may use the phone in student services before or after school. Students should avoid using the telephone during class time. Use of phones is limited to three (3) minutes.

TORNADO DRILL

Tornado safety instructions are posted in each room. Students should study the plans for the rooms which they use and become familiar with them. When the tornado signal, which is a series of short rings on the bell system sounds, classroom doors should be closed; students should walk to their assigned areas, kneel facing the inner walls, and cover their heads with their arms. Students should stay back from entrances and interior doors. If an alert is sounded when students are loading buses, students should return to the building.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

- A. The Merrillville Community School Corporation exists for the education of the resident's pupils. It is the policy of the Board not to accept transfer students who reside within the boundaries of other school corporations.
- B. Children who enroll in the Merrillville Community School Corporation during the school year shall be in the same grade in which they were previously enrolled unless the principal determines that the child would be inappropriately placed if enrolled at the same grade level.
- C. Students who move from the school corporation may, at the election of the parents or at the election of the student (if eighteen years of age) continue attending school corporation schools without charge until the end of the trimester.

D. In the case of a student who has completed the eleventh grade, the parents of such students or the student (if eighteen years of age) may elect to complete the twelfth year of high school in the Merrillville School system without charge if the school corporation is notified prior to relocation from the school district.

E. House Bill 1056 provides that a student in good standing may transfer to a Merrillville school if the students' parent is an employee of the Merrillville Community School Corporation and the school corporation has the capacity to accept the student.

TRANSPORTATION HOME DUE TO ILLNESS

Before a student who has become ill or injured is sent home, the nurse's office will notify the student's parent or guardian to arrange for transportation. In case of an injury which needs medical attention, an attempt will be made to contact the parent for advice. If a parent cannot be reached, the student will be taken to a doctor or to the hospital. **The school does not assume responsibility for payment of these bills.**

WITHDRAWAL

When withdrawing from Merrillville High School, parents are to contact the Student Services Office for the proper forms. Forms must be filled out, including the name of the receiving school, and signed. All paperwork will be given to the attendance secretary. The withdrawal process will be finalized with the grade level principal's signature. Students withdrawing from MHS are to return all school materials, including their chromebook and charger.

WORK PERMIT

The State of Indiana is creating an Employer Registration system for any employer that employs five (5) or more minors. Effective 7/1/2021, Indiana will no longer require work permits for minor employees. Employers will no longer be required to complete the "Intent to Employ" form, and schools will no longer issue work permits.

Employers will be responsible for maintaining an accurate list of all minor employees. If an employer has four (4) or fewer minor employees, registration will not be required. This registration does not have any impact on the work hour requirements for minors. All employers must still comply with the Teen Work Hour Restrictions.

YEARBOOK

Merrillville High School students publish a yearbook, *Merrillvue*, each year. Yearbook orders are taken in the fall of each year.

PART II: ACADEMICS

ACADEMIC HALL OF FAME

In order to qualify for the Academic Hall of Fame a student must be ranked in the top twenty-five students at the end of their second trimester of their senior year. Courses retaken under the audit policy cannot count toward calculations to determine the Valedictorian, Salutatorian, or Top 25 (Academic Hall of Fame).

Note: If a student takes a non-credited course such as being a student aid or study hall, this may affect rank as these courses do not count towards rank or total number of courses taken.

ACADEMIC LETTER ("M" AWARD)

Students attaining 3.80 grade point average are eligible to receive an "M" Award for academic excellence. Grade point average eligibility is determined at the end of eleven (11) terms for twelfth grade students; at the end of eight

(8) terms for eleventh grade students; and at the end of five (5) terms for tenth grade students. Students must be in attendance at Merrillville Community Schools to have a trimester's grades averaged.

Students will be awarded a letter for the first achievement, a gold bar for the second, and a lamp of learning for the third. All letters and pins will be distributed during the awards night ceremony.

ADULT EDUCATION

Adult Education courses will no longer be offered through the Corporation. Beginning January 2014, the Indiana High School Equivalency Diploma will be based on the completion of a comprehensive test developed by CTB/McGraw-Hill instead of the GED tests from GED Testing Service which is now referred to as the TASC (Test Assessing Secondary Completion Test). Our TASC preparation classes are designed for students to learn from their current knowledge to a point where passing the TASC Test the first time is a reasonable goal. This will enable students to be better prepared to take the test with our program. Students must be Indiana residents to enroll in the TASC Preparation Class; a valid Indiana State Photo ID or Indiana Driver's License is required. If the student is under the age of 18 (16 or 17) they must provide an exit interview from their prior educational institution and obtain a superintendent's approval. If they do not have the approval of the superintendent, we will present the supporting documentation for approval from the Merrillville Community School Corporation superintendent. TASC preparation Classes are conducted at Merrillville High School Monday through Thursday from 6-9pm. There is no cost for the class. Students may register at the Administration Office Monday through Friday during regular business hours.

DUAL CREDIT/ARTICULATION AGREEMENT

An articulation agreement is where certain courses taken in high school count as credit at a post-secondary institution (IUN, Purdue Northwest, Ivy Tech, etc.) as well as in high school. Such courses will be published in the curriculum guide as well as the regulations governing them.

During scheduling meetings, students will be informed if the classes they have selected are potentially available for dual credit. If a student elects to take a course for dual credit, the student must follow through with all registration procedures and fulfill all of the requirements of the partnering institution. Failure to do so will jeopardize their potential to earn the college credit.

Dual credit availability is subject to change.

AUDIT CLASS

A course may be audited in one of two ways:

1. When referring to the retake policy, students may replace the lower grade with a higher grade upon completion of repeating the course. The grade being audited will not factor into the student's GPA, and will be removed from the student's transcripts.
2. Audits may be assigned to students who have had excessive excused absences and cannot complete work at a passing level. Audits may also be assigned by the assistant principal for violations to the attendance policy. An audit in this case would be a course taken for no credit. The course is reflected on the transcript with a final grade, however that grade is not reflected in the student's GPA or class rank.

All work assigned in a class taken as an audit **MUST** be completed in order to remain in the class (according to current homework and attendance policies, class rules, and teacher expectations).

COMMENCEMENT

Juniors eligible and planning to graduate at the end of their junior year may participate.

Students who are candidates to participate in the commencement ceremony must be regularly enrolled senior students in the high school day school program and/or in the alternative school program and/or successfully complete the Fifth Year Senior Program. Students who are expulsion eligible and are in attendance in the day school program and/or alternative school program will not be eligible for participation in commencement

ceremonies or any other graduation related activities. The only exception will be those students who have been placed in the alternative program due to non-discipline related circumstances.

Students must have earned a minimum of 40 credits at the end of second trimester of senior year and have all debts paid in order to participate in commencement and baccalaureate.

Students enrolled into the Merrillville Alternative Program may participate if they are not expulsion eligible.

Students who successfully complete the Fifth Year Senior Program may also participate.

Specific participation guidelines will be announced during the student's senior year which applies to any student who is eligible to go through commencement.

COMPUTERIZED TESTING PROCEDURES

A teacher has the option to assess students using a computerized testing program in replacement of a traditional paper and pencil assessment. The purpose of the computerized testing program is to give immediate feedback to the students and report progress to parents in a timely manner. In the event of a computer failure the teacher has the option to retest the student with a written exam or postpone the exam to another time when the computers or network are back online. In the event of a computer failure or network outage during a final exam, the teacher has the option to replace the exam with a written exam if time permits or consider the exam null and void and use the average of the marking period grades as final grade. Exception: If a student is "thrown out" of an ECA testing window, that student will not be permitted to start over or go to paper for that testing window.

CORRESPONDENCE CREDIT

A maximum of two (2) units (four (4) credits) of correspondence study may be counted toward the awarding of a diploma to any student less than twenty-one (21) years of age.

DIPLOMA

The school year that graduation requirements are completed determine the date of graduation on the diploma.

DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS

Students must meet all requirements of the Merrillville Community School Corporation and meet or exceed the requirements of the state of Indiana. The state of Indiana requires that all students fulfill the requirements of Indiana Graduation Pathways. This includes three areas:

Box 1: Obtain credit requirements to earn a diploma: General, Core 40, Academic Honors, Technical Honors

Box 2: Demonstrate Employability Skills: Service Based, Work Based, Project Based

Box 3: Obtain *one* of the following: Honors diploma, qualifying score on ACT, SAT or ASVAB, earn state and industry credential or certification, complete a federally recognized apprenticeship, successfully complete a CTE concentrator, successfully complete AP or dual credit coursework, or successfully complete a locally created pathway.

Students who do not meet the requirements of the Graduation Pathways may appeal for a waiver. In order to qualify for a waiver, students must:

A. Attempt to fulfill at least three of the options for Box 3.

A. Have an attendance record of at least 95% in Grades 9 through 12 as defined in IC 20-10.1-16 13.

B. Meet remediation requirements.

C. Maintain a "C" (2.0) average (in the sum of all courses) that make up the thirty four (34) credits required by the State of Indiana to earn a diploma.

See page 81 for additional information regarding the Graduation Pathway Appeals Process/Waiver Process.

EARLY GRADUATION FROM MHS

Seniors can apply to graduate at midterm, either after the first or after the second trimester. A midterm graduation form must be completed with the counselor during the junior year when scheduling senior classes.

Students planning to graduate at the end of their junior year must apply with their counselor in their sophomore year when scheduling. Students must earn at least a Core 40 diploma and meet ALL other requirements in the application. Applications will be reviewed at the end of the student's sophomore year by a graduation committee. Students approved to graduate at the end of their junior year will be contacted by their counselor to establish the final plan of action.

EIGHTH GRADE CREDITS

Students who have earned high school credits in 8th grade will need to complete the specific number of credits in a subject area in high school. For example, a student who earned 2 credits in English during 8th grade will need to complete 9 credits of high school English to complete requirements for a diploma. The honors course work at the middle school is meant to supplement, not replace, high school courses. High School credit may be awarded for the following in courses completed in 8th grade: English 9, Integrated Math 1, Prep for College and Careers. The grades in these courses will factor into a student's overall GPA.

GRADUATION PATHWAY APPEALS PROCESS/WAIVER PROCESS

Waiver of Postsecondary-Ready Competencies

A student will only be eligible for a waiver if the student attempted to achieve at least three separate postsecondary readiness competencies and was unsuccessful in completing the postsecondary readiness competency by the conclusion of the senior year. This would include a student who was in the process of completing a competency at one school that was not offered by the school to which the student transferred.

If a student transfers to a school during their senior year from a non-accredited nonpublic school or an out-of-state school and the student;

- Attempted to achieve at least one postsecondary readiness competency and
- Was unsuccessful in completing the attempted competency.

Additionally, the student must fulfill the following requirements in order to be eligible for a waiver:

1. Maintain at least a "C" average or its equivalent throughout the high school career in courses required to graduate;
2. Maintain a school attendance rate of at least 95 percent with excused absences not counting against the rate;
3. Satisfy all other state and local graduation requirements beyond the postsecondary readiness competency requirements; AND
4. Demonstrate postsecondary planning (approved by school principal), including:
 - College acceptance, acceptance in an occupational training program. Workforce entry, or military enlistment

ENROLLMENT

All students are to be enrolled into a full day of school. Students may request a shortened schedule pending administrative approval and/or Rule 10.

FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY

The final examination will count twenty percent (20%) of the trimester grade average.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE AND CLASS RANK

Students are ranked according to class on the basis of scholarship. Grade points are assigned for each grade received according to the scale below.

A=4 B=3 C=2 D=1 and F=0

Unless students are enrolled in honors or Advanced placement courses, then grade points are assigned for each grade received according to the scale below:

A=5 B=4 C=3 D=2 and F=0

The grade point average is determined by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the credits attempted..

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Regular day students are encouraged to enroll in grades nine (9) through twelve (12) programs and shall be permitted to attend a minimum of 9 trimesters and may enroll in fewer than five (5) classes during their senior year only for reasons included in the State Board of Education Policies. Students meeting the requirements of graduation may declare their intention to graduate at the end of the first and second trimesters with the written permission of their parents and counselor certification that all graduation requirements have been met. Students must acquire 45 credits for the General Diploma, 45 credits for a CORE 40 College Prep Diploma, and 48 credits for the CORE 40 with Academic Honors and Technical Honors Diplomas; and shall meet all other State Department of Public Instruction requirements for graduation.

Students on track for the Academic and/or Technical Honors diplomas may not use credits from alternative school or credit recovery (Plato) to fulfill their diploma requirements.

GUIDANCE OVERVIEW

The purpose of guidance is to help students in their social/ emotional, academic, vocational and personal development. Counselors may be seen daily from 7:30am to 3:00pm. Student-counselor conference request slips are available in the Guidance Office. Conferences with students receive first consideration of the counselor's time and are scheduled whenever necessary.

The counselors may assist students in:

1. Assessment, to include adequate testing and compilation of information relating to the educational, personal, and social development of pupils;
2. Career development, to include a sequential program aimed at arousing and developing career interest of pupils;
3. Individual and group consultation, related to educational, career, and personal-social concerns; available to pupils, teachers and administrators
4. Pupil follow-up services, related to education and employment;
5. Research and evaluation services, which focus on improvement of the school environment.

HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT FOR COLLEGE COURSES

Junior and senior students may, upon following certain procedures, enroll in college courses and apply them toward both high school and college diplomas. Students desiring to do this need to schedule appointments with their counselors. During such an appointment, the students' interests will be discussed and the counselor will provide the student with the procedures which are to be followed. Junior and seniors participating in this program must

rank in the top 25% of their classes. In addition, if a student's participation would delay his/her graduation, or cause a cancellation of a high school class by dropping it in favor of a college class, such a student would not receive approval. College courses selected by students under this program must be very similar in content to the state approved list of courses.

Merrillville High School will count all such courses completed as one (1) credit of high school work per three (3) credit hours of college work and will include the grade received in the computation for the class rank with the same equivalent as a high school course.

While Merrillville High School will not prevent any student from attending an education program during non-school hours, school credit for such courses will not be approved unless the procedures described above are followed.

Release from school will be based upon the number of credits taken at the post-secondary institution; three credits equals 1 hour of early dismissal.

Counselor Worksheet for College Courses for High School Credit

It is required that counselors meet with students who desire to attend college and count courses taken in college for both high school and college credit. During this meeting the counselor will arrive at an opinion on the student's eligibility to participate in this program. If deemed eligible, the counselor will:

1. Help the student determine appropriate course(s);
2. Discuss high school credit to be granted;
3. Discuss consequences of failure (GPA and Rank);
4. Discuss student's overall schedule;
5. Discuss expenses; Parents/Students will be responsible for said expenses.
6. Discuss student, parent and school responsibilities and any other pertinent matters.

Having done these things, the counselor will make a recommendation to the principal. The principal will then notify the student and the superintendent of his decision.

HOME SCHOOL CREDITS

Home school credits shall be evaluated by the Director of Guidance, appropriate department chairperson and the principal. A copy of the curriculum that was followed and the name of the book will be evaluated and a decision about credit will be received. The appropriate department chairperson will be the department where the credit is proposed to go.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework can have a major effect on a student's ability to learn any subject. Because of the potential to turn a "D" student into a "C" student or a "C" student into a "B" student, we have developed a strict homework policy.

Homework is defined as:

1. Completion of an assignment, minimum 75%.
2. Ability to participate in classroom activities. When homework is not completed:

1st time-Teacher warns student

2nd time-Teacher phones parents/guardian(s)

3rd time-Teacher sends student to Student Service-student assigned one Friday Extension Program.

4th time-Teacher sends student to Student Services-student may continue in the class with a grade of "W", audit, or may elect to go through the removal process.

Teachers' guidelines are to be followed regarding the make-up of homework assignments.

HONOR ROLL

In order to qualify for one of the honor rolls, a student must meet the following standards.

4.0 Honor Roll	Students must average a 4.0, regardless of the number of credits attempted, to be listed on this honor roll.
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(Highest Honor)	
3.5 Honor Roll (High Honor)	Students must average a 3.5, regardless of the number of credits attempted, to be listed on this honor roll.
3.0 Honor Roll (Honors)	Students must average a minimum 3.0, regardless of the number of credits attempted, to be listed on this honor roll.

The honor roll is based upon six (6) week grades only, not on trimester grades.

Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses do not carry any extra points or “weight” when computing grade point averages (GPA’s).

INCOMPLETE GRADES

Students who have had an extended illness may receive an incomplete grade for a grading period or trimester. Incompletes are not given for such reasons as projects not finished or reports not turned in. All work must be completed within one week following the end of the grading period or trimester. Administrative decisions will be made in cases of an illness or accident(s) occurring at the very end of a grading period.

MERRILLVILLE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM (MAP)

The Merrillville Alternative Program (MAP) is designed to provide an opportunity for learning to students who have difficulty functioning in a very structured 5 period day and/or for students who have specific needs that cannot be met during the school day. MAP meets after regular high school and is open only to MHS students who have been referred. Referral to MAP is based on specific criteria including expulsion from the day school setting.

RETAKE POLICY

If a student wishes to repeat a course in order to achieve a higher grade, several stipulations will apply. First, there must be room available in the course. Second, the higher grade achieved by the student will be the grade of record. The lower grade will not show up on the transcript, and will not be counted in the cumulative grade point average, the total amount of credits earned or the class rank. Third, courses retaken will not count toward calculations to determine Valedictorian, Salutatorian, or Top 25 students.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards will be available approximately ten (10) days following the end of the six (6) week or trimester grading period.

SCHEDULE CHANGES

Schedule changes for the next school year may be made anytime from the start of the scheduling process until the last school day of the current school year of which requests are being processed. After this date, changes will be made only for the following reasons.

1. Administrative shifts in the master schedule.
2. Improper placement in a course due to failure of prerequisite.
3. Course upgrades from an elective to an academic requirement.

Any student granted a schedule change is responsible for understanding how/whether the schedule change will impact any aspect of his/her educational program (Academic Honors, CORE 40, etc.), graduation, or athletic eligibility.

All Withdrawals result in immediate placement in study hall and a “W/D” is recorded as the final grade for that course. Students assigned to study hall due to a W/D may be subject to not being student assistants.

Any W/D grade cannot be awarded to improve GPA.

A “Teacher Generated Recommendation for Re-Assignment” may occur through the first 6 weeks of a course. This occurs when a teacher believes that a student's placement may be improper due to academic ability. This includes academic evaluation of the student, and teacher-parent contact. After the first 7 days of the course, these changes will result only in reassignment to study hall.

