

Columbus Municipal School District

2630 McArthur Drive, PO Box 1308
Columbus, MS 39705, 662-241-7400



2026 - 2027 HANDBOOK for STUDENTS and PARENTS

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STUDENT / PARENT HANDBOOK 2026-2027

COLUMBUS MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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COLUMBUS MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Asst. Superintendent of Student Support Services

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Dear CMSD Students and Families,

Welcome to a brand-new school year in the Columbus Municipal School District! I hope this message finds you well-rested, recharged, and excited for the opportunities that await us.

As we begin the 2026–2027 school year, you may notice new faces and positive changes throughout our district. While some things may look different, one thing remains constant—our unwavering commitment to providing every student with an exceptional education in a safe, supportive, and engaging learning environment.

On behalf of the Columbus Municipal School District Board of Trustees and our dedicated faculty and staff, I am delighted to welcome back our returning families and extend a heartfelt greeting to those joining the CMSD family for the first time. Whether your child is taking their very first steps into a classroom or preparing to walk across the graduation stage, we are honored to be part of their educational journey.

This year, we will continue to focus on academic excellence, student well-being, and meaningful partnerships among our schools, families, and community. Our vision remains clear: **Student-Centered and Excellence-Driven**. Throughout the summer, our teachers, administrators, and support staff have worked tirelessly to prepare for a successful school year by creating welcoming classrooms, strengthening instructional practices, and ensuring our schools are ready for every student to thrive.

To our parents and guardians, thank you for entrusting us with your children's education. We encourage you to remain actively involved by maintaining open communication with your child's teachers, participating in school events, and staying informed through district communications. Together, we can provide the support and encouragement our students need to reach their fullest potential.

To our students, you are the heart of the Columbus Municipal School District. We believe in each of you and know you can accomplish extraordinary things. Challenge yourself to learn something new each day, treat others with kindness and respect, and remember that every member of Team CMSD is here to support your success.

As we begin this new school year, let us embrace every opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed. Together, we will continue building a district where every student excels.

Thank you for your continued trust, support, and partnership. We are CMSD Strong, and together, we will make the 2026–2027 school year one of excellence, growth, and lasting success.

Wishing you and your family a safe, joyful, and successful school year!

Sincerely,

Craig Chapman

Dr. Craig Chapman

Superintendent

Columbus Municipal School District

STUDENT CENTERED; EXCELLENCE DRIVEN

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Columbus High School Alma Mater

*Hail to thee, Columbus High School,
Loyally we lift our song;
Into light and truth we journey,
Ever onward, keep us strong.
Pride from those who've gone before us
Guides us forth with dignity;
Let us now proceed in wisdom,
Throughout endless days to come.*

*Hail to thee, Columbus High School,
Worthy of all honor and praise;
Ever will your lofty halls
Echo voices as we raise.
You inspire us ever upward;
Guide us now with dignity.
We shall strive to bring thee honor
Throughout all eternity.*



DISTRICT POLICIES

District Mission Statement

The Columbus Municipal School District will provide the skills necessary to be college work force, or enlistment ready by building bridges among students, parents, community, and all district employees.

Vision

STUDENT CENTERED; EXCELLENCE DRIVEN

Accreditation

All schools of the Columbus Municipal School District are fully accredited by the Mississippi Department of Education.

CMSD Core Values

We believe ...

- That a high quality, public system of education is imperative for our city and community to flourish;
- That quality personnel who are knowledgeable, who deeply care about children and each other, and who reflect the diversity of our community and society, are vital for our success;
- That high expectations for performance must be set for all district employees and students, and that as a total organization, we must continually pursue improvement;
- That honesty, integrity, open communication, life-long learning, teamwork, and individual needs must be demonstrated within the framework of organizational goals;
- That students, parents, educators, and community members are partners in the educational process.

Parental Rights Concerning the Inspection of School Records

CMSD School Board Policy JR, JRAA

Pursuant to the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act of 1975, 34CFR§99, and other federal and state laws, parents and eligible students have certain rights concerning information and records. Our district policy concerning the disclosure of information concerning students and the inspection of records is online at www.columbuscityschools.org and is available through computer resources at each campus.

In summary, parents/legal guardians have the following rights:

- to inspect and review a student's education records,
- to request the amendment of a student's education records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or others' rights,
- to consent to the disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that the law authorized disclosure without consent,
- to obtain a copy of the district policy adapted in accordance with the above-cited laws,
- to file with the U. S. Department of Education a complaint concerning alleged failures to comply with the requirements of the above-cited laws. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Officer
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

These rights are provided in accordance with law; however, parents/guardians are advised that the entire policy should be reviewed if they have any questions.

Policy Concerning the Release of Student Information

Statute 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. Regulations: 34 CFR Part 99.

CMSD School Board Policies JR, JRAA

The Buckley Amendment Regulations of 1980, called the Privacy Rights of Parents and Students, formerly known as the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 34 Code of Federal Regulations Part 99, permits school officials under certain conditions to disclose certain *directory information* about enrolled students. School officials have the right to release *directory information* unless the parent or eligible student informs the principal that any or all of the information designated below should not be released without prior consent. The following information is designated as *directory information*:

- the student's name, address, electronic address, telephone listing, and date and place of birth;
- parent or lawful custodian's name, address, and telephone listing;
- major field of study and grade level classification (Example: "high school student," or "10th grade," or "senior");
- student's participation in officially recognized activities or sports (Example: "soccer team," or "Beta Club");
- weight and height of members of athletic teams;
- dates of attendance, dates of enrollment, withdrawal, re-entry;
- diplomas, certificates, awards and honors received;
- most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student (Example: "transferred from a Houston, Texas, high school"); and
- a photograph.

Should a student or guardian have objections to the release of *directory information* being included in press releases, military recruiter lists, directories, web pages, official school rosters, honor roll lists, Awards Day Programs, school publications, and the like, please contact the principal the first week of school or the first week after enrollment.

Policy for Compliance with Section 504, American Disabilities Act (ADA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

CMSD School Board Policies IDDFA, IDDH, IDDHA, IDDHB, JQ

The policy of the Columbus Municipal School District is to provide a free, appropriate public education to students with disabilities as defined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The intent of the district is to ensure that students with disabilities are identified, evaluated and provided with appropriate educational services. Due process rights of the students with disabilities and their parents, as set forth under Section 504, The American Disabilities Act and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, will be enforced. Inquiries regarding compliance with Section 504 may be directed to Assistant Superintendent for the Columbus Municipal School District (phone 662-241-7400).

In the Columbus Municipal School District, a student has a substantial limitation of learning if he/she is characterized by at least four (4) of the following statements:

- Documented behavior problem(s)
- Documented learning problem(s)
- Excessive absences

- Retained in grade one or more years
- Majority of grades below average
- Is two or more years older than students in the same grade

Policy for Compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

CMSD School Board Policy JB, JB-P

The intent of the Columbus Municipal School District is to ensure that students will not be excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination, based on sex, in any course or school activity, as put forth under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Due process rights of students and their parents will be enforced as set forth in Title IX. Inquiries regarding compliance with Title IX may be directed to the Personnel Director (phone 662-241-7400).

Reporting Unlawful or Violent Acts

CMSD School Board Policy JCBF

Immediately upon obtaining knowledge that one of the following unlawful activities or a violent act has or may have occurred on school property or during a school-related activity, the principal and/or superintendent shall notify the appropriate law enforcement agencies:

- Aggravated assault, including but not limited to
 - Assault resulting in serious physical injury
 - Assault involving use of weapon;
- Assault on a school employee, simple or aggravated;
- Indecent liberties with a minor;
- Possession of a firearm or other weapon;
- Possession, use or sale of any controlled substance;
- Rape;
- Sexual battery;
- Other sexual offense;
- Murder or other homicide;
- Kidnapping;
- Other violent act(s).

About this Handbook

CMSD School Board Policy JCB

Faculty, staff members and administrators, with input from students, parents/guardians, members of the community and constituents of the Columbus Municipal School District have prepared this Student/Parent Handbook as a guideline to procedures, policies, and practices governing the operation of our schools and the behaviors of our students. The administration and instructional staff members of the Columbus Municipal School District believe that both parents/guardians and students are better served when properly informed about matters that concern all of us. The School Board and the administrators work closely together with the student community advisory committee (MS Code 37-11-55) to establish sound and reasonable goals for our schools, to anticipate district needs, and to provide an environment conducive to learning. The primary purpose of providing this handbook is to help make students' school experiences in this environment more satisfying because it will tell them what they need to know and what they need to do in order to make their school experiences pleasant and successful.

Students and parents/guardians are responsible for familiarizing themselves with this Student/ Parent Handbook. We strongly encourage parents/guardians to read and discuss the contents of this handbook with their children.

The policies described in this handbook shall pertain to all students both during the instructional day, in after school programs/activities on school property, on the school bus, on the way to and from school, or who is in attendance at school or at a school-sponsored activity or event **on school property or off school property**. For conduct occurring on property other than school property or other than at a school-related event, when such conduct by a pupil, in the determination of the school superintendent or principal, renders that pupil's presence in the classroom a disruption to the educational environment of the school or a detriment to the best interest and welfare of the pupils and teacher of such class as a whole, the pupil may be removed through suspension or expulsion (MS Code §37-7-301). School-sponsored activities include, but shall not be limited to, practices, rehearsals, participant or spectator, on or off school property, within and outside the school district.

Digital Citizenship

Acceptable Use Policy for Users of Columbus Municipal School District Computer Network

CMSD School Board Policy JCBC, IFBGA, IJB, IJ-E(1)

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY OF COLUMBUS MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NETWORK – ALL USERS

Access to the resources on Columbus Municipal School District (CMSD) Network, hereafter referred to as the "CMSD Network" or the "district network," and the Internet is provided for educational purposes and research consistent with the Columbus Municipal School District's educational mission and goals.

User Defined

A "user" shall be defined as, but not limited to:

1. An employee of the Columbus Municipal School District or contracted to work for/with/in the Columbus Municipal School District;
2. A student;
3. A parent;
4. A visitor on school district property;
5. A person—adult or youth—off campus, connected to the district network, either wired or wireless;
6. A person—adult or youth—not on school district property, using hardware or software belonging to the Columbus Municipal School District; or
7. A person—adult or youth—on district property connecting to the Internet by any other means.

Resources Defined

The "resources on the district network" shall be described in part, but not limited to:

1. Desktops, monitors, laptops, and tablets including all attached peripherals, such as keyboards and speakers, and mobile devices, such as laptops, tablets, and smart phones;
2. Servers;
3. Routers;
4. Storage devices, such as flash drives, discs, and tapes;
5. Local area networks;
6. Telecommunications lines;
7. Telecommunication services;

8. Cables, switches, and hubs;
9. Wireless systems; and/or
10. All software purchased or acquired by, through, or as a result of a connection with the Columbus Municipal School District.

The Internet is a fluid, global environment in which information is constantly changing, thereby making it impossible to predict, with certainty, what information users might locate. Availability of information to users on the Internet does not imply endorsement by this school district. This board makes no assurances of any kind, whether expressed or implied, regarding any Internet services provided. Neither the individual school nor school district is responsible for any damages the user incurs. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at the user's own risk. This board and school district specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information or software obtained through its services. The district network is a filtered network that seeks to limit the access of users to inappropriate content.

Use of the district network and the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use may result in cancellation of that privilege as well as appropriate personnel action in accordance with CMSD school board policy, which may include suspension or termination of employment, payment for damages, or other remedies applicable under school district policy and state or federal laws. At the discretion of the district, law enforcement authorities may be involved and any violations of state and/or federal law may result in criminal or civil prosecution. The superintendent, or his/her designee(s) shall make all decisions regarding whether or not a user has violated these procedures, and may deny, revoke, or suspend access at any time. Although the Columbus Municipal School District provides age-appropriate education of minors regarding appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking sites and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response, it is ultimately the parents'/guardians' responsibility to insure appropriate behavior by their minor child. The Columbus Municipal School District is CIPA (Children's Internet Protection Act) and COPPA (Children's On-Line Privacy Protection Act) compliant.

Unacceptable Use and the Reporting of Unacceptable Use

All communications and information accessible via the district network and the Internet are not private property and, in fact, usage is monitored and logged from time to time. In addition, access to the Internet while on school district property, using equipment provided by the district, or connecting through equipment on school property by any device is governed by this policy. Users will immediately report to Columbus Municipal School District authorities any attempt by other district network users and any other persons while on District property to engage in inappropriate conversations or personal contact and accidental access of inappropriate information so that proper steps can be taken to filter such material.