TRIMESTER FAILURE OF A (2-3 TRIMESTER) COURSE

If a student fails the first trimester of a course, a teacher may recommend that the student not continue in the course for the next Trimester. A conference with the teacher, student, and parent as documented on the “recommendation to Reschedule” directs the process for this decision. Students wishing to go against the teacher's recommendation must have his/her parent/guardian sign a waiver.

SENIOR CLASSIFICATION

Students are to graduate in 4 years. Students who do not complete graduation requirements within 4 years but have at least 35 credits and an IEP may be eligible for a 5th year senior program. If students are not eligible for the 5th year program they will be required to complete diploma requirements from an alternate program.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Standardized tests are administered to students of Merrillville High School for the following reasons and purposes:

1. To assist students in their efforts to gain national recognition and scholarships (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test-PSAT, SAT, and AP Colleboard))
2. To assist students in gaining entrance to college.
3. To assist students in understanding and measuring their educational development.
4. To provide necessary information for our school to evaluate its effectiveness in providing an education to its students.

TRANSCRIPT POLICY

Transcripts: By definition the term transcript shall mean a copy of the student's record including such data as a student name, birth date, vaccinations, address, courses taken and grades earned, attendance, test scores, school activities, and awards. Paper transcripts will cost \$3.00. Requests for records other than the herein defined transcript will require payment of \$1.00 for every five pages of the records requested. According to the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, students must provide written permission for release of transcripts. If a transcript is to be ‘hand carried’ it will be placed into a sealed envelope with the statement “Official Transcript Invalid if Opened” typed or printed on the front of the envelope.

Parchment allows Merrillville High School students and graduates to request their transcript online and sent electronically to participating colleges across the state and country. Students may sign up through the guidance page on the high school website. This service is provided free of charge.

Recommendations: Certain colleges and/or scholarship programs require a recommendation as part of the application process. By definition the term “recommendation” shall mean a narrative interpretation and summation of a student's performance in high school. It shall be the responsibility of those persons wanting recommendations to provide the school or school employees with the necessary forms and addresses, since recommendations will

not be given to students for mailing. Note that many of the recommendations are also completed online through the e-Transcript process at the request of the colleges.

TRANSFER CREDITS

Students who transfer credits from another school to MHS will have the transcript from their previous school evaluated and the credits being transferred will be determined according to Merrillville High School's current policy. Weighted grades will be un-weighted and post-secondary credits will be counted as high school credits under Rule 10. Three credit hours of post-secondary credit will be counted as one credit.

VALEDICTORIAN AND SALUTATORIAN HONORS

At Merrillville High School, it is felt that the valedictorian and salutarian are those students who have demonstrated their abilities in academic competition with the other members of their class. It is this understanding that leads to our school's policy governing the way the valedictorian and salutarian of each class can qualify for that honor.

All students transferring to Merrillville High School will be required to meet all Merrillville High School graduation regulations before a diploma can be granted. Transcripts of these students will be evaluated and converted to Merrillville High School standards. Transfer students will not be ranked with their class until they have received grades from Merrillville High School for at least one trimester. No transfer students will be allowed consideration for valedictorian or salutarian honors until they have completed at least three (3) full trimesters (15 credits) of work at Merrillville High School. Since the last trimester of the senior year is not used in determining a valedictorian or salutarian, that trimester will also not count as one of the three (3) trimesters required for consideration for these honors.

In the event that a student transfers to Merrillville High School and spends less than three (3) trimesters (as outlined above) as a Merrillville High School Student and attains a GPA equal to or greater than the Merrillville High School valedictorian or salutarian, such student will be recognized as an **outstanding transfer student** at commencement exercises.

WEIGHTED GRADES

Courses to be weighted:

English

8th Grade Honors
9th Grade Honors
10th Grade Honors
AP Literature
AP Language/Adv. Comp Honors

Math

8th Grade Honors Integrated Math I
Honors Integrated Math II
Honors Integrated Math III
Honors PreCalculus
AP Calculus
AP Statistics

Science

Honors Biology
Honors Chemistry
AP Biology
AP Chemistry
AP Physics
AP Physics C

Social Studies

AP US History (I, II, III)
AP Government
AP Macroeconomics
AP Microeconomics
AP Psychology

Five (5) points scale for weighted grades:

Classes Prior to 2021

Non-Weighted

Classes 2021 and beyond

Weighted

A=4
B=3
C=2
D=1
F=0

A=5
B=4
C=3
D=2
F=0

Rank Point System

Students in each affected class are ranked according to Rank Points verses GPA raw score
Rank Points will be calculated as follows:

$$\frac{(\text{GPA Raw Score}) + (\text{\# of Credits Earned})}{\text{Total number of courses taken}} = \text{Rank Points}$$

Note: If a student takes a non-credited course such as being a student aid or study hall, this may affect rank as these courses do not count towards rank or total number of courses taken.

Presented: February 21, 2017

Adopted: March 7, 2017

PART III: SAFE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

CAMERA POLICY

It is the goal of Merrillville High School to continue to provide for a safe educational environment to all of its staff and students. The security staff shall be responsible for overseeing and maintaining its digital camera system. This system consists of cameras, which monitor the hallways, common areas and parking lots of the high school. Periodically the security staff and administrators shall be required to review various incidents that occur during a school year. In order to ensure student privacy and confidentiality only administrators and security staff shall be authorized to review and record these incidents.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL / RANDOM DRUG & ALCOHOL TESTING POLICY. 5.49

Policy Statement: The Merrillville Community School Board is strongly committed to drug and alcohol prevention and education to create a safe environment and to provide a climate where all students can reach their potential.

The use of tobacco, alcohol, and/or illegal drugs present a threat to the safety, health and welfare of both our employees and our students. Because of the risks associated with such abuse, the Board has implemented a student testing program for drugs and alcohol. The program is not intended to be punitive or disciplinary in nature. The purpose of this program is to identify a student with drug residues in his/her body, to provide notification to the custodial parent/guardian, and to educate, help and direct students away from drug abuse and toward a healthy, safe, and drug free participation in school activities. Because participation in extracurricular activities at Merrillville High School is a privilege, high standards of conduct are expected for students wishing to participate in these types of activities as well as for students who wish to drive to school. The Merrillville Community School Corporation shall conduct a mandatory random drug and alcohol testing program for all students participating in the following:

1. All extracurricular activities including; all athletics, clubs, organizations, and activities sponsored by the School Corporation.
2. All students who apply for a driving/parking permit pursuant to rules and regulations as set forth in the Student Handbook.
3. Any students not qualifying in the aforementioned activities, who wish to voluntarily participate in the Random Drug and Alcohol Testing Program.

Definitions:

Student Athlete: Any student who is trying out for or participating in any school-sponsored interscholastic athletic competition, or cheerleading.

Extracurricular Activities: Any school sponsored club, organization, activity in which participation is voluntary.

Student Drivers: Any student who is issued a driving/parking permit under the rules and regulations of the driving policy in the Student Handbook.

Consent to Testing: Any student who wishes to participate in extracurricular activities or drive to school must consent to participate in the school's random drug testing program and sign a consent form. A student who does not wish to be included in this program shall not be permitted to participate in the above stated activities. Parents may also voluntarily enroll their child even if the student is not involved in extracurricular activities. Once a student consents to participate in the school district's random drug testing program, the student will be part of the program for the remainder of the school year.

Selection Procedure: Students participating in the program will be selected randomly throughout the school year for drug testing. The testing facility shall implement a procedure for the method of random selection of students involved in the program as well as procedures to be used in the collection and testing of samples. The tests themselves will be administered by an independent testing facility using procedures and standards set up by them.

Consequence of a First Time Positive Test Result: A student who tests positive for drugs or alcohol following the random test, shall be immediately suspended from the extracurricular activities they are currently enrolled in, or future extracurricular activities they wish to enroll in. Students who drive to school will have their driving privileges suspended. The student must immediately enroll in drug counseling, and show documentation of following counseling recommendations in order to be eligible to participate in any further activities or have driving privileges reinstated. During the period of enrollment in a program the student is suspended from all extracurricular activities. The student must provide the school with a drug test result from the counseling service before the school clears the student to return to activities. Within the school year of the first offense, the student may be re-tested at any time. Drug and alcohol counseling options include: South Lake Mental Health, Physicians, Awakenings, Addiction and Behavior Services, and Porter-Stark. Other options may be approved by the administration. Such counseling will be at the student's/parent's expense.

Consequences of a Second Positive Test Result: A student who tests positive for drugs or alcohol following the random test, shall be immediately suspended from the extracurricular activities they are currently enrolled in.

ATHLETES IN OR OUT OF SEASON: If a second offense occurs when an athlete is in or out of season, the athlete must immediately enroll in drug counseling and show documentation of following counseling recommendations. The student must provide the school with a drug test result from the counseling service before the school allows the student to return to activities. The athlete will be suspended from their sport for 30% of the season before being allowed to participate. The athlete will be tested prior to the beginning of their next sport season and periodically during the remainder of the school year.

Consequences of a Third Positive Test Result: A student who tests positive for drugs or alcohol following a random test will be immediately suspended from the extracurricular activity for 365 days.

Parental Notification: When students complete the drug test, the test administrator gives the student a form showing the initial results of the test that can be taken home to give to his/her parent/guardian. Once the school gets the test results from the testing company if a test is positive, the student's parent's/guardian's will be contacted immediately. A parent may require a meeting with the athletic director (test supervisor) to discuss the results, the suspension and the counseling procedure.

Length of Results on Record: Positive test results will be removed August 1st of each school year. Students will start every school year without any record of previous test results.

Masked Test: Any attempt to adulterate, mask, or substitute a specimen will be automatically declared a positive test.

Refusal: After a student has been selected to submit to a random test, if the student refuses to submit to a drug test, the refusal will be treated as a drug-positive test. If a student is unable to urinate during the time the testing company person is onsite, a school administrator will issue the test during that day.

Retest: A parent may request in writing a retest be taken by an outside agency within 72 hours of first notification. All costs associated with an additional test shall be the responsibility of the student and/or the student's parent or guardian. The retest must be done by a facility that is approved by the school. While the results of such a test are pending, the student's suspension shall be in effect. In the event the additional testing undertaken by the parent

and/or guardian is negative no penalty shall be issued. Once the student has attended one of the designated counseling programs the school will retest the student within a two to four week period.

Legitimate Explanation: Within twenty-four (24) hours of being informed of a positive test result, the student may present evidence to the test administrator that the positive test result was caused by the legitimate use of a prescription or non-prescription drug, or an activity other than illegal drug use. The test administrator shall determine whether such reasons would reasonably explain the positive test result. If the test administrator determines the results to have been caused by a legitimate activity, then the test results will be disregarded and any record of the positive result shall be expunged. If the test administrator determines that it was a positive test result the student, at their own expense, may ask that the sample be sent to an independent testing facility approved by the administration.

A copy of the Drug Testing Program Consent Form is on Page 8.

Presented: 12/6/05

Board Approved: 12/20/05

Revised and Presented: 5/6/08

DRIVING RULES/PERMITS

RULES TO REDUCE DANGEROUS DRIVING HABITS OF STUDENTS

The following violations will result in a one-week loss of driving privileges for the first offense, two weeks for the second offense, four weeks for the third offense, and the entire year for the fourth offense;

- False start/spinning the vehicle tires
- Failure to stop at stop sign(s)
- Failure to yield right of way
- Improper parking
- Improper passing on either side

The following violations will result in a one-month loss of driving privileges for the first offense, three months for the second offense, and the entire year for the third offense;

- Reckless driving
- Unreasonable speed
- Improper lane usage
- Failure to obtain a parking permit

All violations will result in fees charged and citations issued, beginning at \$10.00 and continuing at \$10 intervals based upon the number of violations. Students would be required to pay appropriate fees to the School Treasurer within five (5) days from the date of issue. The failure to take care of the fee would result in the immediate loss of school parking and driving privileges on the school campus. Students who continue to drive to school after they have lost their driving privileges could be suspended from school. Students who are involved in the most serious offenses noted Reckless Driving and/or Unreasonable speed would also be subject to after school detention or suspension or an alternative penalty dependent upon the severity of the offense.

Approved: August 21, 2001

DROP OFF

Morning School Drop Off: All Parents/Guardians in the morning will drop off students in the “front drive” near Entrance A. Signs are posted to assist with directions to entering and exiting the dropoff area.

After School Pick Up: All Parents/Guardians after school will pick up students in the parking lot area outside of Entrance Q. After 4:00pm, parents/guardians will pick up students in the parking lot outside of Entrance A.

We ask for all parent/guardians’ cooperation in following these designated areas for drop off and pick up of students to protect and ensure safety for all our students and allow for emergency vehicles access.

REMEMBER: Driving on school property is a privilege, not a right. Safe driving needs to be every driver’s primary goal. All students requesting to drive to school are to follow the regulations below.

1. Students must register vehicles each school year. Driver’s Agreement forms may be obtained from the Student Services Office.

2. The Driver's Agreement is to be signed by the student and one of his/her parents.
3. Parking stickers may be purchased in the Student Services Office at a cost of \$10.00, after the Driver's Agreement has been completely filled out and accepted by the clerk for Student Services. The sticker must be displayed on the rearview mirror with the I.D. numbers facing forward.
4. Student drivers shall enter and leave the school grounds using safe and appropriate driving procedures. The speed limit while on school grounds is 10 M.P.H.
5. All vehicles will be parked in designated STUDENT PARKING areas only and designated parking spots.
6. Only students with written permission from an administrator may leave the building to enter a vehicle during school hours. Loitering in the parking lots is not permitted at any time.
7. Students are to leave their vehicles and the parking area immediately on arrival at school.
8. Seat belts are to be worn on school property.
9. Students operating a motorized bicycle on school property must wear a safety helmet.
10. After school, students are reminded to exit the parking lot from the "North" exit only.
11. Violations of the above regulations will result in detention, suspension, or in loss of driving privileges and vehicles may be towed.
12. Continued tardiness and trancies will result in driving privileges being revoked.
13. Any student driver failing to obtain a parking sticker could receive a written citation from a law enforcement officer, which would result in a \$100.00 fine.
14. All student drivers shall obtain their parking sticker no later than two (2) weeks after the start of the school year.

Administrators shall possess the authority to examine the contents of any vehicle located on school premises when he/she has reasonable suspicion to believe that the contents of the vehicle may include elements which:

- a. Present an immediate threat to the health, safety and welfare of students and staff.
- b. Are illegal to possess.
- c. Have been stolen or lost.

METAL DETECTORS

Use of Metal Detectors -Reasonable Suspicion

When the school administration has reasonable suspicion to believe that weapons are in the possession of an identified student, students, or group of students, the administration is authorized to use a mobile metal detector to search the student or students. Any search of a student's person as a result of the activation of the detector will be conducted in private and in accordance with the policy on personal searches. Only school personnel who have been trained in the usage of metal detectors, law enforcement officers assigned to the school corporation, or school resource officers shall operate the metal detectors under the direction of the administration.

Use of Metal Detectors- Administrative Search

In view of the escalating school violence, the potential presence of weapons in our schools, and the school corporation's duty to maintain a safe learning environment, the Merrillville Board of School Trustees authorizes the use of metal detectors to check a student's person or personal effects. Only school personnel who have been trained in the usage of metal detectors, law enforcement officers assigned to the school corporation, or school resource officers shall operate the metal detectors under the direction of the administration.

School officials or law enforcement officers may conduct metal detector checks of groups of individuals if the checks are done in a minimally-intrusive, nondiscriminatory manner. Metal detector checks of groups of individuals may not be used to single out a particular individual or category of individuals.

If a school official or a law enforcement officer has reasonable suspicion to believe that a particular student is in possession of an illegal or unauthorized metal-containing object or weapon, he or she may conduct a metal detector check of the student's person and personal effects.

Notice of the Board policy and procedures on the use of metal detectors will be sent to parents and students and posted on the websites of the school corporation and of each school.

The Superintendent shall develop procedures for implementing this policy. The metal detector checks will be done only in accordance with the provisions of the Board policy and procedures by school personnel or law enforcement officers under the supervision of the school administrator.

Procedures for the Use of Metal Detectors

The following procedures for the use of metal detectors in the schools are developed pursuant to Board policy on the Use of Metal Detectors. The Superintendent may modify or expand these procedures in any manner consistent with the Board's policy.

A notice will be posted in a central location at each school stating that weapons are not permitted at school and that students may be required to submit to a metal detector check. In addition, the metal detector policy and these procedures will be included in the Student Handbooks for each school. Notice of the Board policy and procedures on the use of metal detectors will be sent to parents and students of each school. A notice must be sent out before the beginning of each school year. The superintendent will determine the specific dates when the notice will be sent out.

- A. Before conducting the metal detector checks, the participating administrator or law enforcement (officer) will explain the scanning process to students, emphasizing that the checks are intended to maintain school safety.
- B. An administrator or officer will escort each student with his or her personal effects into a designated area to proceed with the metal detector check. An adult will closely observe students to make sure no objects are removed from pockets or personal effects.
- C. The administrator or officer will ask the student to remove all metal-containing objects from his or her clothing and personal effects. The administrator or officer will then scan the students without touching his or her body and scan the outside of the student's personal effects. The metal detector scan of the student's person will be done by an adult who is the same sex as the student. If the student refuses to cooperate, the administrator or officer may proceed with the check in the presence of another adult.
- D. If the metal detector is activated during the scanning of the student's effects, the administrator or officer will ask the student to open the bag, purse, etc. and continue looking for weapons and vapes. If the metal detector is activated during the scanning of the student's person, the student will be given a second opportunity to remove any metal-containing object from his person. A second scan will be conducted and if the metal detector is activated again, an administrator or officer of the same sex will conduct a pat-down search of the student's outer clothing in the area where the metal detector was activated. The pat-down search will be done in a private room or area and in the presence of an adult witness, when feasible. If the administrator or officer feels an object on the student's person, the student will be given an opportunity to remove the object. If he or she refuses, the administrator or officer will remove the object from the student in the presence of an adult witness of the same sex.

Metal Detector Checks of Individual Students

Before conducting a metal detector check of an individual student, the administrator or officer must have individualized reasonable suspicion that the student is in possession of an illegal or unauthorized metal-containing object or weapon. The provisions of the Board Policy regarding personal searches and the use of metal detectors shall be followed under these circumstances. If a properly conducted search yields a weapon or any other illegal material, it shall be turned over to the proper legal authorities for disposition.

Presented: 08/21/2018

Adopted 09/04/2018

SCHOOL CORPORATION SMOKING PROHIBITIONS

Effective August 24, 1994, smoking inside any school corporation building or vehicle and in any outdoor seating area is prohibited. Students under 18 years of age, in possession of tobacco, may be ticketed by the Merrillville Police Department.

ANTI-HARASSMENT

General Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Board of School Trustees to maintain an education and work environment that is free from all forms of unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment, occurring in the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs, and/or activities, or, if initially occurring off Corporation grounds or outside the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs, and activities, affecting the Corporation environment (hereinafter referred to collectively as "unlawful harassment"). This commitment applies to all Corporation operations, educational opportunities, programs, and activities. All students, administrators, teachers, staff, and all other school personnel share responsibility for avoiding, discouraging, and reporting any form of unlawful harassment occurring in the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs, and/or activities, or, if initially occurring off Corporation grounds or outside the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs, and activities, affecting the Corporation environment. This policy applies to unlawful conduct occurring on school property, or at another location if such conduct affects the Corporation environment.

The Board will vigorously enforce its prohibition against unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph), that is based on race, color, national origin, sex (including transgender status, sexual orientation and/or gender identity), religion, disability, military status, ancestry, or genetic information, which are classes protected by Federal and/or State civil rights laws (hereinafter referred to as "Protected Classes"), and encourages those within the Corporation community as well as third parties who feel aggrieved to seek assistance to rectify such problems occurring in the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs and/or activities, or, if initially occurring off Corporation grounds or outside the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs and activities, affecting the Corporation environment.

All Corporation employees, including administrators, professional staff and support staff, shall report any incident of alleged unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph) that the employee observes or which is reported to the employee.

The Corporation will investigate all allegations of unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph) and, in those cases where unlawful harassment is substantiated, will take immediate steps to end the harassment, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effects.

Individuals who are found to have engaged in unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph) will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or expulsion from school.

Furthermore, Corporation employees who fail to report any incident of alleged unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph) that the employee observes or which is reported to the employee also are subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

For purposes of this policy, "Corporation community" means students, administrators, teachers, and staff, as well as Board members, agents, volunteers, contractors, or other persons subject to the control and supervision of the Board.

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

Other Violations of the Anti-Harassment Policy

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

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

Definitions

Bullying

Bullying rises to the level of unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph) when one (1) or more persons systematically and chronically inflict physical hurt or psychological distress on one (1) or more students with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate or harm that/those student(s), and that bullying is based upon sex, race, color, national origin, religion, or disability, that is, characteristics that are protected by Federal civil rights laws. It is defined as any unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by an adult or student, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation; and may involve:

- A. teasing;
- B. threats;
- C. intimidation;
- D. stalking;
- E. cyberstalking;
- F. cyberbullying;
- G. physical violence;
- H. sexual violence;
- I. theft;

- J. sexual, religious, or racial harassment;
- K. public humiliation; or
- L. destruction of property.

In the bullying context, “harassment” means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student that:

- A. places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property;
- B. has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s educational performance, opportunities, or benefits; or
- C. has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school.

Sexual Harassment

Pursuant to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, "sexual harassment" is defined as:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when:

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

Sexual harassment may involve the behavior of a person of either gender against a person of the same or opposite gender.

Prohibited acts that constitute sexual harassment may take a variety of forms. Examples of the kinds of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- A. unwelcome sexual propositions, invitations, solicitations, and flirtations;
- B. sexual violence, including physical and/or sexual assault;
- C. threats or insinuations that a person's academic grade, promotion, classroom work or assignments, academic status, participation in athletics or extra-curricular programs or events, or other conditions of

education may be adversely affected by not submitting to sexual advances;

- D. unwelcome verbal expressions of a sexual nature, including graphic sexual commentaries about a person's body, dress, appearance, or sexual activities; the unwelcome use of sexually degrading language, jokes or innuendoes; unwelcome suggestive or insulting sounds or whistles; obscene telephone calls;
- E. sexually suggestive objects, pictures, videotapes, audio recordings or literature, placed in the educational environment, which may embarrass or offend individuals;
- F. unwelcome and inappropriate touching, patting, or pinching; obscene gestures;
- G. a pattern of conduct, which can be subtle in nature, that has sexual overtones and is intended to create or has the effect of creating discomfort and/or humiliation to another;
- H. remarks speculating about a person's sexual activities or sexual history, or remarks about one's own sexual activities or sexual history;
- I. inappropriate boundary invasions by a Corporation employee or other adult member of the Corporation community into a student's personal space and personal life;
- J. verbal, nonverbal or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex or sex-stereotyping that does not involve conduct of a sexual nature;
- K. In the context of employees, consensual sexual relationships where such relationship leads to favoritism of a subordinate employee with whom the superior is sexually involved and where such favoritism adversely affects other employees or otherwise creates a hostile work environment.

Not all behavior with sexual connotations constitutes unlawful sexual harassment. Sex-based or gender-based conduct must be sufficiently severe, pervasive, and persistent such that it adversely affects, limits, or denies an individual's employment or education or creates a hostile or abusive employment or educational environment.

NOTE: Sexual conduct/relationships with students by a Corporation employee or any other adult member of the School Corporation community is prohibited, and any teacher, administrator, coach, other school authority, or staff member who engages in certain sexual conduct with a student may be disciplined up to and including termination and also may be guilty of the criminal charge of "sexual battery" as set forth in I.C. 35-42-4-8. In the case of a child under fourteen (14) years of age, the person also may be guilty of "child molesting" under I.C. 35-42-4-3. In the case of a child between the ages of fourteen (14) and sixteen (16), the person also may be guilty of "sexual misconduct with a minor" under I.C. 35-42-4-9. The issue of consent is irrelevant in regard to the latter two (2) criminal charges. Any employee accused of sexual relations with a student may be placed on leave until school administrative proceedings are completed. Proven sexual relationships with a student regardless of the age of the student will initiate the termination process for the employee.

Race/Color Harassment

Prohibited racial harassment occurs when unwelcome physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct is based upon an individual's race or color and when the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's educational performance; of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment; or of interfering with one's ability to participate in or benefit from a class or an educational program or activity. Such harassment may include but is not limited to conduct directed at the characteristics of a person's race or color, such as racial slurs, nicknames implying stereotypes, epithets, and/or negative references relative to racial customs.

Religious (Creed) Harassment

Prohibited religious harassment occurs when unwelcome physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct is based upon an individual's religion or creed and when the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's educational performance; of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment; or of interfering with one's ability to participate in or benefit from a class or an educational program or activity. Such harassment may include but is not limited to conduct directed at the characteristics of a person's religious tradition, clothing, or surnames, and/or involving religious slurs.

National Origin Harassment

Prohibited national origin harassment occurs when unwelcome physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct is based upon an individual's national origin and when the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's educational performance; of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment; or of interfering with one's ability to participate in or benefit from a class or an educational program or activity. Such harassment may include but is not limited to conduct directed at the characteristics of a person's national origin, such as negative comments regarding customs, manner of speaking, language, surnames, or ethnic slurs.

Disability Harassment

Prohibited disability harassment occurs when unwelcome physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct is based upon an individual's disability and when the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's educational performance; of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment; or of interfering with one's ability to participate in or benefit from a class or an educational program or activity. Such harassment may include but is not limited to conduct directed at the characteristics of a person's disabling condition, such as negative comments about speech patterns, movement, physical impairments or limitations/appearances, or the like.

Reports and Complaints of Harassing Conduct

Students, members of the Corporation community and third parties are encouraged to promptly report incidents of unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph) to an administrator, supervisor or other Corporation official so that the Board may address the conduct before it becomes severe, pervasive, or persistent. All Corporation-level employees, including administrators, professional staff and support staff, shall report any incident of alleged unlawful harassment (see definition see definition in first paragraph) that the employee observes or which is reported to the employee. Any administrator or other Corporation-level official who receives such a complaint shall file it with the Corporation's Anti-Harassment Compliance Officer at his/her first convenience. Corporation employees who fail to comply with the reporting responsibility shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

Members of the Corporation community or third parties who believe they have been subjected to unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph) by another member of the Corporation community or a third party are entitled to utilize the Board's complaint process set forth below. Initiating a complaint, whether formally or informally, will not adversely affect the complaining individual's participation in educational or extra-curricular programs unless the complaining individual makes the complaint maliciously or with knowledge that it is false. Individuals should make every effort to file a complaint within thirty (30) calendar days after the conduct occurs while the facts are known and potential witnesses are available.

If, during an investigation of a reported act of bullying and/or harassment in accordance with Policy 5517.01 – Bullying, the principal or his/her designee believes that the reported misconduct may have created a hostile work or learning environment and may have constituted unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph) based on "Protected Classes" (see definition in first paragraph), the principal or his/her designee will report the act of bullying and/or harassment to one (1) of the Compliance Officers who shall investigate the allegation in accordance with this policy.

Anti-Harassment Compliance Officers

The following individuals serve as "Anti-Harassment Compliance Officers" for the Corporation. They are hereinafter referred to as the "Compliance Officers".

Christine Waugh
Interim Executive Director of Personnel
6701 Delaware Street
Merrillville, IN 46410

(219) 650-5300 ext 5315
cwaugh@mvsc.k12.in.us

Meghan Damron
Chief Financial Officer
6701 Delaware Street
Merrillville, IN 46410

(219) 650-5300 ext 6033
mdamron@mvsc.k12.in.us

The names, titles, and contact information for the Compliance Officers will be published annually:

- A. in the student, parent, and staff handbooks
- B. on the School Corporation's website
- C. on each individual school's web site

The Compliance Officers will be available during regular school/work hours to discuss concerns related to "unlawful harassment" (see definition in first paragraph), to assist students, other members of the Corporation community and third parties who seek support or advice when informing another individual about "unwelcome" conduct, or to intercede informally on behalf of the student.

Any Corporation employee who directly observes unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph) of a student is obligated, in accordance with this policy, to report such observations to one (1) of the Compliance Officers within two (2) business days. Thereafter, the Compliance Officer or designee must contact the student if age eighteen (18) or older, or the student's parents if under the age of eighteen (18) within two (2) business days to advise him/her/them of the Corporation intent to investigate the alleged misconduct, including the obligation of the Compliance Officer or his/her designee to conduct an investigation following all the procedures outlined in this policy for a formal complaint. Additionally, if the alleged harasser is a student, the Compliance Officer or designee must contact the student, if age eighteen (18) or older, or the student's parents if under the age of eighteen (18), within two (2) business days to advise him/her/them of the Corporation's intent to investigate the alleged misconduct, including the obligation of the Compliance Officer or designee to conduct an investigation following all the procedures outlined for a formal complaint. However, all complaints of harassment involving a Corporation employee or any other adult member of the Corporation community against a student will be formally investigated.

The Compliance Officers are assigned to accept complaints of unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph) directly from any member of the Corporation community or a visitor to the Corporation, or to receive complaints that are initially filed with a school building administrator. Upon receipt of a complaint either directly or through a school building administrator, a Compliance Officer will begin either an informal or formal process (depending on the request of the member of the Corporation community alleging harassment or the nature of the alleged harassment), or the Compliance Officer will designate a specific individual to conduct such a process. In the case of a formal complaint, the Compliance Officer will prepare recommendations for the Superintendent or

will oversee the preparation of such recommendations by a designee. However, if the alleged harasser is the Superintendent, the recommendations shall be submitted to the Board President.

All Corporation employees must report incidents of unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph) that they observe or that are reported to them to the Compliance Officer within two (2) business days of learning of the incident.

Investigation and Complaint Procedure (see Form 5517 F1)

Any employee or other member of the Corporation community or third party (e.g., visitor to the Corporation) who believes that s/he has been subjected to unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph) may seek resolution of his/her complaint through either the informal or formal procedures as described below. Further, a process for investigating claims of unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph) and a process for rendering a decision regarding whether the claim of unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph) was substantiated are set forth below.

Due to the sensitivity surrounding complaints of unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph), time lines are flexible for initiating the complaint process; however, individuals should make every effort to file a complaint within thirty (30) calendar days after the conduct occurs while the facts are known and potential witnesses are available. Once the formal complaint process is begun, the investigation will be completed in a timely manner (ordinarily, within fifteen (15)) business days of the complaint being received).

The informal and formal procedures set forth below are not intended to interfere with the rights of any individual to pursue a complaint of unlawful harassment with the United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) or the Indiana Civil Rights Commission (ICRC), or to file a concurrent criminal complaint with the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction.

Informal Complaint Procedure

The goal of the informal complaint procedure is to stop inappropriate behavior and/or unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph), and to investigate and facilitate resolution through an informal means, if possible. The informal complaint procedure is provided as a less formal option for a student who believes s/he has been unlawfully harassed or retaliated against in the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs, and/or activities, or, if initially occurring off Corporation grounds or outside the Corporation's educational opportunities, programs, and activities, affecting the Corporation environment. This informal procedure is not required as a precursor to the filing of a formal complaint and/or filing a concurrent criminal complaint, and will be utilized only where the parties (alleged target of harassment and alleged harasser(s)) agree to participate in such a process.

Students who believe that they have been unlawfully harassed (see definition in first paragraph) or retaliated against may proceed immediately to the formal complaint process and individuals who seek resolution through the information procedure may request that the informal process be terminated at any time to move to the formal complaint procedure.

However, all complaints of unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph) involving a Corporation employee, any adult member of the Corporation community, or a third party against a student will be formally investigated. Similarly, any allegations of sexual violence will be formally investigated.

As an initial course of action, if an individual feels that s/he is being unlawfully harassed (see definition in first paragraph) and s/he is able and feels safe doing so, the individual should tell or otherwise inform the harasser that the conduct is unwelcome and must stop. Such direct communication should not be utilized in circumstances involving sexual violence. The complaining individual should address the allegedly harassing conduct as soon after it occurs as possible. The Compliance Officer(s) is/are available to support and counsel individuals when taking this initial step or to intervene on behalf of the individual if requested to do so. An individual who is uncomfortable or unwilling to inform the harasser of his/her complaint is not prohibited from otherwise filing an

informal or a formal complaint. In addition, with regard to certain types of unlawful harassment, such as sexual harassment, the Compliance Officer may advise against the use of the informal complaint process.

An individual who believes s/he has been unlawfully harassed (see definition in first paragraph) may make an informal complaint, either orally or in writing: 1) to a teacher, other employee, or building administrator; 2) directly to one (1) of the Compliance Officers; and/or 3) to the Superintendent or other Corporation-level employee.

All informal complaints must be reported to one (1) of the Compliance Officers who will either facilitate an informal resolution as described below on his/her own, or appoint another individual to facilitate an informal resolution.

The Corporation's informal complaint procedure is designed to provide employees, other members of the Corporation community or third parties who believe they are being subjected to unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph) with a range of options designed to bring about a resolution of their concerns. Depending upon the nature of the complaint and the wishes of the individual claiming unlawful harassment, informal resolution may involve, but not be limited to, one or more of the following:

- A. Advising the individual about how to communicate the unwelcome nature of the behavior to the alleged harasser.
- B. Distributing a copy of the anti-harassment policy as a reminder to the individuals in the school building or office where the individual whose behavior is being questioned works or attends school.
- C. If both parties agree, the Compliance Officer may arrange and facilitate a meeting between the individual claiming harassment and the individual accused of harassment to work out a mutual resolution. Such a meeting is not appropriate in circumstances involving sexual violence.

While there are no set time limits within which an informal complaint must be resolved, one (1) of the Compliance Officers or a designee will exercise his/her authority to attempt to resolve all informal complaints within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the informal complaint. Parties who are dissatisfied with the results of the informal complaint process may proceed to file a formal complaint, may file a complaint with the United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) or the Indiana Civil Rights Commission (ICRC), and/or may file a concurrent criminal complaint with the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction. And, as stated above, parties may request that the informal process be terminated at any time to move to the formal complaint process.

One of the Compliance Officers or a designee will retain all materials generated as part of the informal complaint process in accordance with the Board's records retention policy (see Policy 8310, Policy 8320 and Policy 8330).

Formal Complaint Procedure

If a complaint is not resolved through the informal complaint process, if one (1) of the parties has requested that the informal complaint process be terminated to move to the formal complaint process, or if the individual elects to file a formal complaint initially, the formal complaint process as described below shall be implemented.

The formal complaint process is not intended to interfere with the rights of an employee, other member of the Corporation community, or third party to pursue a complaint of unlawful harassment with the United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) or the Indiana Civil Rights Commission (ICRC), and/or to file a concurrent criminal complaint with the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction.

An individual who believes s/he has been subjected to offensive conduct/unlawful harassment/retaliation, hereinafter referred to as the "Complainant", may file a formal complaint, either orally or in writing with a teacher, principal, the Compliance Officer, Superintendent, or other Corporation-level employee. Due to the sensitivity surrounding complaints of unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph) and retaliation, timelines are

flexible for initiating the complaint process; however, individuals should make every effort to file a complaint within thirty (30) calendar days after the conduct occurs while the facts are known and potential witnesses are available. If a Complainant informs a teacher, principal, Superintendent, or other Corporation-level employee, either orally or in writing, about any complaint of harassment or retaliation, the employee to whom the student reports the complaint must report such information to the Compliance Officer or designee within two (2) business days.

Throughout the course of the process as described herein, the Compliance Officer should keep the parties informed of the status of the investigation and the decision-making process.

All formal complaints of unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph) or retaliation must include the following information to the extent it is available: the identity of the individual believed to have engaged in, or be engaging in, offensive conduct/harassment/retaliation; a detailed description of the facts upon which the complaint is based; a list of potential witnesses; and the resolution sought by the Complainant.

If the Complainant is unwilling or unable to provide a written statement including the information set forth above, the Compliance Officer shall ask for such details in an oral interview. Thereafter, the Compliance Officer will prepare a written summary of the oral interview and the Complainant will be asked to verify the accuracy of the reported complaint by signing the document.