Unacceptable Use Described

All persons are responsible for all their actions and activities involving the district network and the Internet while on District property or connected to district resources or using district resources. Examples of prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to:

1. Accessing materials or communications that are:
 - A. Damaging to another's reputation.
 - B. Abusive
 - C. Obscene
 - D. Sexually oriented
 - E. Threatening
 - F. Harassing or contrary to the school/district policy on harassment
 - G. Illegal
 - H. Promoting Violence
 - I. Destructive to Persons or Property
 - J. Inappropriate to minors
2. Sending or posting materials or communications (to include e-mail, social media sites, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications) that are:

- A. Damaging to another's reputation.
 - B. Abusive
 - C. Obscene
 - D. Sexually oriented
 - E. Threatening
 - F. Harassing or contrary to the school/district policy on harassment
 - G. Illegal
 - H. Promoting Violence
 - I. Destructive to Persons or Property
 - J. Inappropriate to minors
3. Using the Internet for any illegal activity, including violation of copyright or other contracts or transmitting any material in violation of U.S., State of Mississippi, and local regulations.
 4. Using computers or the Internet for gambling, gaming or accessing online casinos and gambling related websites.
 5. Copying or downloading copyrighted material on any system connected to the school or district systems hardware/software without the owner's permission. Only the owners or individuals specifically authorized by the owner(s) may copy or download copyrighted material to the system.
 6. Copying or downloading copyrighted material for the user's own use without the owner's permission. Users may redistribute copyrighted programs only with the owner's permission. Such permission must be specified in the document or must be obtained directly from the owner in accordance with applicable copyright laws, school board policies, and administrative procedures.
 7. Using the Internet for private financial or commercial gain.
 8. Wastefully using resources including "spamming".
 9. Utilizing any software having the purpose of damaging the school/district system or other user's system.
 10. Downloading or installing software on the district network. The MIS department is responsible for determining if a product is compatible with the network and installing it after purchase.
 11. Gaining unauthorized access to resources or entities.
 12. Invading the privacy of individuals.
 13. Using another user's password.
 14. Posting material authorized or created by another person without his/her consent.
 15. Posting anonymous messages.
 16. Using the Internet for commercial or private advertising.
 17. Forging of electronic mail (email) messages.
 18. Attempting to read, delete, copy, or modify the electronic mail of other system users and deliberately interfering with the ability of other system users to send/receive mail.
 19. Using the network while access privileges are suspended or revoked.
 20. Using the network in a manner inconsistent with the directions from a supervisor and other staff and generally accepted network etiquette.
 21. Revealing personal addresses, telephone numbers, or other confidential information of self, or other users, without that person's permission.
 22. Revealing personal addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, social security number or other personal information about students. (COPPA)
 23. Illegally installing copyrighted software for use on personal computers.
 24. Not conforming to the "Acceptable Use" policies of other sources accessed beyond the district network.

Compensation

By using the district network user agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the school district from any claims, losses, cost, damages, and liability incurred by district relating to, or arising out of, any user's violation of these procedures.

Security

Network security is a high priority. If a user identifies or perceives a security problem or a breach of these responsibilities on the Internet, the user must immediately notify his/her supervisor, designee, or other identified staff. The user must not demonstrate the problem to other users.

Employee Usage

Employee usage of any kind is only permitted after the employee signs the Acceptable Use Policy agreement form ensuring that they will abide by the terms and conditions in this Acceptable Use Policy as stated.

Student Usage

Student usage of any kind is only permitted after the student signs the Acceptable Use Policy agreement form ensuring that he/she will abide by the terms and conditions in this Acceptable Use Policy as stated.

Guest Usage

Visitor usage of any kind, including under an employee's username, is only permitted after the visitor signs off indicating that he/she will abide by this policy.

Other Usage

District resource usage of any kind, including under an employee's username, student's username, or otherwise, is only permitted after the person or persons sign off indicating that he/she will abide by this policy.

Consequences:**For violation of Acceptable Use Policy**

- 1st offense – Verbal warning and parent contact
 - 2nd offense – Loss of device for 3 days, 1 day of ISD with parent contact.
 - 3rd offense – Loss of device for 10 days, 3 days ISD with parent contact.
 - 4th offense – Loss of device for remainder of year, 1 day OSS, parent contact.
- Consequence do not start over at the end of 1st semester.

COMPUTER USER AGREEMENT AND USER CARE GUIDE

Please read this entire section carefully.

This agreement is made effective upon receipt of a Device, between Columbus Municipal School District ("CMSD") and the individual receiving a Device ("Student"). The student, in consideration for being provided with a Device, software, and related materials (the "Device") for use while the student is enrolled at CMSD, hereby agrees as follows:

EQUIPMENT

- 1. Ownership:** CMSD retains sole right of ownership of the Device and grants permission to the student to use the Device according to the guidelines set in this document and the Acceptable Use Policy. Moreover, CMSD administrative staff retains the right to collect and/or inspect the Device at any time, including via electronic remote access; and to alter, add, or delete installed software or hardware.
- 2. Substitution of Equipment:** In the event the device is inoperable, CMSD has a limited number of spare Devices (loaners) for use while the Device is repaired or replaced. The agreement remains in effect for such a substitute. The student may not opt to keep a broken Device or avoid using the Device due to loss or damage. If the Student forgets to bring his/her operable Device or a power adapter to school, a substitute may not be provided.

3. **Responsibility for Electronic Data:** The Student is solely responsible for any non-CMSD installed resources and for any data stored on the Device. It is the sole responsibility of the student to backup all data, as necessary. CMSD does not accept responsibility for loss of any such data or for the student's own software/music/photos, etc.

The student may choose a backup method of his/her choice. CMSD recommends that the student purchase an external hard drive and perform regular (daily or weekly) backups of data.

CUSTOMIZATIONS

The Student is prohibited:

- From adding, removing, or altering files outside the user's directory on the assigned Device unless authorized by the Technology Department.
- From covering, removing, or altering the asset tags that are placed on the Device.
- From installing software unless given express permission by the Technology department.
- Students do not have administrator privileges on these devices to install software, games, or applications packages.

DAMAGE OR LOSS OF EQUIPMENT

4. **Warranty for Equipment Defects:** CMSD strives to provide a warranty on the Device. However, it is not guaranteed that the Device is covered under warranty. Regardless of whether the Device is under warranty, the student will be responsible for a damage fee as mandated by the Damage Fee Table in Section 10 below.
5. **Responsibility for Damage:** The Student is responsible for maintaining a fully working Device at all times. The student shall use reasonable care to ensure that the Device is not damaged. Refer to the Device Care guide for a description of expected care. The student will be provided with a durable computer sleeve in which to carry and protect the Device. This computer sleeve should be used for transporting the Device at all times to provide necessary protection to the Device. These policies apply regardless of where the damage occurs – either on campus or off campus.
6. **Repair Procedure:** To have the Device repaired, the student must report the issue to a teacher. The teacher will report the issue to the CMSD Technology Department. Under no circumstance may the student take the Device to a third-party repair location, including the Apple Store. The Device will be assessed, and if further repair is required, a loaner computer may be issued to the student. The Student's Device will be repaired in-house or sent for repair. Once the device is repaired it will be returned to the student.
7. **Technical Support and Repair:** CMSD will make technical support, maintenance, and repair available at or through the CMSD Technology Department.
8. **Gross Negligence:** CMSD reserves the right to charge the student the full cost for repair or replacement when damage occurs due to gross negligence. Examples of gross negligence include but not limited to:
 - Using the Device in an unsafe manner
 - Deliberately neglecting the Device
 - Losing the Device or not returning the Device for fixed asset inventory
9. **Actions Required in the Event a device is Damaged, Lost or Stolen:** if the Device is damaged, the student must report the problem immediately to a teacher or

administrator. If lost, CMSD requires that the student complete and sign a statement fully describing the circumstances of the loss. If stolen, CMSD officials will work with the student to file a police report.

10. Damage Fees:

Type of Damage	Fee
Broken Screen	\$50.00
Broken Keyboard	\$25.00
Broken Trackpad	\$25.00
Damaged or Lost Power Adaptor	\$45.00
Liquid Damage	\$100.00
Damaged or Lost Case	\$20.00
Other Damages	Minimum of \$20.00 but could be more as deemed necessary by the Technology Department.
Repeat Offenders, Terminal Damage, or Loss	If the Student damages the Device in 4 separate incidents or causes unrepairable damage, the student may be liable to pay for a replacement Device at full cost.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROPERTY

Please read this entire section carefully.

The student is expected to follow all the specific guidelines listed in this document and take any additional common-sense precautions to protect your assigned Device. Loss or damage resulting in failure to abide by the details below may result in full financial responsibility.

Listed below are several steps that you should utilize to maximize the life of your Device. "Device" refers to all hardware and software including but not limited to: Laptop, power adapter, case, etc. by taking proper care of your Device, you will ensure that it will be a functional and a valuable resource for your instruction while attending Columbus Municipal School District.

1. Your Responsibilities

- Student issued Devices are for use solely by the student that they were issued to. Treat this Device with as much care as you would with your own property.
- Bring the Device to school every day with a fully charged battery. Loaner Devices are not available on a daily basis.
- Do not let anyone use the Device other than yourself and an administrator or teacher.
- Never share passwords.
- Adhere to policies outlined in the Device User Agreement and Acceptable Use Policy.
- Back up your data at least weekly. You may choose to back up data using an external hard drive, flash drive, or other methods as needed.

2. General Care

- Operate your Device in a safe and stable environment. Avoid placing it on an uneven or unstable work surface. Avoid placing your Device on the floor where it can be stepped on or kicked. Keep your computer centered on your desk. It should not hang off the edge.
- Keep food and drink away from your device. Spills and crumbs can cause your Device to not work properly. Even if you are careful, someone else may bump into you or your desk causing a spill.

- Keep your hands clean when using your Device. Clean hands make it easier to use your trackpad and there will be less risk of leaving dirt and other stains on the computer. If you need to clean the Device, shut down the Device and then use a lint-free cloth.
- Protect the screen and body of your Device. Do not place or drop objects on it and do not shove foreign objects into the Device. When you shut your Device, make sure there are no small items, such as a pencil or small earphones, on the keyboard. Close the lid gently while holding in the middle.
- It is highly recommended that the student uses a sleeve and/or protective case for the Device. This will reduce the risk of damage if an accident occurs.
- Be sure to unplug your Device if there is an electrical storm.
- Shutdown your Device if you will not be using it for a day or more.

3. Power Management

A battery takes a few hours to fully charge. The battery in the Device can typically last up to a full school day with careful use. Check the battery level indicator for the status of the battery. Bring your device to school completely charged each day. Bring your charger in case the battery depletes during the school day.

Battery conservation tips:

- Close the lid of the Device and allow it to enter sleep mode when not in use.
- Reduce the brightness of the screen.
- Turn off Bluetooth and WIFI when not in use.
- Disconnect USB or any other external device.

4. Handling Technical Problems

Should anything go wrong with the Device, try restarting it, as this solves many issues that may happen. If you have an issue that you are unable to resolve, please report the issue to one of your teachers. If he/she cannot resolve the problem quickly, he/she will report the issue to the CMSD Technology Department.

Students are responsible for maintaining a fully working Device at all times. The student shall use reasonable care to be sure that the Device is not lost, stolen, or damaged. Such care includes:

- Be careful with your charger. DO NOT roll over, step on, or “yank” the cord. Keep your charger in a separate area from your Device. If you carry your charger in your Device case, be careful when you lay your Device case down. Be sure the charger is on the top to keep the screen from cracking.
- **DO NOT** pick at your Device keys or remove them for any reason.
- **DO NOT** place your Device on a pillow or other soft material when it is on, this may cause the computer to overheat.
- Students must keep the Device always attended (with Student or within a secured classroom).
- When using your Device or charging the battery, it is normal for the bottom of the case to get warm. For extended use, place the computer on a hard flat surface.
- **DO NOT** leave any objects on the keyboard. Items like pens, pencils, or earbuds that are left on the keyboard will damage the screen if the lid is closed.
- **DO NOT** remove or damage any identification labels that are on the Device.
- **DO NOT** pick up the Device by the screen/monitor. Close the monitor and lift the entire Device.
- **DO NOT** leave equipment in an unlocked car or unlocked home.
- **DO NOT** leave equipment unattended or unlocked while at school or elsewhere.
- **DO NOT** lend equipment/cords to anyone.
- **DO NOT** use equipment in an unsafe environment, including outside or near water/pool.
- **DO NOT** leave equipment in full view inside vehicles.
- **DO NOT** eat or drink while using or near the Device.

- **DO NOT** place the Device on the floor or seating area.
- **DO NOT** leave the Device near table or desk edges.
- **DO NOT** stack objects on top of the Device.
- **DO NOT** check the Device as luggage at the airport.
- **DO NOT** place adhesive stickers on the case.

Portables risk losing data: Protect valuable data by backing it up to a flash drive or external hard drive. Any hard drive (the Device's most sensitive part) can go bad – through no fault of the user – at any time and without warning.

Back up, back up, back up work you cannot live without!

Violation of Acceptable Use Policy will result in consequences:

Examples of violation:

- Searching/sending videos with sexual content
- Pornography including pictures and videos
- Firearms
- Gang related content
- Unlawful activities
- Cyber Bulling
- Any attempts to hack or bypass district firewalls or proxy servers.

Assessments – Statewide Testing **CMSD School Board Policies ICHI, II**

Students in kindergarten, first, and second grades will be assessed for promotion under the guidelines set forth by the Mississippi Department of Education and CMSD School Board Policy IHE. Beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, a student scoring at the lowest two achievement levels in reading on the established state assessment for third grade will not be promoted to fourth grade unless the student meets the good cause exemptions for promotion. Students in grades three through eight, Algebra I, and 10th Grade English will be required to participate in statewide assessments in mathematics and language arts (reading and writing) known as Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP). Students in grades five and eight will be required to take the Mississippi Science Test (MAAP-SCI). All statewide tests are used for accreditation and evaluation processes for students, teachers, administrators and schools.

Students in high school, as part of the End of Course testing (MAAP-EOC), will be required to take three tests and must score at or above a minimum "cut score" in order to meet state and local graduation requirements. These assessments in Algebra I, English II, ~~US History from 1877~~, and Biology I, as part of the MAAP, will be administered as students are enrolled in these respective courses. Students who are unsuccessful in meeting the minimum scores on these tests may be enrolled in compensatory courses for intensive remediation. Additional graduation requirement information can be found on page **99**.