Upon receiving a formal complaint, the Compliance Officer will consider whether any action should be taken in the investigatory phase to protect the Complainant from further harassment or retaliation, including but not limited to a change of building or class assignment or class schedule for the Complainant and/or the alleged harasser. In making such a determination, the Compliance Officer should consult the Complainant to assess his/her agreement to any action deemed appropriate. If the Complainant is unwilling to consent to any change that is deemed appropriate by the Compliance Officer, the Compliance Officer may still take whatever actions s/he deems appropriate in consultation with the Superintendent and/or Board Attorney.

Within two (2) business days of receiving the complaint, the Compliance Officer or a designee will initiate a formal investigation to determine whether the Complainant has been subjected to offensive conduct/unlawful harassment/retaliation.

Contemporaneously, one of the Compliance Officers or a designee will inform the individual alleged to have engaged in the unlawful harassing or retaliatory conduct, hereinafter referred to as the “Respondent”, that a complaint has been received. The Respondent will be informed about the nature of the allegations and a copy of the Board’s anti-harassment policy shall be provided to the Respondent. The Respondent also must be informed of the opportunity to submit a written response to the complaint within five (5) business days.

Although certain cases may require additional time, one (1) of the Compliance Officers or a designee will attempt to complete an investigation into the allegations of harassment or retaliation within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the formal complaint.

The investigation will include:

- A. interview(s) with the Complainant;
- B. interview(s) with the Respondent;
- C. interviews with any other witnesses who may reasonably be expected to have any information relevant to the allegations; and

- D. consideration of any documentation or other information, presented by the Complainant, Respondent, or any other witnesses that is reasonably believed to be relevant to the allegations.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Compliance Officer or the designee shall prepare and deliver a written report to the Superintendent that summarizes the evidence gathered during the investigation and provides recommendations based on the evidence and the definition of unlawful harassment as provided in Board policy and State and Federal law as to whether the Complainant has been subjected to unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph) or retaliation. The Compliance Officer's recommendations must be based upon the totality of the circumstances, including the ages and maturity levels of those involved. In determining if discriminatory harassment or retaliation occurred, a preponderance of the evidence standard will be used (i.e., it is more likely than not that unlawful harassment or retaliation occurred).

The Compliance Officer may consult with the Board's legal counsel before finalizing the report to the Superintendent.

Absent extenuating circumstances, within five (5) business days of receiving the report of the Compliance Officer or the designee, the Superintendent must either issue a decision regarding whether the complaint of harassment has been substantiated or request further investigation. A copy of the Superintendent's decision will be delivered to both the Complainant and the Respondent.

If the Superintendent requests additional investigation, the Superintendent must specify the additional information that is to be gathered, and such additional investigation must be completed within five (5) business days. At the conclusion of the additional investigation, the Superintendent must issue a written decision as described above.

A Complainant or respondent who is dissatisfied with the decision of the Superintendent may appeal through a signed written request to the Board of Trustees within five (5) business days of his/her receipt of the Superintendent's final decision.

If the Superintendent is the Respondent, the appeal process will skip the review by the Superintendent and move directly to the Board. In such circumstances, the Compliance Officer, or the designee, shall prepare and deliver a written report to the Board that summarizes the evidence gathered during the investigation and provides recommendations based on the evidence and the definition of unlawful harassment/retaliation as provided in Board policy and State and Federal law as to whether the Complainant has been subjected to unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph) or retaliation.

The Board shall meet with the concerned parties and their representatives within twenty (20) business days of the receipt of a written request to appeal. At this meeting, the parties have the right to present evidence, including testimony and/or exhibits, to the Board in support of their position. A copy of the Board's disposition of the appeal shall be sent to each concerned party within ten (10) business days of this meeting. The decision of the Board will be final.

The Board reserves the right to investigate and resolve a complaint or report of unlawful harassment/retaliation regardless of whether the member of the Corporation community or third party alleging the unlawful harassment/retaliation pursues the complaint. The Board also reserves the right to have the formal complaint investigation conducted by an external person in accordance with this policy or in such other manner as deemed appropriate by the Board or its designee.

The Complainant and the Respondent may be represented, at his/her own cost, at any of the above-described meetings/hearings.

The right of a person to a prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint shall not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies such as the filing of a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights or the Indiana Civil

Rights Commission, or the filing of a concurrent criminal complaint. Use of the complaint procedures is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies. Furthermore, the complaint must be investigated even if a separate investigation is being conducted by another agency, including but not limited to the local police department.

Privacy/Confidentiality

The Corporation will employ all reasonable efforts to protect the privacy of the Complainant, the Respondent(s) (that is the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed), and the witnesses to the extent possible, consistent with the Corporation's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and comply with any discovery or disclosure obligations.

All records generated under the terms of this policy shall be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law. Confidentiality, however, cannot be guaranteed.

All Complainants proceeding through the formal investigation process should be advised that their identities may be disclosed to the Respondent(s).

During the course of a formal investigation, the Compliance Officer or his/her designee will instruct all members of the Corporation community and third parties who are interviewed about the importance of maintaining confidentiality. Any individual who is interviewed as part of a harassment investigation is expected not to disclose any information that s/he learns or that s/he provides during the course of the investigation.

Remediation

In cases where the complaint investigation results in a finding that the allegation of unlawful harassment/retaliation is substantiated, action must be taken by the Compliance Officer to remedy the past effects of such unlawful harassment/retaliation on a student. This may include but is not limited to providing a contact person to monitor the student, providing tutoring to the student, allowing the student to retake tests or assignments, and counseling.

Sanctions and Monitoring

The Board shall vigorously enforce its prohibitions against unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph)/retaliation by taking appropriate action reasonably calculated to stop the harassment and prevent further such harassment.

While observing the principles of due process, a violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including the discharge of an employee or the suspension/expulsion of a student. All disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with applicable State law and the terms of the relevant collective bargaining agreement(s), if any. Any discipline of students with disabilities will be in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") and the Federal and State regulations implementing the IDEA.

When imposing discipline, the Superintendent shall consider the totality of the circumstances involved in the matter, including the ages and maturity levels of those involved. In those cases where unlawful harassment is not substantiated, the Board may consider whether the alleged conduct nevertheless warrants discipline in accordance with other Board policies, consistent with the terms of the relevant collective bargaining agreement(s), if any, and with Federal and State laws and regulations.

All sanctions imposed by the Board and/or Superintendent shall be reasonably calculated to end such conduct, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effects. Prior sanctions imposed on the Respondent(s) for similar past conduct shall be considered in determining the appropriateness of the sanction(s) imposed for the present conduct.

Retention of Public Records, Student Records, and Investigatory Records and Materials

All individuals charged with conducting investigations under this policy shall retain all information, documents, electronically stored information ("ESI"), and electronic media (as defined in Policy 8315) created and received as

part of an investigation, including but not limited to complaints, responses, witness statements, documentary evidence, audio, video and/or digital recordings, handwritten and contemporaneous notes, emails related to the investigation and allegations, printouts, letters, determinations, and summaries. The information, documents, ESI, and electronic media (as defined in Policy 8315) retained may include public records and records exempt from disclosure under Federal and/or State law (e.g., student records).

The information, documents, ESI, and electronic media (as defined in Policy 8315) created or received as part of an investigation shall be retained in accordance with Policy 8310, Policy 8315, Policy 8320, Policy 8330 and the Corporation's records retention schedule.

Retaliation

Any act of retaliation against a person who has made a report, filed a complaint alleging unlawful harassment, or participated as a witness in a harassment investigation is prohibited.

Specifically, the Board will not discriminate/retaliate against, coerce, intimidate, threaten, or interfere with any individual because the person opposed any act or practice of unlawful harassment (see definition in first paragraph), or because that individual made a charge, testified, assisted or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing pertaining to unlawful harassment, or because that individual exercised, enjoyed, aided or encouraged any other person in the exercise or enjoyment of any right granted or protected by Federal or State laws.

Individuals found to have engaged in retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or expulsion from school.

Allegations Constituting Criminal Conduct: Child Abuse/Sexual Misconduct

State law requires any teacher or school employee who knows or suspects that a child under the age of eighteen (18) is a victim of child abuse or neglect to immediately report that knowledge or suspicion to the Department of Child Services, Office of Child Protective Services. If, during the course of a harassment investigation, the Compliance Officer or a designee has reason to believe or suspect that the alleged conduct reasonably indicates abuse or neglect of the Complainant or the alleged victim, a report of such knowledge must be made in accordance with State law and Board Policy.

If the Compliance Officer or a designee has reason to believe that the Complainant has been the victim of criminal conduct as defined under State law, such knowledge should be reported to local law enforcement.

Any reports made to Child Protective Services or to local law enforcement shall not terminate the Compliance Officer's or a designee's obligation and responsibility to continue to investigate a complaint of harassment. While the Compliance Officer or a designee may work cooperatively with outside agencies to conduct concurrent investigations, in no event shall the harassment investigation be inhibited by the involvement of outside agencies.

Education and Training

In support of this Anti-Harassment Policy, the Board promotes preventative educational measures to create greater awareness of unlawful discriminatory practices. The Compliance Officers will oversee training of Corporation employees and students so that they understand their rights and responsibilities under Federal and State law and are informed of the Board's policies and practices with respect to fully implementing and complying with the requirements of Federal and State law. All training regarding the Board's policy and administrative guidelines and harassment, in general, will be age and content appropriate.

Notice

Notice of the Board's policy on anti-harassment related to employment practices and the identity of the Compliance Officers will be posted throughout the Corporation, and published in any Corporation statement

regarding the availability of employment, in any staff handbooks, and in general information publications of the Corporation as required by Federal and State law and this policy.

STUDENT SEARCHES

As used in this section, “reasonable suspicion” means circumstances which would cause a reasonable person to suspect that the search of a particular person, place or thing will lead to the discovery of:

1. Evidence of a violation of the student conduct standards contained in the student handbook;
2. Anything which because of its presence presents an immediate danger of physical harm or illness to any person.

The principal, other administrators, school corporation staff, as well as others that have been designated by the principal and acting at the direction of the principal, may search a student who is suspected of having contraband or a dangerous weapon in their possession. A search may be conducted during the school day or any school related activity if the principal or his designee has reasonable suspicion for the search.

As used in this section “probable cause” means circumstances which would cause a reasonable person to believe that the search of a particular person, place, or thing will more likely than not lead to the discovery of:

1. Evidence of a violation of the student conduct standards contained in the student handbook;
2. Anything which because of its presence presents an immediate danger of physical harm or illness to any person.

Searches of a student which require removal of clothing other than a coat or jacket shall be done only with probable cause. Searches of a student shall be conducted in a private room by a person of the same sex as the student being searched. At least one but not more than three additional persons of the same sex as the student being searched shall witness but not participate in the search. The parent or guardian of any student searched shall be notified of the search as soon as reasonably possible.

TRESPASSING

In coming to and leaving the high school, students are expected to respect the property of the high school’s neighbors and are to avoid trespassing, loitering or damaging others’ property.

Students who are suspended/expelled or withdrawn are prohibited from being on MHS property including extracurricular events. Any student violating this policy could be subject to legal action. (This does not apply to students enrolled in the Alternative School Program or Merrillville Adult Programs).

VISITORS

Student visitors are not allowed at MHS. Parent visitors should call for an appointment or stop at the Greeter to sign in, after which arrangements for the visit will be arranged at a mutually convenient time. All other visits by friends or relatives of students at Merrillville High School are not allowed at school. SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS MUST BE APPROVED BY THE PRINCIPAL OR DESIGNEE.

PART IV: ATTENDANCE

PHILOSOPHY

Regular attendance and promptness are essential to good performance in school. Absence from school is often the greatest single cause of poor performance and achievement. Since the learning process is a progressive activity,

each day's lesson is built upon those class activities which took place on previous days. Whenever a class is missed, for whatever reasons, that experience can never be completely made-up. Since responsibility is a learned behavior and regular school attendance patterns encourage the development of responsible patterns of behavior, each student attending Merrillville High School is expected to make every effort possible to be in school each day. The attendance policy is developed with the idea that if a student is not present in schools he/she is not learning. Merrillville High School attendance regulations are expressed to encourage attendance and to encourage an “on the job” attitude for students to follow and to maintain throughout life. **Attendance is recorded per trimester.**

In accordance with the Merrillville High School attendance philosophy, a student must be in attendance in each class for a minimum of seventy-five (75) percent of each trimester in order to receive credit for a course or courses. (NOTE: ALL ABSENCES REGARDLESS OF REASON WILL COUNT TOWARDS THE TWENTY-FIVE (25) PERCENT MAXIMUM).

STATE LAW

Following is the Indiana compulsory school attendance statute (IC 20.8 1-3-20) Parent to Produce Certificate of Child's Incapacity on Demand: If a parent does not send his child to school because of the child's illness or mental or physical incapacity, it is unlawful for the parent to fail or refuse to produce a certificate of the incapacity for an attendance officer within six (6) days after it is demanded. The certificate required under this section shall be signed by an Indiana physician or by an individual holding a license to practice osteopathy or chiropractic in this state or be a Christian Science practitioner who resides in Indiana and is listed in the Christian Science Journal.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance will be designated as, **EXCUSED, UNEXCUSED, or EXEMPT.**

After a student has accumulated his/her fifth absence, **excused, unexcused, or exempt** (see definition below) any class in a trimester, he/she will be notified that sixth absence may result in a loss of credit (audit), withdraw to study hall, or may elect to go through the expulsion process. Students may elect to appeal this decision by going to the high school principal or designee. A student may be put on an attendance contract after the 4th absence.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Excused absences are defined as absences that the school corporation regards as legitimate reasons for being out of school, as included in the school policy. These include:

1. Illness verified by note or phone call from parent/guardian (See CALLS FOR ABSENCES below).
2. Illness verified by note from Physician.
3. Family Funeral (See EXEMPT ABSENCES below).
4. **Out of class or out of school suspension:** When a student is suspended from school, that student may make up work and receive credit for that work if turned into the teacher the day the student returns from suspension.

CALLS FROM ABSENCES (EXCUSED ABSENCES)

Parents/guardians must email mhsattendance@mvsc.k12.in.us or call STUDENT SERVICES (650-5380) prior to the school day if a student is going to be absent, tardy or leave school for an appointment. (If the parent explains on the student's first day of absence that they will be gone for an extended period or time, long illness, etc., there is no need to call back every day.) Absences without a parent phone call will be considered truancies/unexcused. Calls can be received on a 24-hour automated voice system. Calls must be received within three days of the absence. More than five (5) days of absences is considered excessive, except in cases of extended illness or extremely unusual circumstances. Days of suspension for disciplinary reasons will not be counted toward the five (5) day total. After 5 parent phone calls, in order for an absence to be exempt it must meet the following criteria:

EXEMPT ABSENCES

Prolonged Medical Conditions: An illness that results in long-term illness must be verified by a written doctor's statement as to the length of the illness and necessary absence.

In accordance with the Merrillville High School attendance philosophy, a student must be in attendance in each class for a minimum of seventy-five (75) percent of each trimester in order to receive credit for the course or courses. (Note: ALL ABSENCES REGARDLESS OF REASON WILL COUNT TOWARDS THE TWENTY-FIVE (25) PERCENT MAXIMUM.) Students may appeal to his/her grade level administrator.

1. Student illness, ONLY with a doctor's note or the first five (5) absences with a parent phone call; Physician's statement (**doctor's note must be presented to Student Services Office the day of return**). If a student fails to return with a doctor's note, this absence will be considered an unexcused absence.
2. Death in the immediate family;
3. Required court appearance;
4. Medical/dental appointments that could not be scheduled outside the school day. (Students are expected to attend school except for the time of the appointment). Students must bring verification of doctors appointments upon return. If a student fails to bring verification upon his/her return, it will be considered an unexcused absence.
5. Religious holidays; (Request verification).
6. Other emergencies and unusual circumstances as approved by principal;
7. College visitation-seniors are allowed only two (2) per school year. The college must be beyond a 25 miles radius from the high school. A signed statement on their official letterhead, with your name and date visited, must be returned into the Attendance Office the next day.
8. Family Vacation-A Family Vacation form must be filed with the Student Services Office at least one week prior to the beginning of a vacation. We strongly recommend that you make every effort to plan your vacations around the school calendar, and that you avoid removing your child the week prior and during the standardized testing and at the start of each trimester.
9. Military examinations (arrangements must be made in advance and appointments must be verified);
10. Working at the polls;
11. Serve as a page in the Indiana General Assembly;
12. National Guard duty;
13. Driver's examination.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Students may make up work, but may not receive credit for work.

1. An unexcused absence is any absence not covered under the definition of excused or exempt.
2. No phone call from parent (parent has 72 hours to call from time of absence). No exceptions.
3. Truancy from class/school. A student is considered truant if they are 15 minutes or more late to class.
4. Bus service is provided; if the student chooses other transportation and is late.
5. Fifth (5th) absence with or without a parent phone call.
6. After 10 unexcused absences a student may be referred to Lake County Truancy Court.

HABITUAL TRUANCY

In accordance with Indiana State Law Section 18 IC 20-33-2-11. Any student who has accumulated ten (10) days of absences for one (1) school year, which are either truancies, unexcused absences and/or absences without parental phone calls, will be reported to the State of Indiana as a "habitually truant and/or unexcused absent student". According to the state law, students who are identified as "habitually absent" and are reported to the State of Indiana and/or to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, will NOT be issued an operator's license or a learner's permit to drive a motor vehicle under IC 9-24 until the individual is at least eighteen (18) years of age.

TARDIES

Being tardy is defined as arriving up to 15 minutes late to class without an excused pass from anywhere in the building. The following consequences will be applied each time a student is tardy to the same class period:

- 1st: Written warning
- 2nd: One After School Detention
- 3rd: Two After School Detentions
- 4th: One Friday School
- 5th: Two Friday Schools
- 6th: Withdrawal

TRUANCIES

Being truant is defined as arriving late to class 15 minutes or more without an excused pass from anywhere in the building. The following consequences will be applied each time a student is truant to the same class period:

- 1st: Two After School Detentions
- 2nd: One Friday School
- 3rd: Two Friday Schools
- 4th: W/F

A student who is tardy or truant ten (10) times when arriving late to school may receive a referral to Lake County Truancy Court.

Note: Students who accrue two (2) tardies or one (1) truancy will no longer be eligible for perfect attendance recognition.

TRUANCY COURT

According to compulsory attendance laws, more than 10 unexcused/nonexempt absences are considered excessive by the state of Indiana. Students who are found to be in violation of this law, along with a chronic history of excessive tardies may be referred to the Lake County Truancy Court, the C.A.P.S. (Consistent Attendance Promotes Success) program. A citation will be sent to your home with a date to appear in court. A failure to appear could ultimately result in a bench warrant for your arrest, along with educational neglect charges being filed with the Lake County Prosecutor's office.

PART V: DISCIPLINE

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

The School Board acknowledges that conduct is closely related to learning and that an effective instructional program requires an orderly school environment, which is, in part, reflected in the behavior of students.

The Board believes that the best discipline is self-imposed. Students should learn to assume responsibility for their own behavior and the consequences of their actions.

The Board requires each student of this School Corporation to adhere to the Code of Conduct promulgated by the administration and to submit to such disciplinary measures as are appropriately assigned for infraction of those rules. Such rules shall require that students:

- A. conform to reasonable standards of socially acceptable behavior;
- B. respect the person and property of others;
- C. preserve the degree of order necessary to the educational program in which they are engaged;

D. respect the rights of others;

E. obey constituted authority and respond to those who hold that authority.

The Superintendent will promulgate administrative guidelines for student conduct which carry out the purposes of this policy and:

A. are not arbitrary but bear a reasonable relationship to the need to maintain a school environment conducive to learning;

B. do not discriminate among students;

C. do not demean students;

D. do not violate any individual rights constitutionally guaranteed to students.

The Superintendent will designate sanctions for the infractions of rules, excluding corporal punishment, which:

A. relate in kind and degree to the infraction;

B. help the student learn to take responsibility for his/her actions;

C. are directed, where possible, to reduce the effects of any harm which may have been caused by the student's misconduct.

The Superintendent shall publish to all students and their parents the rules of this Corporation regarding student conduct, the sanctions which may be imposed for breach of those rules, and the due-process procedures that will be followed in administering the Code of Conduct.

The Superintendent will report to the Board periodically the methods of discipline used and the incidents of those types of student misconduct designated by the Board.

The Principal shall have the authority to assign discipline to students, subject to Corporation administrative guidelines and the student's due process rights to notice, hearing, and appeal.

Teachers and other employees of this Board having authority over students shall have the authority to take such means as may be necessary to control the disorderly conduct of students in all situations and in all places where such students are within the jurisdiction of this Board including when such conduct interferes with the educational program of the schools or threatens the health and safety of others.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS/STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

In order to contribute to a positive classroom learning environment:

1. Be respectful and considerate of your teacher and classmates in both words and actions.
2. Remain awake and avoid the impression you are asleep.
3. Come prepared for class by bringing:
 - a. Pencil or pen
 - b. Notebook or paper as appropriate.
 - c. Charged Chromebook
 - d. Book(s) as directed.
 - e. Other material as assigned.
1. Sit in your assigned seat.
1. Work only on assignments from the class you are in unless otherwise directed by your teacher.
1. Keep food and drinks out of the classroom (Administrative exceptions will be posted).

1. Remain in your seat and continue to work until the bell rings. The class will be dismissed by the teacher after the bell has rung.

1. Participate in class.

*Serious disruption, disrespect, insubordination, or noncompliance with other Merrillville High School rules will result in appropriate disciplinary actions.

*Misbehavior when a substitute teacher is assigned to your class will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

*Subject to the rules of the governing body and the administrative staff, a teacher or other school staff member may remove a student for a period not to exceed one (1) school day from an educational function supervised by that teacher or school staff member.

DETENTION

Teachers and administrators assign detentions for minor rule violations. After school detention is held from 2:30pm to 3:10pm and is for the use of teachers and administrators as an alternative to in-school suspension. Students who are absent on the day they are scheduled to serve detention will be rescheduled by the Student Services Office to the next available date. A student may change his/her detention date if they notify the Student Services Clerk before 1:00 pm on or before his/her scheduled detention date. **A scheduled detention can be changed only once.**

DRUG REFERRAL

Student self-referral: a. If a student discloses to teacher, counselor, administrator that he/she uses drugs/alcohol: no expulsion. B. If a student voluntarily reveals that he/she is in possession or under the influence of drugs/alcohol: expulsion proceedings are suspended on condition that student immediately begins, within 24 hours, substance abuse therapy. Required police reports would be held, by the police, without processing as long as the student is faithful to the therapy program and no further substance abuse incident occurs. If a student and family refuse treatment or discontinue treatment prematurely, then expulsion procedures continue and a police report is processed.

DRUG & ALCOHOL TESTING POLICY REASONABLE SUSPENSION

Philosophy

Merrillville Community School Corporation has a strong commitment to the health, safety, and welfare of its students. Results of studies throughout the United States indicate that education alone, as a preventative measure, is not effective in combating substance abuse. Our commitment to maintaining the Merrillville Community School Corporation as a safe and secure educational environment requires a clear policy and supportive programs relating to detection, treatment, and prevention of substance abuse by students.

Definitions

Reasonable suspicion: means a belief based upon circumstances which, when taken together in the context of the school building or activity in which they occur, would lead a reasonable person to believe a student has violated a state law, federal law, or student rule. Information provided by other persons may be considered by an administrator as part of the administrator's reasonable suspicion where the administrator has reason to believe the person offering the information is credible.

Scope of Policy

The provisions of this policy apply in all situations in which a student is subject to school disciplinary rules pursuant to Indiana Code 20-33-8-(b), including:

- On school grounds immediately before or during school hours, or immediately after school hours. Or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group;
- Off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event; or
- Traveling to or from school or a school activity; function, or event.

Reasonable Suspicion Testing

When a trained administrator, counselor, or school nurse has reasonable suspicion to believe that a student is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the administrator may require the student to submit to an alcohol or drug test.

The physical characteristics that may be grounds for reasonable suspicion that a student is under the influence of alcohol or drugs include but are not limited to the following:

- Odor of alcohol or marijuana on breath or clothing-bruises, cuts or needle marks;
- Excessive drowsiness-accelerate heart rate-dilated pupils-bloodshot, watering and/or dull looking eyes-decreased heart rate;
- Unsteady gain or loss of balance when walking-rapid, slowed or slurred speech-extreme hyperactivity;
- Manic or hyper behavior-irresponsible, disrespectful or argumentative behavior-fighting or aggressive behavior-irresponsible-emotional instability, especially overreactions to minor provocation-anxiety or depression-euphoria-dysphoria;
- Hallucinations-delusions-tremors-drowsiness or lethargy-confusion-seizures.

Steroid Testing

The Merrillville School Corporation chooses to take a proactive role in combating the use of Anabolic Steroid Abuse. According to the NIDA, National Institute on Drug Abuse, there are numerous consequences of steroid abuse that can have serious effects on an individual's health. According to the NIDA the signs of steroid abuse vary in males and females and athletes may be more prone to steroid abuse in an attempt to enhance strength, muscle tone and body bulk. Some of the more outward signs of steroid abuse are: aggression, severe acne, oily skin and scalp, jaundice, fluid retention and aggressive growth spurt (e.g. unusual or extraordinary weight gain and/or increase of muscle mass and strength.)

If there is reasonable suspicion that a student athlete may be using steroids, a student may be asked to take a steroid test administered by an independent testing agency. If the test is negative, the corporation will absorb the cost of the test. If the test is positive, the student or parents/guardians will pay for the test. Failure to comply will be automatically declared a positive test.

Procedures

A testing laboratory that is certified pursuant to the regulations of the United States Department of Transportation will provide training and direction to those who supervise the alcohol and drug testing of students. The test sample shall be collected by a person designated by the Superintendent and trained to collect specimen for analysis. The integrity of the test sample shall be carefully preserved at all times through a strict chain of custody maintained with the supervision of the testing laboratory. The sample shall be tested at a certified testing laboratory. Test results shall be reported to the school corporation's Medical Review Officer. Rapid drug tests may be used.

Consequences of a Positive Test

Students who test positive for being under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be subject to the provisions of the school corporation's student discipline policy. A refusal to submit to an alcohol or drug test will be treated as a positive test result.

Financial Responsibility

The Merrillville Community School Corporation will be responsible for the costs of all initial alcohol or drug tests based on reasonable suspicion. A request for a confirmation test following a positive test result will be the financial responsibility of the student or his/her parent or guardian.

Confidentiality

If the test is positive, the principal or administrative designee will meet with the student and the students' parent or guardian. The student and the student's parent or guardian will be given the names of counseling and assistance agencies that the family may want to contact for help.

Other than when necessary to administer this policy, any employee of the Merrillville Community School Corporation who has knowledge of the test result of an alcohol or drug test shall not divulge to anyone, other than the student or the student's parent or guardian, the results of the alcohol or drug test. Exceptions to this rule may be made in the case of a valid court order.

Presented 1/5/99, Adopted 1/19/99,

Revised and Presented 5/6/08

EXPULSION

In most cases, expulsion is used as a last resort at Merrillville High School. A student who becomes a distraction to the educational process of others or breaks a major school board policy will need to be separated from the

institutional setting. This does not mean that Merrillville High School will not assist the student with his/her continued pursuit of an education. Merrillville High School will offer its guidance and support if the student wishes to continue his/her education through adult education, tutoring (paid for by the parents) , correspondence courses, etc.

Any expulsion taking effect more than three (3) weeks prior to the beginning of a trimester of any school year must be reviewed prior to the beginning of the next trimester. Any expulsion that will remain in effect during the first trimester of the following school year must be reviewed before the beginning of the school year.

Expulsion means disciplinary action whereby a student is suspended from school attendance in excess of ten (10) days.

Please understand there is a possibility for expulsion for the discipline infractions listed below::

1. Serious disrespect to a staff member.
2. Causing a false alarm
3. Immoral Conduct
4. Possession or use of alcohol
5. Possession, use of, selling/distributing drugs or any look alike drug.
6. Possession of fire crackers or other explosives.
7. Possession of a weapon/facsimile.
8. Engaging in unlawful activities off of school grounds (Indiana State Code 20-33-8-15)

“RULE OF 10”

It will be recommended that a student be expelled when, **in a trimester**, he/she has been assigned any combination of ten (10) Friday Extension Program days, in-school suspensions, or out-of-school suspensions.

Students who have been suspended two (2) times during a trimester will have their driving privileges suspended for 120 days by the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Students who have been expelled will have their driving privileges suspended for 180 days by the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

It will be recommended that a student be expelled when a student’s legal settlement is not in the attendance area of the Merrillville Community School Corporation.

FRIDAY EXTENSION PROGRAM

The Friday Extension Program is based on the philosophy that all students should remain in the school setting in a learning environment unless their presence would be a disruptive influence in the school. This program is designed to bring about correction in student behavior while maintaining the student’s attendance in school. Disciplinary action often means removal of a student from the normal school routine, setting, and environment. The Friday Extension Program provides an opportunity to the student for continued academic progress with alternative disciplinary measures.

A Friday Extension Program day is normally held from 3:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. on Fridays and is for the use of administrators as an alternative to out of school suspension.

If a student is absent on Friday and has a Friday Extension, he/she will be assigned a different Friday by the Student Services Office. If the student misses Friday Extension without having rescheduled, the student will be suspended for up to 3 days.

Friday Extension Program can be changed for emergencies only! The **parent** must call prior to 2:00 P.M. on the Thursday prior to the scheduled Friday. **Work is not an emergency.** Student Services telephone number is 650-5380. Voice mail is available on the weekend (24-hour voicemail)

- Students must bring three (3) hours of study material to Friday Extension Program or they will be asked to leave.
- Same dress code rules apply for Friday Extension Program as day school.
- Friday Extension Program will only be rescheduled for an illness with a doctor’s note.

Students can only receive 5 Friday Extension Program per trimester. Any additional Friday(s) will result in a one day out-of-school suspension. Fridays will be able to reschedule only once, then it will turn into a 1-day suspension. If a student misses a Friday Extension Program, without having rescheduled, the student will be suspended for up to three (3) days. If a student is removed from Friday Extension, or leaves without permission, they will receive a three (3) day suspension.

GANG PREVENTION

Presence of gangs and gang activities can cause a substantial disruption to school and school activities. A “gang” is defined as any group of students who are perceived as a distinct group (not an approved school organization), which prompts a disruptive response in the school community.

The following rules act to prevent disruption and to prohibit gang activities by restricting those actions which foster such activities or which, because they may be performed in relation to gang activities, endanger even those students who do not intend to show gang membership or affiliation.

No student on school property or at any school activity:

1. Shall wear, possess, use, distribute, or sell any clothing, jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol, sign, drawing, graffiti, or other items which may be viewed as evidence of membership or affiliation in a gang.
2. Shall commit any act or omission, or use any speech, either verbal or nonverbal (gestures, handshakes, drawings, graffiti, other written communications, etc.) showing membership or affiliation in a gang.
3. Shall use any speech or commit any act or omission in promoting the interests of any gang or gang activity, including but not limited to:
 - a. Soliciting others for membership in any gangs;
 - b. Intimidating or threatening any persons;
 - c. Violating any other rules as stated in the student handbook.
2. Shall use or have in his/her possession any cellular communication device, pocket page or similar electronic paging devices while on school property or at a school sponsored function.

Violation of the above stated gang prevention rules shall subject the student to suspension(s) or expulsion.

HABITUAL TRUANCY DESIGNATION

On the third truancy from a class or classes during a school year, a student who is at least thirteen (13) but less than fifteen (15), will be classified as a habitual truant and will have his/her name sent to the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles. The student is entitled to the procedure described in Indiana Code 20-33-8-19.

The student has a right to a hearing by an appointed hearing officer following the provisions of Indiana Code.

A student identified as a habitual truant is entitled to a review of the attendance record at least once a year to determine if the attendance has improved so that the student can become eligible for a license/permit. Any student under the age of sixteen (16) who has reached the tenth (10th) absence will be reported to the juvenile court.

The classification of habitual truant cannot be reviewed by the school principal/designee prior to sixty (60) school days from the day of the final determination.

The Habitual Truant Permanent Record Report must be completed, placed in, and becomes a part of the student's permanent record file. This report shall be included with any records sent to another school or school system in which the student enrolls.

HALLWAY BEHAVIOR

As students pass from class to class or move through the corridors before school, at lunch time, or after school, the hallways need to be used in a manner that allows everyone an unobstructed passage. The most efficient method of moving through the halls is for all students to walk on the right side of the corridor. If students wish to stop and talk to friends, they should do so in the alcove areas of the school. At all times students should be

courteous to others and speak at an appropriate volume so as not to disturb others. When class is in session students should speak appropriately without profanity (civility policy).

As students pass through the halls, trash cans are available to discard items and if items are on the floor, picking them up and depositing them in the nearest trash can will help keep Merrillville High School clean.

INVALIDATION OF DRIVER'S LICENSE OR LEARNER'S PERMIT

In accordance with the Indiana Code which provides that any student under the age of 18 and who receives a second out-of-school suspension during a trimester, an expulsion, or an exclusion for disciplinary reasons, will have his/her name sent to the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles which will invalidate the student's license or permit until the earliest of the following events:

1. The person becomes eighteen (18) years of age.
2. One hundred twenty (120) days after the person is suspended.
3. One hundred eighty (180) days after the person is expelled or excluded.
4. The suspension, expulsion, or exclusion is reversed.

LOITERING

Being out of the classroom during class time is something which is to be avoided. While out of the classroom with a pass, the student should be conducting only the business which he/she was given the pass to accomplish. If the student is not in her/her assigned area he/she will be considered to be loitering and will be assigned after school detention(s). Any student without a pass will be considered truant. Any non-student on school grounds without permission will be charged with trespassing.

MAJOR VIOLATIONS

Grounds for suspension or expulsion are student misconduct or substantial disobedience. The following include examples of student misconduct or substantial disobedience, but are not limited to:

1. Engaging in conduct that disrupts or interferes with school purposes: For example - danger to self or others, the use of violence, force, noise, coercion, threat, intimidation, fear, passive resistance, or other comparable conduct, or urging others to engage in such conduct.
2. Trespassing, vandalizing school property, breaking and entering a school building or facility, attempting to set fire or setting fire or intentionally damaging any school property.
3. Causing or attempting to cause substantial damage to school property or stealing or attempting to steal school property of substantial value or repeatedly damaging or stealing school property of small value.
4. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause damage to valuable private property, stealing, or attempting to steal valuable private property, or repeatedly damaging or stealing private property. Selling or attempting to sell stolen merchandise.
5. Attending school or a school-sponsored activity, with the odor of alcohol or marijuana/THC on breath, will be grounds for expulsion. TESTS COULD BE USED TO CONFIRM THE CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL or THC.
6. Repeatedly refusing to follow the directions of supervising school employees.
7. Engaging in acts of serious disrespect to school employees. Any language (obscene, vulgar, profane) or gestures directed at staff members will be grounds for expulsion.
8. Willfully truant from school in violation of building policy.
9. The use or possession of tobacco, tobacco vapes, pens or any smoking object/device including but not limited to electronic smoking devices and vape pens is prohibited at Merrillville High School. If under 18 years old, police may be contacted and a ticket issued.
10. The violation or repeated violation, of any rules, standards or policies which have been established by the Superintendent and presented to the Board; or established by the principal of a school, reviewed and

approved by the Superintendent, and presented to the Board. The Board may change any such rules, standards or policies in accordance with procedures, which it has adopted.

11. Engaging in immoral conduct/sexual conduct. Knowingly entering into a washroom of the opposite gender, will receive a minimum of five (5) days suspension and/or will be subject to a change of placement.
12. Fighting, intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical injury or intentionally behaving in such a way as could reasonably cause physical injury to any person. Self-defense or reasonable belief that it was necessary to protect some other person constitutes a violation of this provision.
13. Using force or the threat of force to take money or something of value from another person, engaging in blackmail, or using coercion to gain something of value or an advantage.
14. Possessing, handling, using, transmitting or selling weapons, dangerous instruments or explosives.
15. Threats of bodily harm (written or verbal).
16. Threats of bringing a weapon (written or verbal).
17. Knowingly possessing, handling, or transmitting a knife or any other object that can reasonably be considered a weapon.
18. Knowingly possessing or using on school grounds during school hours an electronic paging device or a handheld portable telephone in a situation not related to school purpose or an educational function.
19. Knowingly possessing, using, transmitting, or being under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, marijuana vape, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.

Knowingly using or taking a prescription drug that is not prescribed for that person or that exceeds the recommended dosage for the person to which it is prescribed or a patent drug by exceeding recommended dosage with the purpose of creating an intoxicated or irrational state or of causing physical injury, either to one self or to other persons. Knowingly transmitting or selling such prescription or patent drugs to aid a person violates this paragraph.