Attendance Law **CMSD School Board Policy JBA, JBD**

Regular and punctual school attendance is a vital aspect of developing and maintaining a successful educational experience. Regular and punctual attendance promotes a sense of responsibility, ensures educational continuity, facilitates academic growth, and prepares the student for his/her future career. Furthermore, daily attendance is important to both the school and the community in that it is the measure by which state funds are allocated to the school. While it is our belief that students have the primary responsibility for regular and punctual attendance to all classes, we recognize that parents, teachers, administrators, and other school personnel share that responsibility.

Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law

Mississippi Code § 37-13-91 CMSD School Board Policies JBA

The School Board is committed to providing the students of the Columbus Municipal School District a performance-based educational program. The School Board believes that all children can learn and that their daily attendance enhances the educational process. Therefore, in accordance with MS Code §37-13-91, the Columbus Municipal School District shall enforce the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law.

"Compulsory-school-age children" means a child who has attained or will attain the age of six (6) years on or before September 1, of the calendar year.

An "unlawful absence" is an absence during a school day by a compulsory-school-age child and is not due to a valid excuse for temporary non-attendance.

Each of the following shall constitute a valid excuse for temporary nonattendance of a compulsory-school-age child enrolled in school, provided satisfactory evidence of the excuse is provided to the superintendent of the school district or his/her designee.

1. An absence is excused when the absence results from the compulsory school-age child's attendance of an **authorized school activity with the prior approval** of the superintendent of the school district or his/her designee. Such activities may include field trips, athletic contests, student conventions, musical festivals and any similar activity.
2. An absence is excused when the absence results from **illness or injury** that prevents the compulsory-school-age child from being physically able to attend school.
3. An absence is excused when isolation of a compulsory-school-age child is **ordered by the County Health Officer or by the State Board of Health**.
4. An absence is excused when it results from the **death or serious illness of a member of the immediate family** of a compulsory-school-age child. The immediate family member(s) of a compulsory-school-age child shall include children, spouse, grandparents, parents, brothers, and sisters, including stepbrothers and stepsisters.
5. An absence is excused when it results from a **medical or dental appointment** of a compulsory-school-age child where an approval of the superintendent of the school district or his/her designee is gained prior to the absence, except in the case of an emergency.
6. An absence is excused when it results from the attendance of a compulsory-school-age child at the **proceedings of a court or administrative tribunal** if such child is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness.
7. An absence may be excused if the **religion** to which the compulsory-school-age child or such child's parents adheres requires or suggests the observance of a religious event. The approval of such absence is within the discretion of the superintendent or his/her designee, but approval should be granted unless the religion's observance is of such duration as to interfere with the education of the child.
8. An absence may be excused when it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the superintendent of the school district or his/her designee that the purpose of the absence is to take advantage of a **valid educational opportunity** such as travel including vacations or other family travel. Approval of such absence must be gained from the superintendent of the school district or his/her designee prior to the absence but such approval shall not be unreasonably withheld.
9. An absence may be excused when it is **demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Superintendent** or his/her designee that conditions are sufficient to warrant the compulsory-school-age child's non-attendance.
10. An absence may be excused when it results from the attendance of a compulsory-school-age child participating in official organized events sponsored by the **4-H or Future Farmers of America (FFA)**. The excuse for the 4-H or FFA event must be provided in writing to the appropriate school superintendent by the Extension Agent or High School Agriculture Instructor/FFA Advisor.
11. An absence is excused when it results from the compulsory-school-age child officially being

employed to serve as a **page at the State Capitol for the Mississippi House of Representatives or Senate.**

Any parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child subject to the provisions of this policy who refuses or willfully fails to perform any of the duties imposed upon him or her under the provisions of this policy, or who intentionally falsifies any information required to be contained in a certificate enrollment will be guilty of contributing to the neglect of a child and, upon conviction, shall be punished in accordance with the provisions of MS Code §97-5-39.

If a compulsory-school-age child has not been enrolled in a school within fifteen (15) calendar days after the first day of the school year of the school which such child is eligible to attend or such child has accumulated five (5) unlawful absences during the school year, **the principal or school superintendent shall report such absences to the school attendance officer of the youth court or family court.**

The Compulsory School Attendance Law states that every child who has not reached the age of 17 years prior to September 1 of that school year SHALL be enrolled and regularly attend school.

66% RULE

To comply with the state attendance law, Columbus Municipal School District will calculate an attendance percentage by dividing each student's actual minutes attended by his potential instructional minutes per day. If the percentage attended is at least 66% of the potential school day, the student will be counted present for the day.

Potential Instructional Minutes - the total number of minutes of all scheduled classes using the bell schedule in the automated student information system minus any lunch, or class change times.

Minutes attended - the sum of the bell schedule instructional minutes actually present (excluding time between class periods, lunch, and minutes for which the student is marked absent.) Examples of "not present" for a full academic day include if a student arrives late to school, leaves early, or leaves in the middle of the day and returns later, assuming the total minutes attended divided by the student's potential instructional minutes equate to less than 66%.

NEW MDE ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

Comparison of School Attendance Officer Qualifications Requirements

New Version	Current Version
Provides 3 specific Pathways-BS in behavioral field or related, Associates in related field plus 2 years' experience, or 3 years' experience in related role involving student support or engagement	One General Requirement

School Attendance Law Breakdown

New Version	Current Version
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Must attend 66% of student's instructional day	Must attend 63% of school day
Certificate of Enrollment deadline of August 15	Certificate of Enrollment deadline of September 15
Any day after the 3 rd day must have medical excuse	Not addressed
Only 5 excused absences per semester unless extenuating circumstances or approved by the superintendent or designee	No cap
Court petition may be filed at 8 unexcused absences	Court petition may be filed at 12 absences
Cannot file petitions in court unless school has implemented interventions for attendance	No interventions required
Absence Reporting Requirement is within close of next business day of unlawful absence	Report within 2 days or 5 days, whichever is shorter

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

The United States Department of Education (USDOE) has released new reporting standards for calculating chronic absenteeism. To bring our district into compliance with the new standards, we will follow the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) new reporting standards.

- Any student enrolled in a school for at least ten (10) days.
- Any student absent 10% or more of the time that he/she was enrolled in a school is deemed chronically absent.
- Any student enrolled in more than one school and meets the definition of chronic absenteeism as stated above.
- Any student absent 10% or more of the time that he/she was enrolled in any school.
- Any student who misses 50% or more of a school day is counted absent (including unexcused absences, excused absences and suspensions).
- If a student exceeds 21 absences during the school year, excused or unexcused, the student may be retained.

The Columbus Municipal School District uses the federal definition of an absence (**present less than 50% of a school day**) for reporting absences.

In addition, it is important to note that MDE will report chronic absenteeism data at the state, district, and school levels on annual report cards.

Chronic Absenteeism Accountability/Interventions

New Version	Current Version
Accountability Reports and Improvement Plans	None
Required Intervention at 3 days – Tiered Intervention begins	
Strategies for family engagement, partnering with community organization, training of staff on culturally responsive family engagement practices	

District Policies at 10% Chronic Absenteeism

New Version	Current Version
Exceeds 10% of any subgroup or grade level, must adopt written reduction plan, and published	None
MDE shall provide technical assistance to district in the development and implementation of reduction strategies	

Board of Trustees Meetings

The Board of Education for the Columbus Municipal School District meets each month to discuss the business of the district. Unless otherwise noted, all regular meetings will be held at the Brandon Central Office, 2630 McArthur Drive. Meetings dates and times are posted on the district's website.

Please note that the Board of Trustees may call special meetings to consider matters that may come before the board. Notification of these special meetings will be posted on the front door of the Superintendent's Office (Brandon Central Services Center).

Bus Transportation**CMSD School Board Policy EDD**

Bus transportation is available to all students who live more than one (1) mile from the school or if there is a natural boundary such as a major highway that separates them from the school. Bus routes and stops are assigned by the Transportation Department. A copy of the bus routes and stops are kept on file at each school site and the Office of the Assistant Superintendent. Routes will not be altered by the bus driver. Students are assigned to the buses by the school and cannot change buses without permission. Questions concerning bus routes/problems can usually be answered in the individual school office or Transportation Department at 662-241-7402.

Calendars and School Schedules

The Board of Education for the Columbus Municipal School District has approved the academic calendar and school schedules included in this handbook as guidelines for educators and families to plan the academic year. The accreditation standards in Mississippi require school districts in our state to offer students 180 days of instruction. We have scheduled 181 days with one inclement weather day built in the calendar to be used in the case of a weather emergency. In the event that a situation should require us to cancel classes over an extended period, the School Board may have to redraw a calendar that would provide for the missed days.

This calendar is consistent with our academic goals and is posted online at www.columbuscityschools.org.

Academic Calendar **2026 – 2027** **Columbus Municipal School District**

2026 – 2027 Academic Calendar

KEY	July		August		September		October		November		December	
	2026	2027	2026	2027	2026	2027	2026	2027	2026	2027	2026	2027
Students Return	4: Independence Day 20 – 22: Teacher Professional Development 23: Students First Day	1: Christmas Break Cont. 4: Teacher PD 5: Students Return 18: MLK Day			4: Parent Conference 7: Labor Day 28 – 30: Fall Intersession	8 – 12: Spring Intersession 15 – 19: Spring Break 26: Easter Break	1 – 2: Fall Intersession Cont. 5 – 9: Fall Break	23 – 27: Thanksgiving Break	18: Early Dismissal (60% Day) 21 – 31: Christmas Break	27: Early Dismissal (60%) 28: Teacher Professional Development 31: Memorial Day	1: Teacher Professional Development	
Early Dismissal (60% Day)												
Teacher Professional Development (No Students)												
Offices Open (No Students/Teachers)												
All Schools & Offices Closed												
Intersession												

Child Custody

In child custody cases, the school must have a copy of the court order in order to prevent a child from being released to a parent. Unless prohibited by court order, all biological parents have the right to examine school records of their children, including the attendance record. Parents should notify the school in writing if they will be leaving their child with friends or relatives for a period of more than two days.

Child Nutrition Services

CMSD School Board Policy JG, JGHR

Child Nutrition Services' mission is to provide nutritious meals to children that will promote optimum growth and development and to provide nutrition education to children so that they may develop good dietary habits. Special diets can be accommodated with proper authorization from a doctor.

All students enrolled in CMSD schools will eat free due to the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).

A breakfast meal is served daily at each school. The meal consists of five meal components, which are: meat/meat alternate, bread/bread alternate, fruit, vegetable and milk. All grades will be on Offer vs. Serve. Offer vs. Serve is a provision which allows the student to choose three of the five meal components.

A lunch meal is served daily at all schools. The meal consists of the five meal components: meat/meat alternate, bread/bread alternate, fruit, vegetable and milk. A minimum of five food items will be served each day. Desserts, when on the menu, may be chosen. All grades will be on Offer vs. Serve that allows the student to select three of the meal components.

Milk and ice cream will be sold at each school. The price for milk and ice cream will be posted in the cafeteria.

To assist Columbus Municipal School District in complying with the Mississippi Department Office of Child Nutrition Competitive and Sales Food Rules, all parents/guardians are asked to adhere to the district's established Wellness Policy procedures for student's environment and school sales. The policy discourages the use of foods as rewards for student accomplishments. Parents should provide healthy food items (snacks, etc.) and items that are 100% fruit juice. Carbonated soft drinks are not allowed in the cafeteria/dining hall during breakfast/lunch meal service. Also, students with bag lunches must have a container with non-visible drink label. For example, Coca Cola and Pepsi products are not allowed. Food served to students by vendors/outside retail merchants, or any other food carry out retail business during the school day without the CMSD Superintendent or School Food Service Authority approval is not allowed.

These standards do not apply to the school district's vending machines or school approved snack sales. Listed below is a sample of snacks that have been approved. A complete list is available in the Food Service Office.

- Doritos Cool Ranch (Frito Lay)
- Rice Krispie Treats (Kellogg's)
- Baked Cheetos Crunchy (Frito Lay)
- All Types - Whole (Fresh Fruits)
- All Types - Cut/Sliced Without Dip (Fresh Fruits)
- All Types - Whole (Fresh Vegetables)
- All Types - Cut/Sliced Without Dip (Fresh Vegetables)
- Baked Cheetos Crunchy - Flaming Hot (Frito Lay)
- Baked Doritos Nacho Cheese (Frito Lay)
- Quaker-Snack Kids Mix (Frito Lay)
- Rold Gold Pretzels (Frito Lay)
- Kid's Snack Mix (Frito Lay)
- Cinnamon Toast Crunch Cereal Bar (General Mills Sales, Inc.)
- Cocoa Puffs Cereal Bar (General Mills Sales, Inc.)
- Apple Crisp Crunchy Granola Bars - Nature Valley (General Mills Sales, Inc.)
- Cinnamon Crunchy Granola Bars - Nature Valley (General Mills Sales, Inc.)
- Trix Cereal Bar (General Mills Sales, Inc.)
- Fortified Marshmallow Crispy Squares (Goody Man)
- Polly-O String-ums Moisture Part-Skim Mozzarella String Cheese (Kraft Foods North America)

Reduced Fat Mild Cheddar Cheese Portions (Land O'Lakes)
 Generation Max M & M Cookies - Milk Chocolate (Mars Inc)
 Generation Max Combos Ranch Pretzels (Mars Inc.)
 Goldfish Flavor Blasted Hot'n Spicy Cheddar (Pepperidge Farm)
 Tato Skins (Poore Brothers, Inc.)
 Welch's - Reduced Sugar - Fruit Snacks - Mixed Fruit with Real Fruit (Promotion In Motion, Inc.)
 Super Muffin-Apple Blueberry Bran (Super Bakery)
 Nonfat Yogurt - Blended Peach (Upstate Farms)

COLUMBUS MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

★ *Daily Schedule* ★

★ 2026–2027 INSTRUCTIONAL DAY TIMES ★

STUDENT-CENTERED • EXCELLENCE-DRIVEN

SCHOOL	INTAKE WINDOW	INSTRUCTION START	DISMISSAL
 STOKES PREK–GRADE 1	7:00–7:25	7:30	2:25
 COOK GRADES 2–3	7:15–7:50	7:55	2:40
 SALE GRADE 4	7:15–7:55	8:00	2:55
 HUNT INTERMEDIATE	7:30–8:10	8:15	3:05
 COLUMBUS MIDDLE SCHOOL	7:50–8:20	8:25	3:30
 COLUMBUS HIGH SCHOOL	7:50–8:20	8:25	3:30

1

Note: Schedules are subject to change. Parents will be notified of any changes.