Any violation of the above rule will result in a recommendation by the school administration that the student be expelled.

20. Possessing or providing to any person anything used or designed to be used primarily for the storage, processing, delivery or consumption of alcohol, marijuana, stimulants, intoxicants, narcotics, depressants or hallucinogens. Examples of things which are not to be possessed or provided to another person are: pipes, rolling papers, clips, stones and any other devices believed to be, by school authorities, used for the storage, processing, delivery or consumption of the above-mentioned drugs.

Any student who is unsure if possession, use or providing another person with any particular medicine, substance or paraphernalia would violate the above rule should contact the building principal or his designee before possessing, using or providing the medication, substance or paraphernalia.

21. A person knowingly or intentionally delivers any substance that he/she represents to be a controlled substance commits "dealing in a substance represented to be a controlled substance."
22. Creating a disturbance by displaying or using a substance represented to be a controlled substance.
23. Unlawful activities in the community that threatens the school or could cause substantial disruptions or interferes with school purposes.
24. In lieu of suspension, students may be offered an alternative school service.

The grounds for suspension or expulsion listed above apply when a student is:

- a. On school grounds immediately before, during, and immediately after school hours and at any other time when the school is being used by a school group;
- b. Off the school grounds at a school activity, function, or event;
- c. Traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event.

A major violation of the discipline policy may result in the suspension of the student for ten (10) days and a hearing may be conducted within the ten (10) days by a hearing board consisting of the principal and his assistant. A hearing is the examination of accounts of misconduct and the taking of recommendations (in addition to the ten-day suspension) as to future disciplinary action by the hearing board. People in attendance at the hearing would include: the principal, the assistant principal, the student involved, and the student's parents or legal guardians. The student may receive credit for any coursework missed during that suspension if that coursework is returned to the teacher the day the student returns to school.

Note

- I. The accumulation of referrals and suspensions for major violations will accumulate for the entire year.
- II. It will be recommended that a student be expelled when, in a trimester, he/she has been assigned any combination of ten (10) Friday Extension Program days, in-school suspensions, or out-of-school suspensions.
- III. It will be recommended that a student be expelled for one calendar year when, while on school property, the student possesses, handles, uses, or transmits a firearm as defined in IC 35-47-1-5. The return of the student to school will be at the beginning of the first school trimester after the end of one (1) year period. The superintendent shall notify the county prosecuting attorney's office when a student is expelled under this rule.
- IV. It will be recommended that a student be expelled for up to one (1) calendar year when, while on school property, the student possesses, handles, uses, or transmits a deadly weapon as defined in IC 35-41.1.8. The superintendent shall notify the county prosecuting attorney's office when a student is expelled under this rule.
- V. A student may be suspended or expelled for engaging in unlawful activity on or off school grounds if the unlawful activity may reasonably be considered to be an interference with school purposes or an educational function, or the student's removal is necessary to restore order or protect persons on school property. This includes any unlawful activity meeting the above criteria which takes place during weekends, holidays, other school breaks, and the summer period when a student may not be attending classes or other school functions.
- VI. When a group of two or more students cause or attempt to cause physical injury to another student, these students will be recommended for expulsion.

MISBEHAVIOR AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

Misbehavior and disrespect of any kind will not be tolerated at the end of the school year. Any misbehavior occurring on the school grounds or on the bus will be subject to disciplinary action by school officials during the summer or at the beginning of the next school year.

MISSING DETENTION

If a student misses a detention, he/she will be assigned a Friday Extension Program. If a student misses a Friday Extension Program, without a doctor's note, he/she will be assigned one (1) in-school suspension day.

POSSESSION OF MATCHES OR LIGHTERS

Students found in possession of matches or lighters will be subject to disciplinary action..

SCHOOL RELATED FUNCTIONS-BEHAVIOR

All school discipline policies apply at school related functions. This includes school related functions which occur off school grounds.

TRIPS ABROAD/OVERNIGHT TRIPS

As students travel, they represent their school, their community and their country. A key to a successful trip is their willingness to accept new cultures and the occasional inconveniences of travel. When students leave the confines of the school, however, different concerns come to light. All school rules apply.

These are the rules to be followed while abroad or on an overnight trip:

1. (Serious Violation). Alcohol on the trip. Students are neither allowed to drink alcohol nor have it in their possession. (School Rule: Expulsion).
2. (Serious Violation). Drugs. Possession of illegal substances is absolutely forbidden and will require dismissal from the group and a return home at the parents' expense. (School Rule: Expulsion).
3. (Serious Violation). Weapons. Possession of any type of knives, firearms or firecrackers will result in dismissal from the group and a return home. (School Rule: Expulsion)

4. (Serious Violation). Curfew. The teacher sets a curfew. After curfew, students are to be in their hotel room until the next morning. (Substantial disobedience/danger to self: School Rule: Suspension)
5. (Serious Violation). Sexual/Immoral Misconduct. Students will be sent home for inappropriate sexual conduct. (School Rule: Expulsion).
6. (Violation). Hotel/Bus Misconduct. Students will be held personally responsible for any damage caused and will not be allowed to leave the hotel/bus until damage is paid for. (School Rule: Vandalism-first offense 1-5 Fridays).
7. (Violation). Motor Vehicles. Students are not to rent or drive motor vehicles nor can they be passengers in unauthorized vehicles. (School Rule: 1-5 Fridays).
8. (Violation). Attendance at meals/tours. Students are expected to be with their group at meal times and, in addition, students need to be on time for all events (School Rule: Truant-2 detentions for each event missed).
9. (Violation). Tattoos/Body piercing. Students are not allowed to get tattoos or body piercings. (School Rule: 1-5 Fridays).
10. (Violation). Cigarettes. Students are not allowed to smoke cigarettes nor have them in their possession. (School Rule: Suspension).

Other violations not specified here are also subject to school rules/disciplinary action.

DISCIPLINE STEPS

For all violations:

1. A call is made to the parents.
2. A school punishment is issued.

For serious violations, the following step will be added: A dismissal from the group is made and a return home at the parents' expense.

SUSPENSION

Suspension means a student has lost his/her right to attend school or to take part in school until midnight of the last day of suspension. An administrator may suspend a student up to ten (10) school days before a change of placement will be recommended. A suspended student will be responsible for making up school work during a suspension. The student must obtain assignments by contacting other students, by accessing the "Scope and Sequences" page on MHS's website or by contacting the teacher directly. The student must complete missed assignments during the suspension and turn work in to the teacher upon his/her return to school. Make-up of missed tests will be scheduled on the day the student returns to school. **The make-up work will include only written daily work, tests and major projects. Some class work cannot be reasonably duplicated and cannot be made up.** The student will be given credit for properly completed assignments and grades on any made-up tests. The suspension days will not be counted towards the five (5) non-exempt absences. In accordance with the Indiana Code 20-33-8-14 or 20-33-8-15 which provided that any student under the age of 18 and who receives a second out-of-school suspension during a trimester will have his/her name sent to the Indiana bureau of Motor Vehicles which will invalidate the student's license or permit for a period of one hundred twenty (120) days.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In matters relating to the discipline of students with disabilities, the Board shall abide by Federal and State laws and regulations regarding suspension and expulsion.

The Superintendent shall establish administrative guidelines and require that the guidelines are followed when disciplining any student with a disability.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF STUDENTS

The School Board recognizes that removal from the educational programs of the School Corporation, whether by suspension or expulsion, is the most severe sanction that can be imposed on a student in this Corporation and one (1) that cannot be imposed without due process since removal deprives a child of the right to an education.

No student is to be suspended and/or expelled from an activity, program, or a school unless his/her behavior represents misconduct or substantial disobedience while the student is on school grounds immediately before or during school hours, or immediately after school hours, or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group; off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event; or traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event.

In addition to the grounds specified above, a student may be suspended or expelled for engaging in unlawful activity on or off school grounds if the unlawful activity may reasonably be considered to be an interference with school purposes or an educational function, or the student's removal is necessary to restore order or protect persons on school property, including any unlawful activity during weekends, holidays, other school breaks, and the summer period when a student may not be attending classes or other school functions.

Furthermore, a student may be suspended or expelled for bullying, regardless of the physical location in which the bullying occurred, whenever:

- A. the individual committing the bullying behavior and any of the intended targets of the bullying behavior are students attending a school within a school corporation; and
- B. disciplinary action is reasonably necessary to avoid substantial interference with school discipline or prevent an unreasonable threat to the rights of others to a safe and peaceful learning environment.

A Student Code of Conduct, approved by the Board, shall specify the procedures to be followed by school officials when administering this policy. In addition to the procedural safeguards and definitions set out in this policy and the student/parent handbook, the procedures set forth in Policy 5605 shall apply to students identified as disabled under IDEA.

For purposes of this policy and the Superintendent's administrative guidelines, the following definitions shall apply:

- A. "Suspension" means any disciplinary action that does not constitute an expulsion whereby a student is separated from school attendance for a period not to exceed ten (10) school days. A student may be suspended for a longer period of time in accordance with the provisions of I.C. 20-33- 8-23 pending expulsion.

If a student is suspended, the student is required to complete all assignments and school work assigned during the period of the student's suspension. The principal or the principal's designee shall ensure that the student receives notice of any assignments or school work due and teacher contact information in the event that the student has questions regarding the assignments or schoolwork. The student will receive credit, in the same manner as a student who is not suspended, for any assignments or school work assigned during the period of the student's suspension that the student completes. The student shall be allowed to make up missed tests or quizzes when the student returns to school.

- B. "Expulsion" means a disciplinary or other action whereby a student is:
 - 1. separated from school attendance for a period exceeding ten (10) school days;
 - 2. separated from school attendance for the balance of the current semester or current year unless a student is permitted to complete required examinations in order to receive credit for courses taken in the current semester or current year; or

3. separated from school attendance for at least one (1) calendar year pursuant to I.C. 20-33-8-16 for possession of firearms, deadly weapons, or destructive devices, which may include an assignment to attend an alternative school, an alternative educational program, or a homebound educational program.

The term does not include situations when a student is disciplined under I.C. 20-33-8-25, removed from school pursuant to I.C. 20-34-3-9, or removed from school for failure to comply with the immunization requirements of I.C. 20-34-4-5.

Any student who brings a firearm, as defined in I.C. 35-47-1-5, or a destructive device, as defined in I.C. 35-47.5-2-4 to school or onto school property or at a school-related activity or is in possession of a firearm shall be expelled for at least one (1) calendar year unless the Superintendent reduces the punishment for reasons justified by the particular circumstances of the incident.

If the student brings a deadly weapon as defined in I.C. 35-31.5-2-86 onto Corporation property or is found to possess a deadly weapon on Corporation property or at a school-related activity, s/he may be expelled for a period of not more than one (1) calendar year unless the Superintendent reduces the punishment for reason justified by the particular circumstances of the incident. The Superintendent shall notify the law enforcement agency designated by the Prosecuting Attorney immediately when a student possesses a firearm, destructive device, or deadly weapon on school property or at a school-related activity.

The Superintendent shall ensure that a copy of this policy is sent to the State Department of Education as well as a description of the circumstances surrounding any expulsions for the above-stated firearms or weapons offense together with the name of the school, the number of students so expelled, and the types of firearms or weapons that were brought on Corporation property.

The Corporation shall annually prepare a list of

1. alternative education programs in the same county in which the Corporation is located or a county immediately adjacent to the county in which the Corporation is located; and
2. virtual charter schools;

in which a student may enroll if the student is expelled. The list must contain contact information for the entities described above and must provide the student and the student's parent notice that the student may be required to comply with I.C. 20-33-2 or any statute relating to compulsory school attendance in accordance with I.C. 20-33-8-31. A copy of the list shall be provided to the student or the student's parent at the expulsion meeting. If the student or student's parent fails to attend an expulsion meeting, a copy of the list shall be mailed to the student's residence.

If a student is expelled from school or from any educational function, the student's absence from school because of the expulsion is a violation of I.C. 20-33-2 or any other statute relating to compulsory school attendance if the student may enroll in

1. an alternative education program in the county where or in a county immediately adjacent to the county where the Corporation from which s/he was expelled is located; or
2. a virtual charter school

and the student does not enroll in an alternative education program or a virtual charter school during the student's expulsion. In the event an alternative education program or virtual charter school is not available for a student to attend under this subsection, the student's expulsion is not a violation of I.C. 20-33-2 or any other statute relating to compulsory school attendance.

The Board of School Trustees has voted to hear all expulsion appeals.

The Superintendent shall develop administrative guidelines which provide appropriate procedures for implementing this policy and comply with applicable statutes.

The Board authorizes the Superintendent to develop administrative guidelines to provide for the referral of a student to the juvenile court.

The Superintendent shall report all expulsions and second suspensions to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles in accordance with law and the Bureau's guidelines.

Retention of Public Records, Student Records, and Investigatory Records and Materials

All individuals charged with imposing discipline under this policy shall retain all information, documents, electronically stored information ("ESI"), and electronic media (as defined in Policy 8315) created and received as part of an investigation of student misconduct and disciplinary action taken, including but not limited to reports, admissions, witness statements, documentary evidence, audio, video and/or digital recordings, handwritten and contemporaneous notes, emails related to the allegations, investigation and disciplinary action, printouts, letters, determinations, and summaries. The information, documents, ESI, and electronic media (as defined in Policy 8315) retained may include public records and records exempt from disclosure under Federal and/or State law (e.g., student records).

The information, documents, ESI, and electronic media (as defined in Policy 8315) created or received as part of an investigation of student misconduct or disciplinary action taken shall be retained in accordance with Policy 8310, Policy 8315, Policy 8320, Policy 8330, and the Corporation's records retention schedule.

MERRILLVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

DISCIPLINE GUIDELINE EXAMPLES

The following are general guidelines for administrators and are subject to change based on severity of the incident. The following should be considered

EXAMPLES of progressive discipline. Administrators may substitute re-directive and restorative practices

***Items are cumulative for the year.**

VIOLATION	FIRST TIME	SECOND TIME	THIRD TIME
Bullying, Threats, Harassment, Provoking	Suspension/Expulsion	Suspension/Expulsion	Expulsion
Cafeteria (throwing food/other objects)	Warning/Community Service/Suspension	Community Service/Friday Extension/ Suspension	ISS/Suspension
Wireless Communication/ Electronic Devices	Hold in Office/Parent pick-up/1 Friday	Hold in Office/Parent pick-up/1 ISS	Hold in Office/Parent conference/1 OSS
Cheating	“0” for assignment	Friday & “0”	Removal W/F
Civility Policy	3 Day Suspension	5 Day Suspension	Expulsion
Degrading Remarks Ethnic/Racial/Sexual	3 Day Suspension	5 Day Suspension	Expulsion
Dress Code Violation, Inappropriate Dress	Warning & Change Clothes	Friday & Change Clothes	ISS/Suspension
Disrespect to Staff (Serious)	Suspension/Expulsion		
Electronic/ Laser Beam	Hold in Office/Return at end of the day	Hold in Office/Parent pick-up/1 Friday	Hold in Office/Parent pick-up/2 Fridays
False Alarms (Fire, etc.)	Expulsion		
*Fighting/Assault/ (Subject to Arrest)	8 Day Suspension/ Expulsion/ Subject to arrest	Expulsion/ Subject to Arrest	
Forged Pass (Etc.)	2 Fridays	3 Fridays/ ISS	4 Fridays/ ISS
Friday Extension Removal	1 Day Suspension	3 Day Suspension	5 Day Suspension
Gambling/Dice (Any Form of Wagering)	2 Fridays	3 Day Suspension	Expulsion

VIOLATION	FIRST TIME	SECOND TIME	THIRD TIME
Improper Affection	Warning & Parent Call	Parent Call & 2 Detentions	Parent Call & 1 Friday
Immoral Conduct	Expulsion		
Inappropriate Touching	Suspension/Expulsion		
Insubordination	3 Fridays	3 Day ISS	3 Day Suspension
Language (Inappropriate)	2 Detentions	1 Friday	3 Fridays
Language/Gestures (Obscene) Using “F” word Student to student	4 Fridays/Suspension	5 Fridays/Suspension	Suspension/Expulsion
Leaving Class Without Permission	2 Detentions	1 Friday	ISS/OSS
Leaving School Without Permission	2 Fridays	ISS	Suspension
Loitering, In Hall or Parking Lot without permission or In Unauthorized Part of the Building	1 Friday	ISS	Suspension
Missing Detention	Reschedule	2 Fridays	ISS
*Missing Friday School	Reschedule and assigned 2 Fridays	3 ISS	3 Day Suspension
Parking/Driving Violations	Traffic Ticket/Loss of Driving Privilege/Car May be towed	Traffic Ticket/Loss of Driving Privilege/Car May be towed	Traffic Ticket/Loss of Driving Privilege/Car May be towed
Possession or Use of Alcohol	Expulsion		
Possession or Use of a drug, marijuana vape/Look alike	Expulsion/ Online Drug Education Program		
Possession of Firecrackers or other explosives	Expulsion		
Possession or Use of Tobacco, tobacco vape, chemical vape, or cartridge	3 Day Suspension and Online Drug Education Program	5 Day Suspension and Online Drug Education Program	Expulsion
Possession of matches/lighters	1 Friday/Phone call home	2 Fridays	3 Fridays/ISS

VIOLATION	FIRST TIME	SECOND TIME	THIRD TIME
Possession of drug paraphernalia	Suspension/Expulsion	Expulsion	
Possession of a weapon/facsimile	Expulsion		
Stealing/Possession of stolen merchandise	Restitution and 5 Day Suspension	Expulsion	
Reckless Driving	Loss of driving privilege/Ticket	Loss of driving privilege/Ticket	Loss of driving privilege up to one year
Refusal to give an electronic device/cell phone to a staff member	1 Days In School Suspension	3 Days Out of School Suspension	5 Days Out of School Suspension
Refusing to identify self to staff member	ISS	3 ISS	Suspensions
Sign In/Out (Failure to)	Warning	Friday	ISS
Signs of violence/hate (gang signs, swastikas, etc)	3 Suspensions	5 Suspensions	Expulsion
Sleeping in class/or appearance of sleeping	1 Detentions	2 Detentions	1 Friday
Threats, harassment, provoking	Suspension/Expulsion	Expulsion	
Truant from class or school	2 Detentions	1 Friday	3rd: 2 Fridays 4th: Withdrawal
Tardy to class/school/study hall	Tardy Kiosk	1 Detention	3rd: 2 Detentions 4th: 1 Friday 5th: 2 Fridays 6th: W/F
Vandalism	Community Service/Payment 1-5 Fridays/Expulsion	Community Service/Payment 3-5 Fridays/Expulsion	Community Service/Payment Suspensions/Expulsion

PART VI: EXTRACURRICULAR INFORMATION

PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

Activities beyond the regular curriculum at Merrillville High School are designed to implement by their nature and structure the philosophy underlying the school as a whole: to provide students with the tools of learning that will enable them to continue learning all their lives.