Columbus Municipal School District Student Parent Handbook 2026-2027

Delivery of Gifts to Students

Due to bus and school safety concerns, CMSD schools will not accept delivery nor be responsible for students receiving flowers, balloons, or other gifts. Such deliveries should be made to the student at his/her home.

Enrollment/Admission in Columbus Municipal Schools

CMSD School Board Policy JBC, JBA, JBCAA

An adult parent or guardian must accompany students seeking to enroll in one of the schools operated by the Columbus Municipal School District. Students not accompanied by a parent or guardian may be refused admission until such time as a parent or guardian accompanies the student. Parents of Pre-K-5 children must bring documents to the Office of the Superintendent, Brandon Central Services Center, 2630 McArthur Drive, in Columbus. Parents seeking to enroll their child in one of the Columbus Municipal School District schools must have all of the following documents:

- 1. Birth Certificates:** To be eligible for prekindergarten, a student must be four years old on or before September 1st of the current year. To be eligible for the kindergarten program, a student must be five years old on or before September 1st of the current year. To be eligible for the first grade, a student must be six years old on or before September 1st of the current school year. A certified copy of the birth certificate is required for permanent enrollment of all students. Applications for Mississippi certified birth certificates are available in the school office or at the local health department. New students in other grades may be asked to provide a birth certificate if their records are incomplete. The full legal name must be used to enroll students. At the judgment of the Superintendent or designee, a student may be temporarily enrolled for a period of 30 days in order for the family to secure a certified copy of a birth certificate.
- 2. Certificates of Immunization:** All students, regardless of grade level, must present a Mississippi Certificate of Compliance concerning immunizations. Immunization certificates may be obtained from the Lowndes County Health Department or a doctor.
- 3. Verification of Residence:** In the Columbus Municipal School District, parents, legal guardians, or other adults seeking to enroll students must provide documentation (2 proofs of residency) that is 30 days old or less to verify that each student resides **with the parent or legal guardian** in the Columbus Municipal School District boundaries at the beginning of the current school year. All parents or guardians must provide the required documentation to verify residency each year. Such parents or guardians must present documentation showing that they have been approved to transfer into CMSD. However, students approved for legal transfer from another school district are exempt from this residency process. Detailed information regarding this is available in the superintendent's office.
- 4. Homeless Children:** When a child is determined to be homeless as defined by the Stewart B. McKinney Act 42 USC Section 11431 (1), 11432 (e)(4) and 11302 (a), this school district shall consider and take enrollment action that is in the best interest of the child.

Students transferring to CMSD from non-accredited or home schools shall also be enrolled under the procedures described in TRANSFERS TO CMSD on page 38.

Honor Roll

CMSD School Board Policy IHD

Students in CMSD schools who earn all A's in every subject during a grading period will be listed on the Superintendent's List of high achieving students. Students who earn all A's and/or B's in every subject during a grading period will be listed on the Principal's List of high achieving students.

Insurance for Students

CMSD School Board Policy EGB

The school district does not carry accident and illness insurance on students. Parents are urged to take advantage of the low-cost accident insurance available to students on school and district website. Questions about the information available to students should be directed to the office of the Superintendent or designee.

Medications for Students

CMSD School Board Policy JGCD, JGCDA, JGCDC

District officials understand the roles medications play in our day-to-day lives. At the same time, we have a responsibility to protect our children and err on the side of caution. Therefore, the following guidelines are provided for students and parents and must be followed precisely.

- Before any student can take a medication (including over-the-counter medications, such as Tylenol) at school, the parent/guardian and a licensed physician must complete a Medication Authorization Form. This form is available in the school office or at the district's central office.
- Parent must provide all medication. The school does not provide any medication.
- Prescription medication must be brought to school by a parent in a pharmacy-labeled bottle that includes instruction on how and when the medication is to be given. Over-the-counter medications must be received in the original container. Medications will be stored in a secure area of the school.
- Medication classified as controlled substances (ADD/ADHD medication, pain medication, etc.) must be brought to the school by a parent.
- Students may possess and self-administer asthma and/or anaphylaxis medication if they have the appropriate paperwork on file at the school.
- Other medications must be taken in the presence of the school nurse.

Asthma Medication and Anaphylaxis Medications

(Auto-Injectable Epinephrine)

CMSD School Board Policy JGCDA, JGCD

The safety and well-being of students is of utmost importance to the Columbus Municipal School District school board members, administration, personnel, and staff.

The board permits the self-administration of asthma and anaphylaxis medication pursuant to the requirements of this policy. A student with asthma and/or anaphylaxis is entitled to possess and self-administer prescription asthma and/or anaphylaxis medication while on school property, on school-provided transportation, or at a school-related event or activity if:

1. The prescription asthma and/or anaphylaxis medication has been prescribed for that student as indicated by the prescription label on the medication.
2. The self-administration is done in compliance with the prescription or written instructions from the student's physician or other licensed health care provider; and
3. A parent of the student provides to the school:
 - a) Written authorization, signed by the parent, for the student to self-administer prescription asthma and/or anaphylaxis medication while on school property or at a school-related event or activity.
 - b) A written statement, signed by the parent, in which the parent releases the school district and its employees and agents from liability for an injury arising from the student's self-administration of prescription asthma and/or anaphylaxis medication while on school property or at a school-related event or activity unless in cases of wanton or willful misconduct.

- c) A written statement from the student's physician or other licensed health care provider, signed by the physician or provider, that states:
 - i. That the student has asthma and/or anaphylaxis and is capable of self-administering the prescription asthma and/or anaphylaxis medication.
 - ii. The name and purpose of the medication.
 - iii. The prescribed dosage for the medication.
 - iv. The times at which or circumstances under which the medication may be administered; and
 - v. The period for which the medication is prescribed.
 - vi. The physician's statement must be kept on file in the office of the school nurse of the school the student attends or, if there is not a school nurse, in the office of the principal of the school the student attends.
- 4. If a student uses his/her medication in a manner other than prescribed, he/she may be subject to disciplinary action under the school codes. Disciplinary action shall not limit or restrict the student's immediate access to the medication.
- 5. The school board authorizes the school nurse or trained school employee to administer auto-injectable epinephrine to a student who the school nurse or trained school employee, in good faith, believes is having an anaphylactic reaction, whether or not the student has a prescription for epinephrine.

Definitions

- 1. "Parent" means parent or legal guardian.
- 2. "Auto-injectable epinephrine" means a medical device for the immediate administration of epinephrine to a person at risk for anaphylaxis.
- 3. "Asthma and anaphylaxis medication" means inhaled bronchodilator and auto-injectable epinephrine.
- 4. "Self-administration of prescription asthma and/or anaphylaxis medication" means a student's discretionary use of prescription asthma and/or anaphylaxis medication.

Parental Engagement Policies and Guidelines

The policy of the Columbus Municipal School District (CMSD) is to develop jointly with parents a policy that outlines the minimum requirements for parental engagement to be used at sites across the district. This policy shall be distributed to parents via the student/parent handbook that is distributed to all students at the beginning of each year. This policy will be distributed to and discussed with staff at the beginning of each school year. Further, this policy will be amended as needed according to the requirements of current federal law.

1. District Responsibilities

- A. Involve parents in the joint development of the Title I plan.
- B. Provide the support necessary to assist schools in implementing effective family engagement activities to improve academic achievement.
- C. Conduct an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy in improving the academic achievement of Title I schools, which includes identifying barriers to greater participation by families.
- D. Use the findings of the annual evaluation to develop evidence-based strategies for more effective parent and family engagement.
- E. Involve families in school activities, which may include establishing an advisory board to develop, revise and review the parent and family engagement policy.

2. School Responsibilities

- A. Convene an annual meeting at a time convenient to parents to explain the Title I program and inform them of their rights to be involved in the program.

- B. Conduct regular meetings at times convenient to parents throughout the school year to discuss the program's operation and site needs.
 - C. Involve parents in the planning, review, and improvement of Title I programs.
 - D. Provide timely information to parents about the Title I program.
 - E. Provide parents an opportunity to submit feedback regarding differences in opinion about the school wide plan.
 - F. Develop a school-parent compact jointly with parents.
3. **School Written Contracts**
- A. Develop jointly with parents a school-parent compact that identifies the activities that parents, the entire school staff, and students will share to improve academic achievement. The school-parent compact must emphasize the importance of ongoing communication between teachers and parents, such as parent-teacher conferences, progress reports, staff access, and volunteer and participation opportunities.
 - B. Send a letter home to the parent(s) of each Title I eligible child. This letter will describe the program offered at the site, provide details about the curriculum in use at the school, provide information regarding the types of assessment used to measure student progress, and levels of proficiency students are expected to meet.
 - C. Make additional written contacts with parents at least once each semester. These contacts may be made through the distribution of a school newsletter, pamphlets, fliers, personal letters, postcards, etc.
4. **Use of Funds**
- A. Each school site will reserve, and utilize yearly, at least one percent (1%) of its total allocation for parent and family engagement activities. These funds must be used for at least one of these activities:
 - Supporting schools in training school staff regarding engagement strategies.
 - Supporting programs that reach families at home, in the community or at school.
 - Providing information on best practices focused on engagement, especially for increasing engagement of economically disadvantaged parents and family members.
 - Supporting schools to collaborate with community-based organization or businesses that have a track record of improving family engagement; or
 - Engaging in any other activities that the district believes are appropriate in increasing engagement.
 - B. Funds will be used to meet, in order of priority, the identified needs of the school sites.
5. **Parental Comments**
- A. Non-satisfactory written parental comments from parents of participating children shall be submitted to the LEAs district level office from each site to be forwarded to the state educational agency (SEA).
 - B. Responses to written unsatisfactory parental comments will occur within one week of the written comment's receipt. These responses will originate from the site administrator (with a copy to the LEA office) or from the LEA office, if appropriate.
6. **Accessibility**
- Columbus Municipal School District, to the extent possible, will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency or with disabilities, including providing information and school profiles in a language and form such parents understand.

Parental Communications to School Officials

Your communication with us is very important. In the list at the beginning of each school's section of this handbook and on the district's website, you will find **phone numbers for each school**. We hope if you have concerns or suggestions about our schools, you will contact us. We solicit your comments by mail, by phone, or by email. Email addresses for all administrators and teachers may be found on our district website at <http://www.columbuscityschools.org>.

Contacting Parents

It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to provide accurate and current telephone numbers which will permit our school personnel to reach a responsible adult at all times. The school must be informed of any changes in telephone numbers and addresses. Parents/guardians are advised that if a responsible adult cannot be reached after good faith efforts by school personnel, Lowndes County Social Services and/or a law enforcement agency will be contacted. The Columbus Municipal School District uses an automated school-to-parent communication service to place calls to parents announcing emergency preparedness procedures and to inform parents of upcoming school events such as statewide testing, fund-raisers, and PTO meetings. Parents may opt to receive this communication by phone or email.

Promotion Policy

CMSD School Board Policies IHE

Elementary Schools

Promotion from one grade to the next depends on students' successful completion of the content and skills expected at the grade level. The following standards have been established to give each student a clear opportunity to be successful at the next grade level.

Kindergarten: Because English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics skills are essential for a student's educational success, a student's promotion to the first grade will be based on his/her mastery of a minimum of 70% of kindergarten skills in language arts and 70% of kindergarten skills in mathematics shown on the Columbus Municipal School District grade report form, as well as 70% of kindergarten skills in reading readiness as measured on the district's reading readiness assessment.

Grade One: To be promoted to the second grade, the student must successfully complete math and ELA with a passing grade.

Grade Two: To be promoted to the third grade, the student must successfully complete math and ELA with a passing grade.

Grade Three: To be promoted to the fourth grade, the student must successfully complete math and ELA with a passing grade. Mississippi Law mandates, "that every student completing 3rd grade reads at or above grade level". The K-3 Literacy Based Promotion Act (Policy ICHI) established by the State of Mississippi mandates that students with reading deficiencies in kindergarten and grades 1-3 are identified, their parents informed, and intensive reading instruction and intervention be provided. Columbus Municipal School District uses the state-adopted assessment to measure students' reading proficiency. If a student's reading deficiency is not corrected by the end of his or her third-grade year, the student may not be promoted to fourth grade.

Grade Four: To be promoted to the fifth grade, the student must successfully complete math and ELA with a passing grade.

Grade Five: To be promoted to the sixth grade, the student must successfully complete math, ELA, science, and social studies with a passing grade.

Grade Six: To be promoted, a student must earn a passing grade in each of the major subjects in accordance with the board approved grading scale. A student who does not have a passing grade in a major subject will be given an opportunity to attend the Extended School Year Program (when available) to improve their grade in that subject; however, participation does not guarantee promotion.

Middle School

Grades Seven and Eight: To be promoted, a student must earn a passing grade in each of the major subjects in accordance with the board approved grading scale. A student who does not have a passing grade in a major subject will be given an opportunity to attend the Extended School Year Program (when available) to improve their grade in that subject; however, participation does not guarantee promotion.

High School

Promotion in grades 9 through 12 shall be based upon each pupil's accumulation of earned course units (Carnegie Units). The core curriculum, which includes state and district standards, requires a passing grade in each subject before Carnegie Units will be awarded.

The following guidelines shall determine eligibility for grade classification:

Freshman: 9th Grade – a student having earned 5 or fewer Carnegie Units

Sophomore: 10th Grade – a student having earned a minimum of 6 Carnegie Units

Junior: 11th Grade – a student having earned a minimum of 12 Carnegie Units

Senior: 12th Grade – a student having earned a minimum of 17 Carnegie Units, and be eligible for graduation under state guidelines (Requirements can be found in the policy labeled IHF – Graduation Requirements)

Special Education Students

The State Department of Education shall establish goals for the performance of students with disabilities that will promote the purpose of IDEA and are consistent, to the maximum extent appropriate, with other goals and standards for students established by the State Department of Education. Performance indicators used to assess progress towards achieving those goals that, at a minimum, address the performance of students with disabilities on assessments, drop-out rates, and graduation rates shall be developed.

Textbooks

CMSD School Board Policy ICFA

Students who misuse or lose books will have to pay fines or possibly pay to replace them. The transfer of school records may be delayed if a student owes money for textbooks. Textbooks are very expensive and are expected to last six years. Parents are urged to encourage their children to take care of all books properly. Lost, stolen, or damaged textbooks are the financial obligation of the student and his/her parent(s).

Fines Include:

- Writing, Drawing, Scribbling in Book - \$1.00 per page
- Excess Wear Damage – 10% of cost of book
- Cover of Book Damaged – 25% of cost of book
- Spine Damaged – 25% of cost of book
- Water Damaged but Still Useable – 25% of cost of book
- Water Damaged but Not Useable – cost of book
- Pages Missing Not Useable – cost of book
- Obscene Writing or Drawing in Book – cost of book
- Book Not Returned – cost of book

Transferring from Non-Accredited or Home School to CMSD

CMSD School Board Policy JBCD, JBAB

Any transfer student from a school or program (correspondence, tutorial, or home study) not accredited by a regional or state agency is given either a standardized achievement test(s) or teacher-made special subject test(s) to determine the appropriate classification of the student. {MS Code 37-15-33} Note: The administrative head of each public school shall ensure that each pupil applying for transfer shall be tested within thirty days after the filing of such application for transfer. Notice of the administering of such test(s) shall be given to the applicant not less than five days prior to the date of the administration of such test.

All students seeking to transfer from any school, public or private, within or outside of the boundaries of the State of Mississippi, to a public school within the state may be required to take a test to determine the grade and class to which the pupil shall be assigned at the time of pupil transfer. The administrative head of each public school shall administer the test or tests to such pupil or pupils as shall apply for transfer to such public school. Such test or tests shall be administered within thirty days after the filing of each such application for transfer. Notice of the giving of such test shall be given to the applicant not less than five days prior to the date of administration of such test.

No transfer of a pupil shall be effective until the test has been given and the pupil is assigned according to the grade and class for which the test shows he/she is best suited. No pupil shall be assigned to a grade and class more than three (3) grades above or below the grade or class that the pupil would have been assigned to had the pupil remained in the school from which the transfer is being made. Pending the administration of the test herein provided for and its grading and an assignment based thereon the superintendent of the school district or the attendance center principal to which the pupil seeks admission may assign the pupil temporarily to a grade and class comparable to that in which the pupil would have been had the pupil continued in the school from which the transfer was being made. MS Code §37-15-33

Weather Emergencies

CMSD School Board Policy AFC

When inclement weather conditions warrant, the Superintendent of Schools will issue a school closure notice over the CMSD Website, television, social media, and Falcon Blast. Every effort will be made to make the announcement by 6:00 AM. If the weather becomes bad during the school day, the Superintendent may close the schools and release students. It is very important to keep updated contact information on file with your school. The safety of our students is always our main concern. If there is a question concerning our emergency procedures, contact the school your child attends or the Superintendent's designee.

Visitors on Campuses

To better ensure the safety and protection of the students, all visitors, including parents, community members/officials, and vendors must sign in and sign out using designated procedures at the school office before attending a scheduled conference or to obtain permission to visit in the building or on the campus. Parents and/or grandparents who come to schools to eat lunch with their children must check in through the school's office.

All visitors will be required to walk through the metal/temperature detector prior to entering the building. Parents/visitors are asked to refrain from bringing small children when requesting to observe or visit a classroom.

Personal Appearance Policies and Guidelines

CMSD School Board Policy JCDB

The Board of Trustees has adopted these standards expecting the support of parents and students in the spirit for which the standards are intended. Students are expected to dress and groom within the limits set by the standards. Students are expected to obey the rules and directions of the teachers and principals in charge of their educational program. Parents are requested to encourage their students in participating in the spirit intended by the standards for personal appearance and the discipline program.

The standards for dress, grooming, and discipline with appropriate methods of enforcement and appeal, have been established to provide an environment and conditions whereby the school district's educational program can be so planned, adopted, and conducted as to provide each child the training and opportunity to take his/her place in a democratic society. On rare occasions principals may make exceptions to these guidelines for special events, e.g., for school spirit events, as part of a reward system, for more formal events, or the like.

General Guidelines

- No student's appearance should cause a distraction to such an extent that it would violate another student's right to an educational environment. All students are expected to observe minimum standards of hygiene, sanitation, and personal appearance.
- Parents are requested to see to it that their children conform within the limits set by the personal appearance standards.
- The personal appearance code has been developed to establish a standard of decency for covering the body and should be interpreted in the spirit for which it is intended.
- Teachers, principals, and administrators will positively enforce the personal appearance code. The following regulations are to be observed by all students. Any student violating any of such regulations will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.
- **All students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade Eight (PreK-8) are required to wear school uniforms unless instructed differently by the building principal.**

Uniform Policy for All Pre-K-8th Grade Students

STOKES-BEARD ELEMENTARY, COOK ELEMENTARY, SALE ELEMENTARY, HUNT INTERMEDIATE, COLUMBUS MIDDLE, AND CMSD K-8 ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Board of Trustees approved the following recommendations for clothing to be worn in elementary and middle schools of the Columbus Municipal School District:

Mandatory School Uniform Policy

The Board of Trustees of the Columbus Municipal School District finds it is appropriate to implement a mandatory school uniform policy for the following reasons:

1. Promote a more effective climate for learning with fewer discipline referrals.
2. Increase safety and security.
3. Foster school unity and pride
4. Ensure appropriate attire.

Uniform Dress Code

Any deviation, however slight, is disallowed. Items that are offensive because of reference to race, sex, ethnic group, etc. shall be prohibited anywhere on school property.

Every component of the student uniform should be appropriate in length and size. Appropriate is defined as that which properly covers the body, and which is in good taste.

Students must wear clothing that is not too tight or too loose.

The principal has the final decision about the appropriateness of the length/size of clothing.

All teachers will monitor student dress and send those students who are dressed inappropriately to the principal.

Undergarments should never be visible.

Shirts

- Must be solid color: purple, gold, or navy (shirts must be tucked into the pants)
- Must have a collar.
- May **not** be sleeveless or form fitting.
- May **not** have visible emblem, trademark, logo, etc.
- District approved Falcon t-shirts can only be worn on Fridays.
- Female students must wear appropriate undergarments and the front of the clothing should not be worn so that it becomes immodest.

Any visible clothing worn above the waist must be a solid color: purple, gold, or navy blue with the exception of District approved Falcon t-shirts.

Sweatshirts

- Must be solid color: purple, gold, or navy.
- Must be a pullover.
- May have a hood.
- May not be worn/carried around the waist, neck, shoulders, etc.
- May **not** have visible emblem, trademark, logo, etc.

Sweaters

- Must be solid color: purple, gold, or navy.
- May be a cardigan (button-up) or pullover.
- May have a hood.
- May not be worn/carried around the waist, neck, shoulders, etc.
- May **not** have visible emblem, trademark, logo, etc.

Vests

- Must be solid color: purple, gold, or navy.
- May **not** have visible emblem, trademark, logo, etc.

Pants, Capri Pants, Walking Shorts, Skirts, Skorts, Jumpers

- Must be solid color: khaki or navy blue.
- Must be properly hemmed, no joggers or sweatpants.
- Must be free of rips, tears, frays, holes, etc.
- Must be worn at the waist.
- Skirts and shorts should be of a length that when a student's arms are extended downward by the sides in a natural position and the shorts are at the proper position at the waist, the length of skirt, shorts, etc. must be as long as the longest fingertip.
- No halters or halter dresses may be worn.

Belts

- Belts must be worn for clothing items with belt loops.
- Must be solid color: brown, black, navy blue.
- May not have visible emblem, trademark, logo, etc. (including the buckle)

Headwear

- No caps, hats or headwear shall be worn inside the school building. (Penalty: Confiscation)
- Sunglasses will not be worn in the building. (Penalty: Confiscation)

Leggings, Socks, Tights

- Must be solid color: Navy blue, white, purple, or gold.

Shoes

- Must be closed toe shoes.
- Shoes with over two-inch heels shall not be permitted.

Jackets/Coats

- Must be solid color.
- May **not** have visible emblem, trademark, logo, etc.
- Long trench coats are prohibited.
- May not be worn/carried around the waist, neck, shoulder, etc.
- CMSD school/team jackets are allowed in the classroom to promote school spirit.

Uniform Compliance Measures

If necessary, disciplinary actions may be taken to encourage compliance with the policy. Each school should strive to achieve full compliance through positive reinforcement and should resort to disciplinary action only when positive measures fail to ensure compliance. In addition, schools shall communicate with parents so that expectations, rationale and benefits are fully understood by the student and his/her family.

Prior to initiating any disciplinary action against a student not complying with the policy, a conference with the parents must be held with a school administrator to solicit parental cooperation and support. Disciplinary action is to be initiated only after all other means to secure support and cooperation as mentioned above have not been successful.

Students new to the district and enrolling on or after the first day of school will have five (5) calendar days to comply with the mandatory uniform dress code.

Dress Code for All Students in Grades 9-12

There appears to be a definite relationship between good dress habits, good work habits, and proper school behavior. Any type of attire which attracts undue attention to the wearer, and thus causes a disturbance in the school, is in bad taste and not acceptable.

There are no set standards for what is appropriate to wear at all times, although a person with good judgment and a strong sense of pride will always be appropriately dressed regardless of the occasion. One's dress and general appearance is a factor in the way a person conducts himself/herself. Appropriate school dress helps promote the best learning situation. The manner in which a student dresses directly reflects the home, school and the community.

Student dress should not distract from the learning environment or interfere with another student's right to learn. Clothing or lack of clothing that is disruptive is not permitted.

The principal or his designee has final authority to make judgments about whether a student is properly attired or groomed. Clothing judged by the principal as indecent or inappropriate for school will not be allowed. Immodest clothing will not be tolerated.

Articles of clothing, book bags, notebooks, jewelry, personal items and physical body must be free of the following:

- Symbols or words alluding to substances or activities illegal by law for minors: tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or gambling.
- Gang symbols, signs, tattoos, body markings, or language associated with gangs or gang activity.
- Profane, sexual, pornographic, violent, or suggestive language
- Derogatory symbols, pictures, or language directed to any person or group.
- Fraternity and sorority emblems or references
- Weapons
- Obscene or indecent nature or otherwise deemed inappropriate.
- Students may not wear dark glasses unless under a doctor's prescription.
- Students may not wear hats, caps, head coverings (except under extenuating circumstances approved by administration) curlers, picks, bandanas, scarves, durags, bonnets, wraps, or sweatbands etc. Items will be confiscated.
- Students may not wear shirts or blouses that expose the midriff while sitting or standing.
- Students may not wear see-through garments, muscle shirts, tank tops, or halter tops.
- Shirts or blouses must have straps 3 inches wide at the top of the shoulder.
- Strapless, racerback, spaghetti straps, tank top, scoop neck, low cut, or off the shoulder shirts or dresses are not permitted at school.
- Any style of clothing that exposes undergarments is not appropriate for school.
- Students may not wear basketball jerseys, muscle shirts/tank tops (unless worn as a vest type garment over an appropriate shirt); no shirts with sleeves cut off.
- Hooded jackets and sweatshirts will be allowed but hoods cannot be worn on the head during school.
- Students may not wear joggers (any color), silk boxers, compression shorts/pants, pajama/lounge pants.
- Leggings/jeggings/tights/yoga pants may be worn with the appropriate knee length skirt, shirt or shorts.
- All shorts, skirts, dresses must be knee length or longer. No Gym shorts are allowable except during P.E class.
- Pants must be free of rips, tears, frays, holes, etc.
- Belts must be worn for clothing items with belt loops.
- Students must wear closed toe and heel shoes at all times. House shoes, Crocs, slippers, slides, or shoes with taps, cleats, or spikes are not allowed.
- Students with tattoos may be requested to keep them covered.
- Students may not groom in classrooms, halls, cafeteria, or commons area.

- Any style of dress, hair color, hairstyle, or makeup that is distracting to students or teachers should be brought to the attention of the administration.
- All athletic uniforms or clothing associated with an extracurricular activity may be worn only on game days or for a school-related activity.
- Sagging pants are not allowed. Sagging pants are those which sag so that the top of the trousers is significantly below the waist, sometimes revealing much of the undergarments.

Consequences for Dress Code Violations:

1st Offense: Warning and must correct infraction.

2nd Offense: 1-day ISD (In-School Detention)

3rd Offense: 2 days-ISD

4th Offense: 1-day Alternative ISD

Subsequent offenses will receive 2 days Alternative ISD.