The recognized value of extracurricular participation to student's personal development has given these activities a high priority in the total school program. To ensure this value, it is essential that the goal of the extracurricular program be to encourage individual responsibility and initiative within the established framework of each organization and to allow students to recognize the consequences of their own decisions and actions. Extracurricular activities at Merrillville High School provide scope for a variety of interests and talents through programs in athletics, curriculum-related clubs, student government, honor clubs, intramurals, music and drama organizations and service clubs.

Each of these groups has been given the responsibility of setting its own standards for participation consistent with the philosophy of the school and the requirements for conduct expected of all students. Within this general framework, the standards of each activity will necessarily vary according to that activity's individual purpose and goal as well as overlap in the restatement of school handbook requirements.

The extracurricular program can maintain its credibility only if the organizations within it have the authority to maintain their own goals and standards. Unless otherwise stated, club standards will be enforced during the school year, with the expectations that students will observe these standards at school and uphold them away from school as well. Enforcement of club standards during the summer will be in effect for the athletic program and for those organizations maintaining summer activities.

It should be clearly understood by all students involved in the extracurricular program and by their parents that individual participation must be regarded not as a right but, instead, as a privilege dependent on personal acceptance of the group's common philosophy.

Merrillville High School/Athletic Department reserves the right to use a variety of methods to investigate potential athletic code of conduct violations. These include, but are not limited to, legal notification, public records, internet websites, parent communication and other personnel contacts.

For this reason, the school will endeavor through its Parent/Teacher Advisory Committee to support each organization in maintaining the expectations of membership as these have been developed within the group and as they are set forth in this handbook.

ATHLETIC RULES AND REGULATIONS IHSAA ELIGIBILITY

The Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) has established the following rules for eligibility for both girls and boys. If there is a question concerning your eligibility to participate in athletics, feel free to check with the athletic director.

Age- A student who is or shall be twenty (20) years of age prior to or on the scheduled date of the IHSAA state finals in a sport shall be ineligible for inter school athletic competition in that sport; a student who is nineteen (19) years of age on the scheduled date of the IHSAA state finals in a sport shall be eligible as to age for inter school athletic competition in that sport.

Transfer- Students who have transferred from another school shall not be certified or permitted to participate in inter school athletics until the athletic director has on file a signed and completed IHSAA Athletic Transfer Report approving said transfer by receiving/sending school principal, school principal, and the Commissioner.

Grades- To be eligible scholastically, students must have received passing grades at the end of their last grading period in school in at least seventy percent (70%) of the maximum number of full credit subjects (or the equivalent) that a student can take and must be currently enrolled in at least seventy percent (70%) of the maximum number of full credit subjects (or the equivalent) that a student can take. Trimester grades take

precedence. MHS has a maximum class load of five (5) which means athletes must pass four (4) subjects in order to be academically eligible to participate in athletics.

Amateur Standing- Students may lose their amateur standing and their eligibility for interscholastic sports if they accept gifts or prizes for participation on a team or in a tourney other than with a school team. If there is a question, check with the athletic director.

Parent's and Physician's Consent Form/Emergency Medical Treatment Waiver/Concussion Form:

Before students may practice with any team, they must have on file in the athletic office the IHSA physical examination and emergency medical treatment forms which have been properly signed by their parents giving permission to participate, and properly completed and signed by a licensed medical physician indicating that the student is physically able to play. This form must be filled out for both boys and girls and must be renewed each year. No physicals are to be taken earlier than April 1 for the following school year. Falsification of these documents can result in suspension or dismissal from a sport.

Participation- Students are encouraged to participate in more than one sport if they are academically secure. If a student is not involved in a sport during a season, he/she is encouraged to be involved in a conditioning program. A student who quits a sport may not go out for another sport until the end of the first IHSA tournament series. Athletes, cheerleaders and dance team members may not participate in more than one activity during the same season. (Exception: A request must be filed with the athletic director to request exemption from this rule).

Practice Rules- A student must practice the minimum required number of days prior to participation in an interscholastic athletic event as listed in the IHSA bylaws. The number of required practices is 10 for all sports except girls' golf which is 2. Practices must be under the direct supervision of a member of the coaching staff.

Absence Due to Illness (see Rule 9. IHSA Bylaws)- A member of any team who is unable to practice for five consecutive days due to illness or an injury must present to the athletic trainer a statement from his/her physician that he/she is physically able to resume practice. **Students who are absent for any part of the school day are not allowed to participate in a contest on that day. Special exemptions must be approved by the athletic director prior to the contest day.** (Examples of exemption: funeral, dental appointment).

Participation on Outside Teams (IHSA Bylaw)

1. An Outstanding student athlete may participate as an individual during the authorized contest season of a sport without loss of interschool eligibility provided the following criteria are met:
 - a. Complete and forward application form to Commissioner 30 days prior to the event
 - b. Requires approval of parent, coach, principal and Commissioner
 - c. Requires certification by State, National or International non-school organized chairperson including:
 1. Evidence of student's qualification; and
 2. Agreement to notify student's principal of advancement to the next higher level of competition
 - d. Requires prior arrangements to complete academic lessons, assignments, tests, etc.
 - e. Requires that student not miss an Association (IHSA) sponsored tournament series contest for which he/she is eligible. It is the philosophy of the association that students owe loyalty to their school and team.
 - f. Require student and parent agreement to not accept directly or indirectly, any awards, gifts, trips, merchandise, etc. which would violate IHSA Rule 5 (Amateurism) Rule 6 (Awards, Prizes, Gifts).
2. A 9th, 10th, 11th or 12th grade student may NOT participate in an inter school contest in Indiana with or against a student enrolled in a grade lower than the 9th.
3. Participation of a student in an organized athletic contest with or against players not belonging to their school constitutes a game. An organized "scrimmage" or practice by students with or against teams or players not belonging to their school is considered a game.
4. Students who participate in any inter school contest when ineligible other than in scholarship, too many quarters, too many events and similar oversights, become ineligible only in that sport for the remainder of that sport season. When facts are purposely withheld or misrepresented, students become ineligible in all sports for the remainder of that trimester and all of their next trimester in school.
5. Team practices out of state, other than pre-game practices, shall not be permitted.

MHS POLICIES

Citizenship. It is an expectation that all students/athletes are always on their best behavior in and outside of school. You represent your school and your team 365 days a year. The violations and penalties listed in this section are in effect 365 days.

Lettering Criteria- At the beginning of the sport season coaches will give each student a written copy of their lettering criteria. These criteria has the approval of the athletic administration.

Awards-Athletes must meet the standards set by the head coach in each sport in order to receive an award. An athlete may earn only one (1) of the following awards: **Pirate Head and Letter (M).** Thereafter, **Sport Emblems** will be given to an athlete who letters two or more times. In order to purchase a letter jacket, an athlete must have earned their varsity letter “M”. Junior varsity members of athletic teams will receive a **Pirate Head**, which may be displayed on a letterman’s jacket after receiving an “M” award. A Pirate head is the first award for an athlete on a junior varsity team. A **JV Certificate** is awarded to an athlete who already has earned the **Pirate Head** and did not earn a varsity letter. **Letter “M”** is the first award for an athlete earning a varsity letter. A **Sport Emblem** is awarded to a varsity letter winner who has already received a letter “M” (Varsity letter winners will physically receive only one letter in their high school career). ***Plaque-**Awarded to an athlete who has received six varsity letters. ***Blanket-**Awarded to an athlete who has received eight varsity letters. **MVP Plaque** is awarded to a team member who is acknowledged by the team or coaching staff as being the most valuable player on the team. **Sportsmanship Plaque** is awarded to a team member who is acknowledged by the team or coaching staff as having the best sportsmanship on the team. **Most Improved Plaque** is awarded to a team member who is acknowledged by the team or coaching staff as having made the most improvement on the team in the current season. **Leadership Plaque** is awarded to a team member who is acknowledged by the team or coaching staff as having the best leadership on the team. **The Scholar Athlete Certificate** is awarded to an athlete who has accomplished a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or better. (This does not include first semester freshmen). **Scholar Athlete Patch** is awarded to a junior or senior athlete who has a 3.5 GPA or better. **Scholar Athlete Certificate** is awarded to a freshman (This does not include first semester freshmen) or a sophomore who has a cumulative 3.5 GPA. **Scholar Athlete Four Year Plaque** is awarded to a senior athlete who has maintained a GPA of 3.5 or better for four years while participating on an athletic team. The **Tri-Athlete Plaque** is awarded to an athlete who receives three varsity letters in one school year. **Cheerleader Awards-**The first time a cheerleader earns an athletic letter he/she will receive a Pirate Head and Letter “M”. Emblems will be earned for each season he/she completes after the first season.

Awards Banquet-There are four awards banquets scheduled during the school year. Fall, Football, Winter and Spring. Students receiving awards are expected to be present at the banquet.

Practice Policy- Teams and individuals may practice Monday through Saturday. Coaches may not hold practices on Thanksgiving or Christmas. **NO TEAM MAY PRACTICE ON SUNDAY.** Practice attendance policies are left up to the head coach and a copy of the policy should be given to each athlete at the beginning of the season.

Vacation Policy-Students who are taking a vacation with their immediate family are excused during this period. When the athlete returns from vacation, they will receive NO penalty from the coach for being absent. The student may however, not hold the same position on the team as he/she did prior to the vacation simply because another student may have exceeded their standard of performance during the absence. Students taking vacations with friends, relatives, etc. are unexcused and will accept the rules set by the coach in that sport upon their return. Coaches must have their policies in writing and give each athlete a copy at the beginning of the season.

Personal Appearance-Students who are not dressed in school uniforms for away contests, should dress in a fashion which demonstrates a self-respect and a respect of school. Coaches who have policies on appearance must have these policies in writing and give each student a copy at the beginning of the season. Athletes and cheerleaders must be clean-shaven from the first practice date of the sport until the last contest (no beards and mustaches). No jewelry may be worn during practices or games.

Hazing-Hazing is unacceptable behavior and will not be tolerated. Hazing incidents will result in disciplinary action decided upon by the coach and the athletic administration. Dismissal from the team is possible depending on the severity of the infraction.

Sexual Harassment-The athletic department will adhere to the Sexual Harassment Policy as written in this handbook in the general information section.

Insurance- The athletic department does not carry insurance for students. The school corporation does offer a student insurance plan that can also cover student athletes in all sports except football. It is a secondary insurance plan and may be done on-line by visiting the following website: www.markel.sevencorners.com

Football insurance is available and is handled by the athletic trainers.

Team Rules- Specific team rules may be set forth by the coach of each sport. These rules and the penalties for breaking them will be given to the students by the coach at the first meeting or practice of that sport. These written regulations will be on file with the athletic director. Every student and parent must read these team rules and sign the form at the end which states they have read the rules and they understand the violations for any infraction of the team rules.

Team Transportation-When a team takes a bus or van to an athletic contest, all students will return from the event on the bus or van. Only in the case of emergency, when a parent or legal guardian asks the coach for permission to take the student after an event, may a student leave from the event with only a parent or guardian. A transportation form (located in the athletic office) must be filled out by the athlete's parent and signed by the athletic director before a student may leave after an event with their parent(s). This form must be filled out prior to the day of the event.

Accidents and Injuries- All accidents or injuries, home or away are to be reported to the trainer and/or coach immediately.

NCAA Requirements- Athletes and parents or guardians who have questions regarding college recruiting or college requirements please contact the guidance department or athletic director.

Equipment- All students will care for all equipment and uniforms as though it were their own personal property. If equipment or uniforms are damaged or lost the student is responsible for paying for replacement items at the replacement cost. Athletes are not to wear school owned uniforms anytime other than at the contest.

Conflict Between Activities- Please see the section in the handbook that covers conflicts between activities.

Class Release- There are very few times or reasons why a student should ever miss class. IHSAA tournaments may be an exemption. If a student will miss a class or classes a field trip form must be signed by the parent and teachers of the student prior to the day of the event. No exceptions.

Athletic Debt(s)-Athletes are required to pay all debts prior to going out for a team. If the debt is incurred during the season, an athlete has to pay that debt before the middle of their season or they will be unable to participate in a contest. If an athlete has a debt at the end of the season, a debt slip will be filled out by the coach, signed by the athlete and given to the school treasurer. After this point, debts must be paid in the Treasurer's Office. The debt will be carried on the school books until paid. Students may not attend prom or graduation if they have a debt of any type.

CHEERLEADER RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Merrillville Varsity Cheerleading Team will be composed of male and female freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. The team will not exceed 21 cheerleaders when there are males on the team. The team will not exceed 17 girls if there are no male cheerleaders. The Merrillville Cheerleading Team will cheer at all Varsity football games, girls and boys Varsity home games, a limited number of away games to be determined prior to the season, and all post-season tournaments.

A call out meeting will be announced to all students in grades 8-11 who are interested in trying out for the Merrillville Cheerleading Team. In order to be considered for the team, attendance at this meeting is mandatory. Exceptions will be granted by the athletic director only. At the call out meeting each student will receive specific information regarding tryouts, practice schedules, and information regarding the academic, social and financial expectations of being part of the Merrillville Cheerleading Team. Rules and expectations can be found in the Merrillville Athletic website under the cheerleading tab.

After being selected for the Merrillville Cheerleading Team, there will be a mandatory parent meeting to meet parent's guardians and to further outline and explain the program's expectations, procedures, and consequences that will be applied to situations that warrant disciplinary actions.

The Merrillville Cheerleading Team will have a summer practice schedule including attendance at a cheerleading camp. Summer practices are not optional. There will be two weeks of moratorium built into the schedule for

vacations. Absence from practice will have consequences and will be at the discretion of the coaches and athletic department.

Cheerleaders as athletes are under the authority of the athletic department and will abide by the same rules and regulations as other sports. Training rules and violations listed in the handbook apply to all cheerleaders.

VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES

TRAINING VIOLATIONS- Students participating on school teams are required to live according to the rules listed in the SCHOOL HANDBOOK RULES and the BYLAWS OF THE IHSAA. School rules and athletic rules may be interrelated and may result in two different penalties since two different codes may have been violated.

ATHLETICS RULES ARE IN EFFECT 365 DAYS A YEAR.

ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURE- No penalties set forth below shall be imposed until the student is afforded an opportunity for an informal meeting conducted by an athletic director and/or coach or principal which includes:

1. A discussion of the rule violation with the student/athlete
2. An opportunity for the student to explain their conduct
3. If the student denies the violation, they may present evidence that supports their denial. If the athletic director decides that a penalty set forth below should be imposed against the student at the conclusion of the informal hearing the director, within 24 hours of the informal hearing, or such additional time as is reasonably necessary, send a written statement to the student's parents or guardian describing the conduct, misconduct or violation of the rule or rules, the reasons for the action taken by the athletic director, and the penalty imposed.

Use and/or possession of any form of tobacco:

- a. 1st Offense- The student will miss 10% of the entire season schedule and two hours of school service assigned by the athletic director. If the season is near completion and the suspension cannot be carried out, the suspension will be served in the students next sport season.
- b. 2nd Offense- The student will miss 40% of their entire season schedule and must attend a workshop on the use of tobacco before returning to any sport. The workshop must be approved by the athletic director prior to attending. If the season is near completion and the suspension cannot be carried out it will be served in the students next sport season.
- c. 3rd Offense- The student is ineligible to participate in athletic activities for 365 days from the date of the infraction.

(If an athlete joins a new sport just to serve their suspension, they must remain in the new sport the entire season and finish the season in good standing in order for the suspension to have been legally served. If the student does not remain in the sport, he/she will serve their suspension in the next sport season.)

Consumption and/or possession of alcohol:

- a. 1st Offense- The student will miss 30% of their entire season schedule and serve 6 hours of school service assigned by the athletic director.
- b. 2nd Offense- The student is ineligible to participate in athletics for 365 days. The student must attend a workshop on alcohol before returning to athletic activities. The workshop must be approved by the athletic director prior to attending.

Use and/or possession of Drugs (*Non-School Related Infraction versus Random Drug Testing*)

- a. 1st Offense: The student may not participate in athletics for 365 days. **STUDENT OPTION:** Once the student meets with the athletic director, they have 30 days to enroll in a drug rehab program. Upon completion of the program they may ask for a reinstatement hearing before the Athletic Hearing Committee. This Committee is made of: 1. A high school administrator, 2. An athletic administrator, 3. The head counselor/asst. Principal, 4. A coach representative, and 5. A faculty representative. At the hearing the student may ask for reinstatement into the athletic program. Prior to the hearing the paperwork from the drug counseling program stating that the student has completed the course and is drug free, must be presented to the athletic director. Without this paperwork the hearing is not allowed. If

the committee allows the athlete to return to a sport, he/she will serve a 30% suspension before being allowed to participate.

- b. **2nd Offense-**The student is ineligible to participate in athletic activities for 365 days. The Athlete must appear before the Athletic Hearing Committee for possible additional suspension past the 365 days.

RANDOM DRUG TESTING:

- a. **1st Offense:** The penalty for random drug testing when a student tests positive is different from the rules stated above. Every athlete's parent(s) sign a random drug testing form prior to the athlete being allowed to participate. A student/athlete who tests positive must immediately attend drug counseling and be released from counseling prior to returning to competition. The student must have a clear drug test before returning to their team. The student is not allowed to practice with their team until the counselor releases the student.
- b. **2nd Offense:** The penalty for a second offense is as follows: the student/athlete must enroll in the complete drug counseling. Upon completion the student must have a clear drug test provided by the counseling has been completed. Once this is complete, the student will be suspended for 30% of their season.
- c. **3rd Offense-**A student/athlete who tests positive for drugs following a random test will be immediately suspended from the team 365 days. There will be no hearing.