DISCIPLINE

Philosophy of Discipline

There is an intimate relationship between teaching/learning and discipline. The chief aim of any program of discipline is the development of intelligent self-control by students. Our program of discipline is also a means of ensuring an environment in the classroom that is conducive to learning. The objective of discipline within our school may be considered as follows:

- To establish and maintain favorable learning conditions, as well as teaching conditions free from distractions, disruptions, and misbehavior.
- To establish and maintain respect for authority within the school and community.
- To develop, on the part of the student, ideals, interests, habits, and skills that make for self-government and good citizens.

We look upon discipline primarily as a means of building enlightened self-control in the pupil, and only secondarily as a force to secure external control of the student. Grievances are handled through normal channels of communication according to School Board Policy. School officials believe that parents have the responsibility to present to the school a reasonably well-disciplined student.

Code of Student Conduct **CMSD School Board Policy JCB**

In compliance with MS Code §37-11-55, the Columbus Municipal School Board has adopted the following code of student conduct. The code of conduct is made available to all teachers, school personnel, students and parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year. The code of conduct includes specific grounds for disciplinary action; procedures to be followed for acts requiring discipline; and explanation of the responsibilities and rights of students regarding attendance, respect for persons and property, knowledge and observation of rules of conduct, the right to learn, free speech and student publications, assembly, privacy and participation in school programs and activities.

Students and parents are encouraged to read and develop a thorough understanding of the details presented in this document. To deter and minimize violations of this code of conduct, a need for cooperative relationships exists between students, parents, and school officials. The responsibilities of each are listed below:

Parents/Guardians

- Keep in regular communication with the school concerning their child's conduct and progress.
- Make efforts to ensure that their child is in attendance daily; report and explain any absence to the school.
- Provide their child with the resources needed to complete class work.
- Assist their child in being well groomed and in compliance with personal appearance regulations.
- Bring to the attention of school authorities any problem or condition which affects their child in the school community.
- Discuss report cards and work assignments with their child.
- Care for their child's physical well-being.

Students

- Attend all the classes for which you are scheduled and arrive on time.
- Be prepared for class with proper materials and be responsible for your own work.
- Be respectful to all individuals and property.
- Conduct yourself in a safe and responsible manner.
- Be well groomed and compliant with personal appearance regulations.
- Abide by the rules and regulations set forth by the school and individual classroom teachers.

Schools

- Maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning.
- Exhibit an attitude of respect for students and parents.
- Plan a flexible curriculum to meet the needs of all students.
- Keep an open line of communication between themselves, students and parents.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities

CMSD School Board Policies JC

These statements of rights and responsibilities of students are summaries of broad principles. More specific details of the application of these principles in the practices and procedures of Columbus School District can be found in the remainder of this handbook. These principles are meant to guide students toward finding more and greater opportunities to serve themselves and society. Notice that for every right that is listed, a corresponding responsibility is also listed. Rights cannot exist for all without responsible behavior by every student.

Attendance - Each student has the right to information on School Board policies and individual school policies that define excused, approved or unexcused absences and tardiness. *Each student has the responsibility to attend all scheduled classes and to report to class on time.*

Regular and punctual attendance of all students is encouraged throughout the school year. Parents should have their student in school every day and should take him/her out only in unavoidable cases. Parents may keep their student out of school for whatever reason, but the school administration will determine whether the absence is excused or unexcused.

Each student has the right to make-up class work in any excuse or approved absence. Each student has the responsibility to request the make-up assignment from her/his teachers in advance or upon their return to school.

Respect for Persons & Property – Each student has the right to be respected by his/her peers and school personnel. *Each student has the responsibility to show respect to his/her peers and school personnel.*

Each student has the right to personal property within school rules that do not interfere with the educational process. *Each student has the responsibility of knowing school rules and of gaining school approval for possession of other properties.*

Each student has the right to the protection of property, as set forth in the laws of the State of Mississippi. *Each student has the responsibility to notify the parent or proper authority of the damage.*

Each student has the right of access to appropriate use of public-school properties to develop educational skills and knowledge. *Each student has an obligation to respect and protect public property and individual property.*

Knowledge & Observation of Rules & Conduct - Each student has the right to be made aware of rules of conduct relating to school and school activities. *Each student has the responsibility to abide by rules of conduct as prescribed by school board policy and school policies.*

Each student has the right to know that corrective disciplinary action will be administered when rules are broken. *Each student has the responsibility to accept corrective disciplinary action as a means of helping him/her improve behavioral patterns.*

The Right to Learn - Each student has the right to a school atmosphere conducive to learning. *Each student has the responsibility to help maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning.* Each student has the right to equivalent educational opportunities regardless of race, color, creed, gender, handicap, religion or marital status. School officials are required by law to maintain a suitable environment for learning. *Each student has a responsibility to make satisfactory progress in school. "Satisfactory" progress is progress consistent with reasonable expectations for each student in relation to his/her ability and aptitude.*

Free Speech & Student Publications – Each student has the right to refrain from any activity that

violates the precepts of her/his religion. *Each student has the responsibility to respect the rights of the religious beliefs of others.*

Each student has the right through his/her student government representatives to discuss issues related to the school environment. *Each student has the responsibility to respect the decision rendered after discussion.*

Each student has the right to express him/herself through the use of school publications. *Each student has the responsibility to respect the rights of others. Also, a student may seek consent and approval of teachers, advisors and school administration and must observe the normal rules of responsible journalism.*

Each student has the right to conference with teachers, counselors and administrative staff concerning personal or school-related problems. *Each student has the responsibility to arrange each personal conference.*

Each student has the right to form and express her/his own opinion on issues without jeopardizing his/her relationship with his/her teacher or school officials. Each student has the right to express an opinion on issues in the classroom, cafeteria, playing field, or any other place, as long as the exercise of such rights does not interfere with the existing Code of Conduct/disciplinary guidelines within the school. Each student will be informed as to when and where he/she can express ideas and distribute materials. *Each student has the responsibility to make efforts to become informed and knowledgeable about issues and express his/her opinion in a manner that is suitable for the forum in which the discussion is taking place.* Orderly procedures for student expression include the following:

- Students are entitled to express their personal opinions as long as these expressions do not disrupt the educational process. That is, a student may express himself/herself without materially or substantially interfering with the requirement of the appropriate discipline in the operation of the school and without colliding with the rights of others.
- Students who publish and/or distribute written or duplicated material on the school premises are responsible for its content.
- The distribution of such material must take place at a reasonable time and location approved by the principal or his/her designee and must not interfere with the orderly school process.
- Such material must be free of libel, obscenity, and defamatory statements against persons.
- A student in his/her written or oral expressions shall not advocate or encourage the commission of crime.

The Right to a Scheduled Assembly – Each student involved in school-sanctioned organizations has the right to a scheduled assembly. *Each student has the responsibility of following club and organization schedules as established by school policy.*

The Right to Privacy – Each student has the right to private consultation with teachers, counselors and school administrators concerning matters of a personal nature. *Each student has the responsibility to respect the discretion and judgment of the teacher, counselor or administrators in a situation that may involve a violation of a federal, state or local law. If a situation should occur regarding a violation of the law on school property, then the principal should be notified, and parents should be involved as soon as possible.*

The School Board recognizes that all students possess the constitutional right to be secure in their persons, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures. The Board seeks to assure a climate in the schools, which is appropriate for schools, and which assures the safety and welfare of personnel and students. To assist the Board in achieving and maintaining these goals, students, parents, and school officials are advised of the following.

- **Search and Seizure: (CMSD School Board Policy JCDA)** Students are entitled to the guarantees of the Fourth Amendment, and they are subject to reasonable searches and seizures. School officials are empowered to conduct reasonable searches of a particular student and school property when there is reasonable cause to believe that the student may be in possession of drugs, weapons, alcohol, or other materials in violation of school policy or state law. School property,

such as lockers and desks, shall remain under the control of school officials and shall be subject to search.

- **School Property:** The school district owns student lockers, desks, and other such property. The school exercises exclusive control over the school property, and a student should not expect privacy regarding items placed in school property because school property is subject to search at any time by school officials.
- **The Person:** According to the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, "a student may be searched if there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated either the law or the rules of the school." A particular student's effects also are subject to being searched by school officials and are subject to the same rule. Effects may include automobiles located on school property.

The scope of the search must be "reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction."

If school officials conclude that a more intrusive search (e.g., a strip search) is needed, they shall call the parents of the students involved and report their suspicions to the police. Searches of students and their effects must be particularized. Group searches lacking particularized suspicion will not be permitted.

The Right to Participate in School Programs & Activities - Students have the right to participate in activities as spectators. *The responsibility of the student is to participate in school activities, not only in attendance, but to show good sportsmanship along with good behavior and respect the rights of others as well as for personal and public property.*

Students have the right to participate in school programs and activities. *Students have the responsibility to develop to their fullest potential and to promote the activities of the school by participating in school activities at the students' maximum performance levels and to abide by sponsor, school and district regulations while participating in in-district or out-of-district activities.*

General Expectations for Behavior

It is not possible to list all behaviors that may be displayed inappropriately during the school day by our students or the consequences that are judged appropriate. Consequently, at some point, experienced, trained, and fair-minded school administrators must make judgments about the appropriateness or inappropriateness of student behaviors and assign appropriate consequences. We offer the following as a general guide to student behavior, but not as an exhaustive list of behavior expectations.

Throughout the school day, in general:

- Respect constituted authority and abide by school regulations.
- Avoid loud talking, whistling, loitering, running, pushing.
- Be a lady or gentleman at all times.

In the cafeteria:

- Enter the cafeteria as you would a restaurant in town. Do not run or push.
- Be as refined in your cafeteria table manners as you are in your home.
- When you have finished, take your tray to the receiving window so the table will be clear for others.

In the classroom:

- Do not talk while others are talking.
- Cooperate with the teacher and other students in every class activity.
- Be courteous to your teacher and fellow students.
- Avoid laughing at other's mistakes.
- When you need to talk, keep your voice in a conversational tone.
- Do not touch or read anything on the teacher's desk without specific permission.
- Be quiet during morning announcements -- something you need to know may be announced.

In the auditorium:

- Enter the auditorium quietly and remain quiet during the entire program.
- Be prompt and take your seat in your assigned section.
- Give your attention to the speaker or entertainer who is on the platform.
- Do not disturb the ones around you.
- Applaud in a refined and courteous manner when you enjoy something.
- Never boo or whistle regardless of your opinion of the program.
- Do not read or do any type of work during the program.
- When you leave the auditorium, do not block the aisles by stopping to talk.
- Do not bring food or drink into the auditorium at any time.
- Stay out of the auditorium during lunch unless you have permission from a teacher to be there.

In the library/media center:

- Develop an appreciation and love for books. If this is done, you will naturally handle them with care. Failure to return books or damaged books will result in a fine up to an amount sufficient to replace the lost or damaged property.
- Be considerate of others by being silent for those who are reading.
- Follow the requests of the librarians and cooperate with them.

In the hallways and walkways:

- Do not carry open soft drink containers. Drinks are to be consumed outside only.
- Do not run through the corridors or in or out of doorways.
- Do not stop traffic by stopping to talk with a group of friends.
- Do not push but move through the corridors in an orderly manner like ladies and gentlemen.
- Go to lockers only after the first bell in the morning before school and during class changes.
- Have a signed and timed pass from a teacher any time you must be in the corridors while classes are progress.

In the Restrooms:

- Do not loiter in the restrooms.
- Take care of the restroom facilities and do not misuse them.

Virtual:

- Sit at a desk or table.
- Quiet environment
- Camera on and /or active participation
- Adequate materials available
- Appropriate Dress- no pajamas or head wear
- Must be present for __% of the class time.
- Parent participation as needed.

Rules for Student Conduct

Disciplinary action will consist of procedures set forth by classroom or school-wide discipline plans, isolation, detentions, loss of privileges, denial of participation in school activities, probation or a combination of any one or more of such actions, including appropriate constructive assignments, depending on the seriousness and the circumstances of the offense, and the attitude of the student. Discipline in the form of any corporal punishment shall not be practiced.

In implementing conduct and personal appearance regulations, it should be kept in mind that the primary responsibility for the conduct and personal appearance of a student rests with the student and the parents. Administrators and teachers shall hold students to strict account for disorderly conduct or misconduct at any school, on the way to and from school, on the playgrounds during recess, at school meetings, programs, functions, and on school buses. The Superintendent or principal of any school may suspend any student from school for good cause, but such suspension shall be reported promptly to the Board of Trustees. The Superintendent or the principal of a school shall have the power to suspend a student for any reason for which such student might be suspended, dismissed, or expelled by the Board of Trustees.