BREAKING THE LAWS OF INDIANA: Minor offenses will be punishable under the discretion of the athletic director. Major offenses such as an arrest, will be presented to the athletic administrator and principal for punishment. Severe cases may result in dismissal from the team.

GROSS DISRESPECT: An athlete who displays gross disrespect to a teacher, coach, fellow student, parent or administrator is subject to suspension from participation for a period of time to be decided by the athletic administration and/or principal.

DUE PROCESS: The decisions of the athletic administrator or the Athletic Hearing Committee may be appealed by the student and his/her parents or guardian in writing to the superintendent within five (5) school days. **When serving a suspension, the student is expected to be present at all athletic contests and practices involving his/her team unless he or she has been dismissed from the team. The student is a member of the team and is expected to fulfill this responsibility. This rule applies when a student will return to that team that season.

PART VII: CLUBS AND ACADEMIC COMPETITION GENERAL POLICIES

ACTIVITIES BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL

No student is to be given permission to remain in the building or on school grounds unless he is with a group supervised by a teacher or an adult who is in charge of students.

MERRILLVILLE HIGH SCHOOL CO-CURRICULAR RULES & POLICIES

Co-Curricular Training Violations- Students participating in school sponsored clubs or teams are required to abide by the rules listed in the SCHOOL HANDBOOK RULES. School rules and co-curricular rules may be interrelated and may result in two different penalties since two different codes have been violated.

Grades

To be eligible scholastically, students must have received passing grades at the end of their last grading period in school in at least seventy percent (70%) of the maximum number of full credit subjects (or the equivalent) that a student can take and must be currently enrolled in at least seventy percent (70%) of the maximum number of full credit subjects (or the equivalent) that a student can take. Trimester grades take precedence. MHS has a maximum class load of six (6) which means clubbers must pass five (5) subjects in order to be academically eligible to participate

in the club and/or academic competition.

CO-CURRICULAR TRAINING VIOLATIONS

Students participating in school sponsored clubs or teams are required to abide by the rules listed in the SCHOOL HANDBOOK RULES. School rules and co-curricular rules may be interrelated and may result in two different penalties since two different codes have been violated.

Enforcement Procedure- Penalties set forth below shall be imposed only after the student is afforded an opportunity for an informal hearing, conducted by the grade level principal, which includes:

1. A written or oral statement of the specific alleged infraction against the student.
2. If the student denies the charge, a summary of the evidence from investigation regarding infractions.
3. An opportunity for the student to explain conduct/inappropriate infraction.

If the assistant principal determines that penalty set forth below should be imposed, at the conclusion of the informal hearing he/she will, within 24 hours of the informal hearing, or such additional time as is reasonably necessary, send a written statement to the student's parents or guardian describing the conduct, misconduct or violation of the rule or rules, the reason for the termination and the penalty imposed.

Use and/or Possession of Any Form of Tobacco

1st Offense- The student will miss 10% of the season he/she is currently in or the next season he/she participates in and two hours of school service assigned by the grade level principal. If the school year is near completion and the suspension cannot be carried out, the suspension will be served during the student's next club or team season.

2nd Offense- The student will miss 40% of his/her entire season schedule and must attend a workshop on the use of tobacco before returning to any club or team. The workshop must be approved by the assistant principal prior to the student's attending. If the year or season is near completion and the suspension cannot be carried out it will be served in the student's next co-curricular season.

3rd Offense- The student is ineligible to participate in co-curricular activities for 365 days from the date of the infraction/misconduct.

(If a student joins new co-curricular club or team just to serve the required suspension, the student must REMAIN IN THAT ACTIVITY FOR THE ENTIRE SEASON AND FINISH THE SEASON IN GOOD STANDING IN ORDER FOR THE SUSPENSION TO HAVE BEEN SERVED. If the student does not remain in the activity, he/she will serve their suspension in the co-curricular activity next season.)

Consumption and/or Possession of Alcohol:

1st Offense- The student will miss 30% of the season they are currently in or the next season he/she participates in, and serve 6 hours of school service assigned by the grade level principal. If the year or season is near completion and the suspension cannot be carried out it will be served in the student's next co-curricular season.

2nd Offense- The student is ineligible to participate in co-curricular activities for 365 days. The student must attend a workshop on alcohol before returning to his/her co-curricular activity. The workshop must be approved by the grade level principal prior to attending.

3rd Offense- The student is ineligible to participate in co-curricular activities for 365 days. The student must also appear before the grade level principal for a due process hearing.

Use and/or Possession of Drugs

1st Offense- The student may not participate in co-curricular activities for 365 days. **OPTION:** The student has 30 days to enroll in a drug rehab program and upon completion of the program the student may ask for a hearing before the Co-Curricular Hearing Committee. (This Committee is made up of:

1. A high school administrator
2. The athletic director
3. The head counselor
4. A coach/sponsor representative
5. A faculty representative
6. A student representative)

At this hearing the student may ask for reinstatement into the co-curricular program and must show proof that they have attended the drug rehab program and they are drug free.

If the recommendation is to have the student return to his/her co-curricular activity, he/she needs to serve a 30% suspension before resuming participation.

2nd Offense- Minor offenses will be disciplined under the discretion of the grade level principal. Major offenses will be presented to the co-curricular hearing committee for a decision on the penalty.

Due process- The decisions of the grade level principal. Major offenses will be presented to the Co-Curricular Hearing Committee and may be appealed by the student and his/her parents or guardian in writing to the superintendent within five (5) school days.

When serving a suspension, the student is expected to be present at all co-curricular contests/practices involving his/her team or club. The student is a member of the team or club and is expected to fulfill their responsibility. This rule applies when a student will return to that club or team that school year.

CONFLICTS

Students should only participate in simultaneous school activities when there are only occasional potential conflicts for practice, performances and contests. In such cases where there are unforeseen and unavoidable conflicts between performances or contests for the two activities to which a student belongs, then the following criteria will be used to determine in which activity the student will participate.

- A. What is at stake for the individual and the two groups?
- B. What is the individual's role and relative importance to the success of the two groups? For example: If the individual is not a critical performer or the contest is not a State Tournament or Conference or Tournament then a regular academic program like Band, Orchestra, or Chorus concert will take precedence.
(e.g. a Band, Orchestra, Chorus concert would take precedence over a regular season athletic contest; however, allowances for late arrival to an evening performance should be made.)
- C. What is the student's preference?

Order for Decision Making:

1. Sponsors and coaches involved will meet to discuss application of above criteria to resolve the conflict and determine student's participation.
2. Assistant Principal for extracurriculars and Athletic Director will meet to discuss.
3. The High School Principal will make the final decision if conflict is at an impasse.

CONSEQUENCES

Once an individual's participation has been decided, the group that lost the services will not give a punishment or withhold any awards.

An alternative performance requirement may be assigned that is no greater than what was originally scheduled.

DANCES

When possible, dances should be scheduled from 7:30pm to 10:30pm or for 1 ½ hours following an athletic event. Any deviation from these times must be cleared with the appropriate administrator for Extracurricular Activities. Because a dance is a school sponsored event, all rules and regulations of Merrillville High School will be in effect. Only students of Merrillville High School will be admitted to school dances unless prior arrangement is made with the appropriate administrator for Extracurricular Activities.

Only active members of the band will be admitted with the band.

No student may leave the building after being admitted to a school sponsored dance unless they are leaving the dance and all school property for the remainder of the evening.

FUND RAISING PROJECTS

All student fund-raising activities within the building must have a staff sponsor and be approved by the appropriate administrator in charge of student activities. Those student fund-raising projects involving more than the high school student body must have prior approval of the School Board in addition to having a staff sponsor.

OFFERINGS

The single most common characteristics about successful Americans is their participation in some extra class activity while in high school. Merrillville High School has a wide variety of extra class activities in athletics, drama, cultural and social enrichment, school governance, and special interest. While a few activities, such as Band, Vocalteens, etc., meet as a class, most activity meetings and practices are held either before or after school. Students interested in any extra class activity should contact the appropriate adviser or coach or one of the principals. A list of advisers and coaches is published each fall. A list of the organizations and activities follows:

Academic Competitions

Mock Trial
Spell Bowl
Academic Super Bowl
JETS
Quiz Bowl
Speech & Debate

Student Government

Student Council Officers
Pres., VP, Treas., Sec.

Class Officers

Pres., VP, Treas., Sec.
Student Council Members
Elected by entire student body in spring
Elected by respective class

Special Interest Groups

Bible Club
Freshman Mentors
Environmental Club
Family, Career & Community Leaders of America
ENL
Robotics
French Club
Future Educators of America (F.E.A)
Gay Straight Alliance (GSA)
Key Club
National Honor Society
Pirate News Network (PNN)
Students Against Destructive Decisions (S.A.D.D.)
Science Olympiad
Socially Together and Naturally Diverse (S.T.A.N.D.)
Spanish Club
Quill and Scroll

Boys Athletics

Baseball
Basketball
Cheerleading
Cross Country
Football
Golf
Soccer
Swimming

Tennis

Track
Wrestling

Girls Athletics

Basketball
Cheerleading
Cross Country
Flag Football
Golf
Gymnastics
Soccer
Softball
Swimming
Tennis
Track
Volleyball
Wrestling

Dramatic and Music Groups

Color Guard
Fall Play
Fine Arts Revue
Jazz Band
Pep Band
Spring Play
Thespians

Publications

Merrillvue (yearbook)

Mirror (newspaper)

PARTICIPATION WHEN ABSENT

If a student is absent any part of the school day, he/she is not allowed to participate, compete, or attend any contest, performance or activity that day without permission from an administrator.

PURCHASING

Students must have prior approval from the group adviser before making any purchases. All purchases must be made by means of a purchase order or a claim.

“PROM” -All debts must be paid in full in order to attend the Prom.

Students who want to attend a school-sponsored dance/prom must be a regularly enrolled student in the high school day school program. Students who are expulsion eligible and are in attendance in the Alternative School Program will not be eligible for participation in a school sponsored dance/prom or any other dance/prom related activities. The only exception will be those students who have been placed in the Alternative Program due to non-discipline related circumstances.

PEP SESSIONS AND OTHER RELATED EVENTS

Any club or organization wishing to participate in an activity involving athletic related events such as pep sessions, homecoming, or parades, must have preliminary plans approved by the appropriate administrator at least two weeks before the activity is to take place. These events must be placed on the school calendar before they are official.

PRACTICE AND REHEARSAL TIME

When a practice is held on an evening prior to a school day, the practice must end no later than 10:00pm. When a practice is held on an evening when there is no school the next day, the practice must end no later than 11:30pm.

END OF THE SCHOOL DAY

All students are to be out of the building at 2:45 pm unless in a supervised area with a staff member. Students who are waiting for rides after 2:45pm must wait at Entrances H or I. Students will no longer be permitted to remain after school waiting for pick-ups after 3:30pm at any entrance. Parents will have to make arrangements to pick up students by 3:15pm or have them take the bus home.

SCHEDULING

All extracurricular activities must be approved, at least one week in advance of the activity, by the appropriate administrator. Once the activity is posted on the school calendar by the assistant principal, the activity becomes an official school function.

All activities which take an organization or club away from school must be properly chaperoned. Transportation must be on a school vehicle. Sponsors may have students meet directly at the activity if it is within Ross Township.

MHS REGULAR BELL SCHEDULE W/STUDENT RESOURCE TIME (SRT)

7:15 AM	Entrance A, J, & M	Doors Open/Teachers Arrive
7:15 AM	7:25 AM	Breakfast in Cafe
	7:25 AM	Warning Bell
7:30 AM	8:30 AM (60)	1st Hour
8:30 AM	8:36 AM	Passing
8:36 AM	9:36 AM (60)	2nd Hour
9:36 AM	9:42 AM	Passing
9:42 AM	10:22 AM (40)	3rd Hour (SRT)
10:22 AM	10:27 AM	Passing
10:27 AM	12:07 PM	4th Hour & Lunch
10:27 AM	10:57 AM	A LUNCH
11:02 AM	11:32 AM	B LUNCH
11:37 AM	12:07 PM	C LUNCH
12:07 PM	12:13 PM	Passing
12:13 PM	1:11 PM (58)	5th Hour
1:11 PM	1:17 PM	Passing
1:17 PM	2:15 PM (58)	6th Hour

A Lunch (Main Cafe) 10:27 - 10:57 Lunch 10:57 - 11:02 Passing 11:02 - 12:07 Class	B Lunch (Main Cafe) 10:27 - 10:57 Class 10:57-11:02 Passing 11:02 - 11:32 Lunch 11:32 - 11:37 Passing 11:37 - 12:07 Class	C Lunch (Main Cafe) 10:27 - 11:32 Class 11:32 - 11:37 Passing 11:37 - 12:07 Lunch
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D Lunch (Frosh Cafe) 10:27 - 10:57 Lunch 10:57 - 11:02 Passing 11:02 - 12:07 Class	E Lunch (Frosh Cafe) 10:27 - 10:57 Class 10:57-11:02 Passing 11:02 - 11:32 Lunch 11:32 - 11:37 Passing 11:37 - 12:07 Class	F Lunch (Frosh Cafe) 10:27 - 11:32 Class 11:32 - 11:37 Passing 11:37 - 12:07 Lunch
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EARLY RELEASE (NO SRT/NO 3RD HOUR)

7:15 AM	Entrance A, G & I	Doors Open/Teachers Arrive
7:15 AM	7:25 AM	Breakfast in Cafe
7:25 AM		Warning Bell
7:30 AM	8:06 AM	1st Hour
8:06 AM	8:12 AM	Passing
8:12 AM	8:42 AM	2nd Hour
8:42 AM	8:48 AM	Passing
8:48 AM	9:18 AM	5th Hour
9:18 AM	9:24 AM	Passing
9:24AM	9:54AM	6th hour
9:54AM	10:00AM	Passing
10:00 AM	11:30 AM	4th & LUNCH
10:00 AM	10:30 AM	A LUNCH
10:40 AM	11:10 AM	B LUNCH
	11:30 AM	Dismissal

A Lunch (Main Cafe) 10:00 - 10:30 Lunch (30) 10:30 - 10:35 Passing (5) 10:35 - 11:30 Class (55)	11:30AM Dismissal Dismiss from 4th Hour.	B Lunch (Main Cafe) 10:00 – 10:35 Class (35) 10:35 – 10:40 Passing (5) 10:40 - 11:10 Lunch (30) 11:10 – 11:15 Passing (5) 11:15 – 11:30 Class
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TWO HOUR DELAY BELL SCHEDULE

NO 3RD HOUR (SRT/HOMEROOM)

9:30 a.m.	10:07 a.m.	1 st Period (37 min.)
10:07 a.m.	10:13 a.m.	Passing to 4th (6 min.)
10:13 a.m.	12:03 p.m.	4th Period - Lunch
12:03 p.m.	12:09 p.m.	Passing to 2 nd (6 min.)
12:09 p.m.	12:46 p.m.	2nd Period (37 min.)
12:46 p.m.	12:52 p.m.	Passing to 5 th (6 min.)
12:52 p.m.	1:29 p.m.	5 th Period (37 min.)
1:29 p.m.	1:35 p.m.	Passing to 6 th (6 min.)
1:35 p.m.	2:12 p.m.	6 th Period (37 min.)
2:12 p.m.	2:15 p.m.	Announcements

4th Period Class/Lunch Periods

"A/D" Lunch

10:13 a.m. - 10:43 a.m. Lunch (30 min)
 10:43 a.m. - 10:48 a.m. Passing (5 min)
 10:48 a.m. - 12:03 p.m. Class (75 min)

"B/E" Lunch

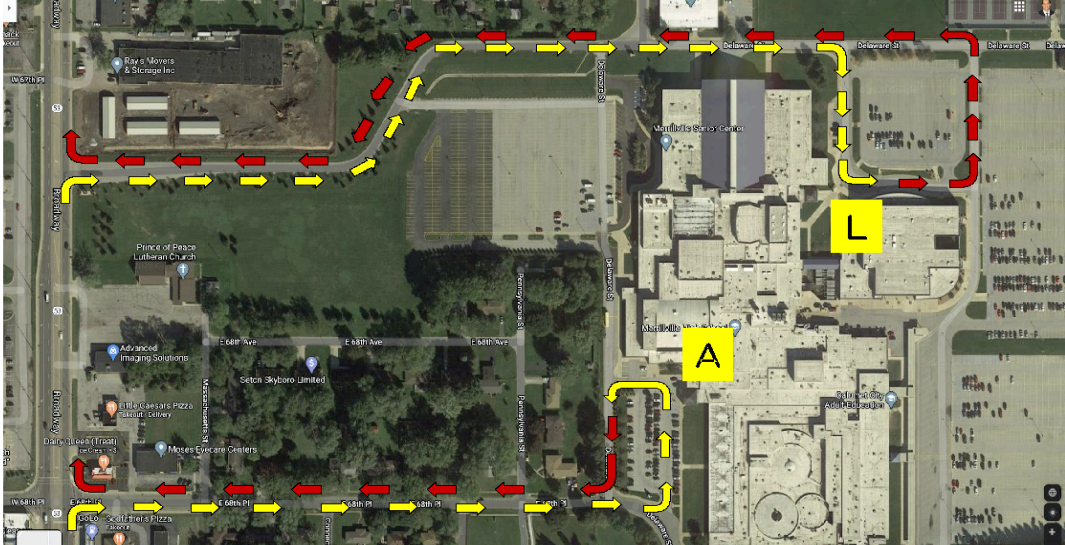
10:13 a.m. - 10:48 a.m. Class (35 min)
 10:48 a.m. - 10:53 a.m. Passing (5 min)
 10:53 a.m. - 11:23 a.m. Lunch (30 min)
 11:23 a.m. - 11:28 a.m. Passing (5 min)
 11:28 a.m. - 12:03 p.m. Class (35 min)

"C/F" Lunch

10:13 a.m. - 11:28 a.m. Class (75 min)
 11:28 a.m. - 11:33 a.m. Passing (5 min)
 11:33 a.m. - 12:03 p.m. Lunch (30 min)

Merrillville High School

Student Drop Off Route (AM)



MHS FIGHT SONG

*We're loyal to you Merrillville High.
We're Purple and White Merrillville High!
We'll back you to stand. You're the best in the land!
For we know that you will stand Merrillville High!
So Back up that ball Merrillville High.
We're backing you all Merrillville High!
Our team is the fame protector.
On team! For we expect a vic'try for you
Merrillville High.
GO PIRATES, GO!*