The Superintendent or principals, are authorized to institute appropriate disciplinary action including immediate suspension, if warranted, of any student for disorderly conduct, or misconduct including, **but not limited to**, the following:

1. Fighting (see explanations and consequences, p. 60)
2. Disorderly conduct
3. Harassment, sexual harassment, intimidation, threats, and bullying (see "Sexual Harassment," p. 63)
4. Disruption of school operations, functions, programs or activities (see also, "Bomb Threat", p. 51)
5. Disobedience
6. Disrespect
7. Insubordination
8. Leaving class, school program or meeting without permission; cutting classes or programs
9. Insulting language
10. Insulting behavior
11. Indecent exposure
12. Public indecent displays of affection (including in cars parked in the vicinity of any school building or activity)
13. Obscene language
14. Vandalism (see explanations and consequences, p. 64)
15. Malicious mischief
16. Theft
17. Damage to property, private or school
18. Unauthorized use of school property
19. Unauthorized entry on school premises, including other schools or campuses.
20. Loitering or being "out of bounds;" i.e., being where he/she is not supposed to be.
21. Selling items for personal gain on school campuses without specific permission from the principal
22. Use of tobacco (see consequences, p. 52)
23. Use of alcoholic beverages (see consequences, p. 55)
24. Under the influence of alcoholic beverages
25. Use of illegal drugs (see consequences, p. 55)
26. Under the influence of illegal drugs
27. Selling or distributing any drugs—legal or illegal, prescription or non-prescription
28. Any offense otherwise punishable by law and any offense determined to constitute good cause for disciplinary action.
29. Cheating
30. Use of the district's network resources to access inappropriate or non-educational material.
31. Damaging, altering, destroying, copying, transmitting, or changing any official school records through the use of technology
32. Gang related activities (see explanations and consequences, p. 52)
33. Possession of:
 - A. Illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia
 - B. Alcoholic beverages
 - C. Matches, lighters, fireworks, explosives, or incendiary materials
 - D. Knives, firearms, slingshots, or any other weapon (see explanations and consequences, p. 54)
 - E. Pornographic materials
 - F. Stolen property
 - G. Tobacco or tobacco paraphernalia
 - H. Cards or gambling paraphernalia
 - I. Noise making devices.
 - J. Other disruptive materials
 - K. Other materials, possession of which is punishable by law.
 - L. Sprays which incapacitate such as mace and pepper spray

Students, parents, teachers, and administrators should recognize that the enumeration of certain offenses in the Code of Conduct are not intended to and do not restrict the power, authority, and duty of the Superintendent, principals, and teachers to carry out their statutory duties of maintaining order and discipline in the public schools, even if the specific offense is not set out in this disciplinary code.

The CMSD Discipline Codes are not all inclusive. CMSD administrators reserve the right to assign the actions of any disciplinary consequences based on severity of the infraction.

Student Complaints and Grievances

CMSD School Board Policy JCE

The Board of Trustees believes that it is in the best interest of the district to have complaints/grievances of students resolved as promptly and equitably as possible.

A complaint/grievance is a claim by a full-time student that there has been an action that has unjustly caused a loss of some benefit or has imposed an unjustified burden as a result of a misinterpretation or misapplication of a school district policy.

This policy shall not apply to any matter which is prescribed by state or federal law and/or regulations or to any matter over which the board is without power to act.

COMPLAINT POLICY – STUDENTS

The Columbus Municipal School District Board of Trustees will use the following procedure for any grievance of any nature to include, but not be limited to alleged discrimination based on the grounds of race, color, disability, sex, religion, creed, national origin, or age.

When a student has a grievance, he or she shall, within five working days of when the grievance is first known, request a conference with the Title IX Coordinator. This conference shall be scheduled by the Title IX Coordinator within five working days of receipt of the request. If the grievance is resolved at this conference by mutual agreement, there shall be no further action. Both parties shall state in writing that they are in agreement with the proposed resolution.

If the grievance is not resolved at the first level conference, the student shall file, within five working days, with the Assistant Superintendent, a written description of the grievance. Upon receipt of the grievance, the Assistant Superintendent and the Title IX Coordinator shall schedule a conference with the student to be held within five working days of the receipt of the grievance. This conference shall be for the purpose of resolving the filed grievance. Following the conference, the Assistant Superintendent shall respond in writing within five working days to the student as to his or her decision regarding the disposition of the grievance.

Should the grievance not be resolved to the satisfaction of the student, he or she may continue through each level of administration in the same manner as prescribed heretofore. Upon completion of the final administrative level, the Superintendent of Education, the student may request to be heard by the Board of Trustees by submitting the request in writing to the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall insert in the appropriate place on the agenda of the next board meeting (providing that the time constraints, as per board policy, are met for inclusion on the most immediate agenda) an item that states the student desires to address the board concerning a grievance.

The Board of Trustees shall review the original grievance. In addition, the board may, but is not required to, hear directly from any individual with knowledge of any relevant facts to the grievance. The board shall make a decision regarding the merits of the grievance within five working days of its hearing.

Bomb And Other Unlawful Threats

CMSD School Board Policy JCBE

It is unlawful for any person to intimidate, threaten or coerce, or attempt to intimidate, threaten, or coerce, whether by illegal force, threats of force or by the disruption of intimidating, threatening or coercive material, any person enrolled in any school for the purpose of interfering with the right of that person to attend school classes or of causing him not to attend school classes (Mississippi Code § 37-11-20). The Superintendent or Principal of a school shall have the power to suspend or expel any student who telephones, emails, communicates, or otherwise delivers a threat to students in or around a school or school activity. This provision includes bomb threats.

Notice of Unannounced Search Policy

CMSD School Board Policy JCDA

The Columbus Municipal Schools, in an attempt to ensure that the schools are kept free of illegal drugs and other illegal objects or substances, may conduct an unannounced search at any time during the school year through the use of dogs trained to detect illegal drugs. Such a search will cover buildings and grounds, including lockers and automobiles parked in the school parking lots, but will not include the person of an individual. If drugs or any contraband or prohibited substances are found, the person(s) responsible will be dealt with according to school board policy.

Proximity to a Campus Policy

CMSD School Board Policy JCBE

The rules set forth in this Code of Conduct shall apply to each and every offense committed by a student off of a campus of the Columbus Municipal School District to the extent that the offense is committed within such proximity to a campus of the District so as to be determined to adversely affect the educative process within the District; to endanger the health, welfare, safety or morals of the students or employees of the District; or, to interfere or obstruct the operation of the District for the safety and welfare of its students or employees.

Non-School Related Conduct Policy

CMSD School Board Policy JCBE

A principal or principal's designee may discipline a student for dangerous or violent acts or the sale of controlled substances if such acts are committed away from the school or school related activities by recommending assignment of said student to the alternative school, if there is a showing that the non-school related conduct of the student has a direct and negative effect upon the learning environment of the school and/or constitutes a threat to the safety of the student or others. Any student, parent, or guardian aggrieved by the decision of the principal or principal's designee shall be entitled to due process pursuant to the district's existing policy on short and/or long-term suspension.

After an arrest of a student or expressed permission from a youth court designee, a security officer or the city police may transport a student to the detention center. Every effort will be made to contact the parent/guardian when a student has been arrested.

- If the student is otherwise legally enrolled in school, the principal or principal's designee may suspend the student for up to ten (10) days and make a recommendation to the Superintendent that the student be expelled, or
- If the student is not enrolled but subsequently attempts to enroll in the school, the principal or principal's designee may disallow enrollment of the student.

Any student, parent, or guardian aggrieved by the decision of the principal or principal's designee shall be entitled to due process pursuant to the Board's existing policy on long-term suspension.

Gang Related Activity or Association Policy

CMSD School Board Policy JCBB

Gangs that initiate, advocate, or promote activities that threaten the safety or well-being of persons or property on school grounds, or which disrupt the school environment are harmful to the educational process. The use of hand signals, graffiti, or the presence of any apparel, jewelry, accessory, or manner of grooming which, by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark, symbol, or other attribute that indicates or implies membership or affiliation with such a group, presents a clear and present danger and is prohibited. This is contrary to the school environment and educational objectives and creates an atmosphere where unlawful acts or violations of school regulations may occur. Incidents involving initiations, hazing, intimidation, and/or related activities of such group affiliations which are likely to cause bodily danger, physical harm, or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to students are prohibited.

The School District shall enforce the above rule and attempt to ensure that any student wearing, carrying, or displaying gang paraphernalia or exhibiting behavior or gestures that symbolize gang membership and/or participating in activities that intimidate or affect the attendance of another student shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Gang Insignia

Gang insignia, signs, symbolic dress, drawing, pictures, or related activity will not be tolerated. Students who have in their possession such items described above on their person, in their possession, on clothing, in books or notebooks will be suspended out of school as follows:

1st Offense	Three (3) days Out-of-School Suspension
2nd Offense	Five (5) days Out-of-School Suspension
3rd Offense	Up to ten (10) days Out-of-School Suspension with recommendation for Alternative School placement.

Physical Restraint Policy

CMSD School Board Policy JCBA

When it becomes necessary, the Board approves the use of physical restraint for students who are out of control when that behavior becomes a danger to him/herself or someone else or involves the destruction of school or personal property. The amount of force used must be in direct proportion to the situation in order to diffuse the danger. Physical restraint may be used on any school property or anywhere the district has supervisory responsibility.

Possession/Use of Tobacco and Tobacco Paraphernalia Policy

CMSD School Board Policy JCDA

The policy of the Columbus Municipal School District is that the district should be tobacco-free. The School Board recognizes the dangers and concurs with the Surgeon General's report on the harmful effects of tobacco on the human body. Therefore, the schools will provide a program presenting the harmful effects of tobacco on the body.

The use of any tobacco products in any form or use of e-cigarettes or other vaped devices designed to inject nicotine or other substances is not permitted in school buildings, on school grounds, or while operating school owned equipment is prohibited. The total ban on tobacco is the strongest statement Columbus School District can make to show students, employees, and visitors its concern for their health and well-being.

Any student who shall possess (either actual or constructive), use, carry, or sell cigars, cigarettes, chewing tobacco, smokeless tobacco, or any other form of tobacco product, e-cigarettes or other vaped devices,

or tobacco paraphernalia—which shall include rolling papers, lighters, matches, or the like—while in school, on campus, on school grounds, upon school buses, on the road to and from school or during participation in or attendance at or travel to and from school sponsored events, activities, events and ceremonies shall be subject to the following disciplinary action:

Penalties for use or possession (actual or constructive) of tobacco, e-cigarettes, vaped devices, or tobacco paraphernalia:

1st Offense	Three (3) days of out-of-school suspension and confiscation
2nd Offense	Five (5) days of out-of-school suspension and confiscation
3rd Offense	Up to ten (10) days out-of-school suspension with recommendation for Alternative School placement.

§ 97-32-29 – Tobacco Use Prohibited on School Property

No person shall use any tobacco product on any school property. Violators shall be subject to a warning for the first conviction, \$75 for a second conviction, and a fine not to exceed \$150 shall be imposed for subsequent violations.

For the purposes of this Act, school property means any public-school building or bus, campus, grounds, recreational area, athletic field, or other property owned, used or operated by a local school board, school, or directors for administration of any public educational institution or during a school related activity. Sixteenth section land or lieu land without school facilities or school-related activities are exempt from this Act.

This Act does not include property owned or operated by the state institutions of higher learning or public community or junior colleges.

Anyone convicted under this Act shall be recorded as being fined for a civil violation and not for violating a criminal statute.

Weapons-Free School Policy

CMSD School Board Policy JCDAE, JCDAE (2), JCBH

The Columbus Municipal School District Board of Education recognizes that the possession of firearms or other weapons on school premises or at school functions by persons other than duly authorized law enforcement officials creates an unreasonable and unwarranted risk of injury or death to district employees, students, visitors, and guests and further creates an unreasonable and unwarranted risk of damage to properties of district employees, students, visitors and guests. Because of such dangers, the Board hereby prohibits the possession of pistols, firearms, or weapons in any form by any person other than duly authorized law enforcement officials on school premises or at school functions, regardless of whether such person possesses a valid permit to carry such pistols, firearms, or weapons.

1. **Firearms:** The Columbus Municipal School District operates in compliance with the Gun-Free Schools Act, Title VIII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Therefore, all policies and/or procedures adopted by the Board which affect the conduct and/or discipline of students are supplemented by the requirements of this act, as follows:

No student is permitted to bring or possess a firearm on school property.

- A. **A "firearm" means** any type of weapon, including a starter gun, which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; any destructive device, including any explosive, incendiary, poison gas, bomb, grenade, rocket, missile, mine or other similar device; and any type of weapon, any combination of parts either designed or intended

for use in converting any device into any device described herein and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled; or as otherwise defined by federal law.

- B. **Examples of prohibited weapons** – Prohibited weapons include, but **are not limited to**:
- 1) Gun, rifle, pistol, taser, or other firearm
 - 2) Dynamite cartridge, bomb, grenade, mine or other explosive
 - 3) BB gun, air rifle, air pistol
 - 4) Bowie knife, dirk, dagger, switchblade, pocketknife, or other knife
 - 5) Slingshot
 - 6) Lead cane, blackjack, nun chucks
 - 7) Metallic or other artificial knuckles
 - 8) Razors, razor blades
 - 9) Any sharp-pointed or edged instrument (except instructional supplies, unaltered nail files, clips, and tools used only to prepare food or for instruction and maintenance of school property)
 - 10) Any instrument having the effect or appearance of a weapon (including utensils, imitation firearms or knives, etc.)
- C. **"School property" includes** any school building, bus, campus, grounds, recreational area, athletic field or other property owned, used or operated by the district. Furthermore, no student shall possess or carry any firearm or weapon as herein set forth within a vehicle brought onto school property as herein defined.
2. **The penalty** for bringing or possessing a firearm on school property shall be expulsion from the school program and all its activities for a minimum period of one calendar year (365 days) as calculated from the date of expulsion. Any student who is charged with bringing or possessing a firearm on school property shall be automatically suspended for ten (10) days and recommended for expulsion for a minimum period of one calendar year as stated herein by the principal or his designee. The suspension shall take effect immediately following the provision of initial due process and pending the conclusion of due process on the recommendation of expulsion, all in accordance with the CMSD policies regarding long term suspension as provided in the CMSD Code of Conduct. The Superintendent who receives a recommendation for expulsion may determine, based upon the circumstances of a given case, that other disciplinary action or alternative placement is appropriate and may make such recommendation to the Board.
3. **Imitation firearms** – Any student who has in his/her possession any imitation firearms including but not limited to, a cap, plastic toy, or water gun shall be suspended out of school as follows:
- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1st Offense | Three (3) days out of school |
| 2nd Offense | Five (5) days out of school |
| 3rd Offense | Up to ten (10) days out of school |
- Imitation weapons will be seized and turned over to the proper officials.
4. **Possession of Other Weapons** : Possession, – Any student who has an "other" weapon (as defined below) in his/her possession while in school, on school property, on a school bus, on the way to and from school, concealed in a vehicle on school property, attending any school or school function, or in any other manner have in his/her possession, may be subject to out-of-school suspension up to ten (10) days and recommendation for expulsion.
5. **Examples of such other weapons shall include but not be limited to** a bowie knife, pocketknife, dirk, dagger, switchblade or other knife, blade, billy club, metallic knuckles, throwing stars, pipe, club, bat, chain, razor, box cutter, ice pick, slingshot, lead cane, blackjack, any instrument having the effect or appearance of a weapon (including utensils or knives, etc.) or any sharp-pointed or edged instrument (except instructional supplies, unaltered nail files and clips and tools used only to prepare food or for instruction and maintenance of school property); sprays that incapacitate such as mace, pepper spray, etc., will also be considered a weapon.

6. **Use of Other Weapons** - Any student who uses or brandishes any object as a weapon, regardless of its original purpose while he/she is on school property as defined in Subparagraph a. (3) herein, may be subject to up to ten (10) days out-of-school suspension and recommended for expulsion in accordance with the CMSD policies regarding long-term suspension as contained within the Code of Conduct. See above for examples of other weapons.

The Superintendent, who receives a recommendation for expulsion for a violation of Subparagraph d. as herein contained, may determine, based upon the circumstances of a given case, that other disciplinary action or alternative placement is appropriate and may make such recommendation to the Board.

The Superintendent or Principal or their respective designee, as appropriate or in his/her discretion, may give prior approval for weapons to be on or about campus under the following circumstances:

1. With specific permission from the principal, a student may possess weapons on school property only when the weapons are used for valid educational purposes or school-sanctioned ceremonies; and
2. Law enforcement officers and other government officials may carry weapons onto school property as permitted by law.

Threatening School Personnel

1st Offense	Minimum of Five (5) days Out-of-School Suspension
2nd Offense	Up to ten (10) days Out-of-School Suspension and recommendation to the alternative school

Physical Assault on Personnel Policy

CMSD School Board Policy JCBE

1st Offense	Up to ten (10) days Out-of-School Suspension and recommendation for expulsion
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Alcohol Policy

CMSD School Board Policy JCDAC

Possession (actual or constructive) or use of (confiscation and report to authorities)

1st Offense	Minimum 5 days Out-of-School Suspension not to exceed nine (9) Days.
2nd Offense	Up to ten (10) days Out-of-School Suspension and recommendation to Alternative School

Illegal Drug Policy

CMSD School Board Policy JCDAC

Any student in any school who possesses any controlled substance in violation of the Uniform Controlled Substances Law shall be subject to automatic expulsion for a calendar year by the Superintendent or principal of the school in which the student is enrolled; provided, however, that the Superintendent of the school shall be authorized to modify the period of time for such expulsion on a case-by-case basis. Such expulsion shall take effect immediately subject to the constitutional rights of due process, which shall include the student's right to appeal to the local school board (Mississippi Code § 37-11-18). Possession (actual or constructive) or use/consumption of illegal drugs within the Columbus Municipal School District shall result in an immediate nine (9) day out-of-school suspension and recommendation for expulsion.

Student Drug Testing Program Extracurricular Activities

CMSD School Board Policy JCDAB

All students enrolled in grades seven through twelve shall be subject to random and/or reasonable suspicion drug and alcohol testing to the extent and in the manner provided in district policy. Students who wish to participate in extracurricular activities or co-curricular activities, operate machinery, or seek a privilege for which a school permit is required (e.g., operating a motor vehicle on campus) may not illegally use or consume alcohol, tobacco products, mood altering substances or drugs at any time, including school hours and non-school hours, school days and non-school days, twelve months a year. If the school administration determines that the student who is participating in an activity or enjoys a privilege stated above or seeks to participate in any activity or privilege stated above, is engaged in the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs, the student may be subject to consequences in accordance with the Columbus Municipal School District Drug Policy. Prior to making this determination and imposing any exclusionary consequence, the administration shall give the student the right to explain his or her conduct. All CMSD students enrolled in grades seven through twelve subjected to drug and alcohol testing provided in district policy must sign a "Participants Pledge" and the Policy Consent/Release Form as a precondition to his or her participation or privilege. The student's signature on the Pledge/Consent Form signifies the commitment to abide by the conditions of the CMSD Substance Abuse Testing Policy and to remain free from alcohol, and illegal substances. The parent's signature signifies that the parent has read and understands the CMSD Substance Abuse Testing Policy. The provisions of these policies shall apply to all students during all of the period of time that they are under and subject to the jurisdiction of the Board of Education of this school district as defined by the laws of the state of Mississippi, and/or while participating in or going to or from any school activity sponsored by this school district and/or while under the supervision and direction of any teacher, principal, or other authority of this school district.

Policy Code: JCDAB Student Drug Testing Program Extracurricular Activities SUBSTANCE ABUSE TESTING

INTRODUCTION

The Columbus Municipal School District (CMSD) Board of Trustees recognizes the significant problems created by drug and alcohol use in society. The board further recognizes the important contribution that public schools have in shaping the youth of today into the adults of tomorrow. Failure to protect our students from drugs and alcohol is not acceptable. It is the intent of this Board to create a safe and healthy learning environment free of drugs and alcohol.

PURPOSE AND INTENT

A program of deterrence will be instituted as a proactive approach to a drug-free school. The purpose of this program is four-fold:

- A. to provide for the health and safety of students.
- B. to offer students a credible means to resist peer pressure as it relates to the use of alcohol, performance-enhancing and/or illegal drugs.
- C. to provide a resource for support and assistance to any student who may be using illegal drugs and/or alcohol; and
- D. to preserve the educational environment.

STUDENTS SUBJECT TO TESTING

All students enrolled in the CMSD in grades 7-12 shall be subject to drug and alcohol testing to the extent and in the manner provided in this policy. Any student who wishes to participate in an extra-curricular activity, co-curricular activity, or seeks the privilege to drive a vehicle to and from school shall be subject

to random drug testing. This includes school hours and non-school hours, school days and non-school days, twelve months a year.

Any parent/guardian of a student who does not participate in or enjoy any privilege stated above may request that their child be included in the random drug testing program. Procedures and consequences are the same for all participating students.

CONSENT FORM

All CMSD students enrolled in grades 7-12 subject to drug and alcohol testing provided in this policy must sign a Participant's Pledge and the Policy Consent/Release Form as a precondition to his or her participation or privilege. The student's signature on the Pledge/Consent Form signifies the commitment to abide by the conditions of the CMSD Substance Abuse Testing Policy and to remain free from alcohol and illegal substances. The parent's signature signifies that the parent has read and understands the CMSD Substance Abuse Testing Policy.

REASONABLE SUSPICION TESTING

If there is reasonable suspicion to believe that a student has abused alcohol or drugs, or is under the influence of alcohol or any prohibited substance during the time period that the student is under and subject to the jurisdiction of the CMSD is in violation of CMSD policy [JCDAC "Alcohol Use/Possession."](#) The student is subject to immediate disciplinary action and the consequences outlined in [Section VII of the Random Drug Testing Policy](#) and may be recommended for expulsion. The school district reserves the right to administer a breath alcohol test on any student where there is reasonable suspicion that he is under the influence of alcohol. The student, with the permission of his or her parent or guardian, may, at student/parent expense, voluntarily submit to an appropriate drug test (if applicable) to attempt to establish that he or she is not under the influence of any prohibited drug in violation of policy JCDAC. If the test results are negative, the district will pay the costs of the test. The school administration shall record in writing the factors which led to the school's conclusion, shall stipulate the specific consequence to be administered, and shall attempt to inform the student's parents or guardian of the option of submitting to a drug test. The results of any such testing shall be confidential but shall be communicated to the student, his or her parents or guardians and appropriate school and law enforcement authorities. The following circumstances shall constitute grounds for reasonable suspicion:

- A. direct observation by a CMSD employee of drug and/or alcohol use or possession.
- B. abnormal or erratic behavior indicating intoxication in class, at school or at the school-sponsored or school-approved activity.
- C. physical symptoms indicating intoxication including but not limited to glassy or bloodshot eyes, slurred speech, loss of balance, poor coordination, or reflexes.
- D. first-hand information provided by reliable and credible sources of use, possession or intoxication while at school or at a school-sponsored or school-approved activity.
- E. the presence of the drug on the student, detectable by the senses, such as the smell of activated marijuana or alcohol; or
- F. possession of illegal drugs, prescription drugs for which the student does not have a prescription, or alcohol containers or drug paraphernalia.

Anyone of the above-listed circumstances shall be sufficient to constitute grounds for reasonable suspicion. If one of the above-mentioned circumstances is found, CMSD employees and administrators may, but are not required to, consider the following factors in corroboration of the finding of reasonable suspicion:

- A. excessive tardiness.
- B. excessive absenteeism.
- C. decrease in academic performance.
- D. recent violation of school rules and regulations.
- E. any efforts to evade detection of the use or possession of drugs or alcohol or misrepresentations or untruths regarding the circumstances constituting grounds for reasonable suspicion.
- F. information provided by reliable and credible sources of use, possession, or intoxication while at school or a school sponsored or school approved function, event or activity; or
- G. prior confirmed discipline for violations of this policy or violations of drug and alcohol laws.

RANDOM DRUG TESTING

Testing Protocol

The CMSD Board of Trustees reserves the right to use hair, breath, saliva or urinalysis testing procedures. Only urinalysis will be utilized for random drug testing. Drug testing will be conducted by a certified laboratory approved by the CMSD Board of Trustees. Testing protocol will be established by the testing laboratory and the CMSD. Where the district has an employee collect a specimen or conduct a breath alcohol test, the district will provide instruction and training to that employee. All confirmed positive test results will be part of the student's discipline record but will not become a part of the student's permanent file and will be shared with authorized personnel on a need-to-know basis. Refusal to submit to a test or attempting to make or otherwise tamper with the test will be treated as a positive test and exclusionary consequences will be imposed.

Testing Pool

Participants to be tested will be selected randomly by the drug testing agent. Each student will be assigned a number that will be placed in a pool for the drawing. School officials will have no control over whose number is drawn. If a student whose number is drawn is absent on the test date, the student's number will be held and included in the next regular test. The participation pool will be updated periodically. A student will only be assigned one number for the pool. The privacy of the student will be protected.

Testing Procedure

On the day of testing, the selected student will be immediately escorted to the designated collection site for testing. Testing protocol will be established by the testing laboratory and the CMSD. In all cases precautions will be taken to guard against tampering and ensure that the chain-of-custody and the proper handling of the specimen were followed so that the test results are not called into question. At no time will the random test results be shared with any law enforcement agency.

Prescription Drugs

The proper use of medication prescribed by a physician is not prohibited; however, the CMSD prohibits the misuse of prescribed (or over the counter) medications.

Testing Cost

All tests will be paid for by CMSD unless stated otherwise.

Test Results

Test results are cumulative during grades 7-8. At the end of grade 8, the student's record is cleared of any previous violations. Beginning July 1 preceding the student's 9th grade year, the test results are cumulative until the student graduates. Exclusionary periods, including Return to Participation requirements, imposed for positive drug tests shall carry over into the following school year (including 8th to 9th grade) if the time period is not completed on the last day of school. For the purpose of carry-over days, the days will resume beginning the first day of school.

Parent Notification

Parents will be informed in writing of a negative result (no drug or alcohol use detected). Parents will be informed in writing (and by phone if possible) of a positive result (alcohol or illegal drug use was detected). All information, test results, written and otherwise, received by the CMSD through the Substance Abuse Testing Program are confidential communications and will be released to authorized personnel on a need-to-know basis.

Request for Retest

A student or parent or guardian may request a retest at his own expense, but the results will only be considered if scientifically meaningful, timely performed and in compliance with established testing procedures.

Return to Participation Testing

All students referred to counseling or a rehabilitative program or who are excluded from participation for abuse of substances covered under this policy will be subject to unannounced periodic testing during the exclusionary period and following return to participation for no less than 12 months and no more than 24 months.

CONSEQUENCES

First Positive Test Result

1. Parents are notified by school officials in writing and by phone, if possible.
2. The student is excluded from all activities and privileges until a meeting between the parents and the school administration is held.
3. Upon a meeting between the parents and the school administration, the student may immediately resume participation in all activities and privileges if within five school-days of the meeting, the student shows proof of participation in an approved substance abuse counseling program (at student/parent expense, if any), submits to a second random drug and alcohol test within ten school-days of the meeting and complies with the Return to Participation clause. Failure to meet these conditions will result in the exclusion of the student from participation in any school activity or privilege covered under the Substance Abuse Testing Policy for a period of 45 school days.

Second Positive Test Result

1. Parents are notified by school officials in writing and by phone, if possible.
2. The student is excluded from all activities and privileges until a meeting between the parents and the school administration is held.
3. Upon a meeting between the parents and the school administration, the student is excluded from participation in all activities and privileges for a period of 20 school-days beginning the day of the meeting. The student may resume participation in all activities and privileges after the twenty-day exclusion if the student shows proof of participation in an approved substance abuse counseling program (at student/parent expense, if any), and complies with the Return to Participation clause. Failure to meet these conditions will result in the exclusion of the student from participation in any school activity or privilege covered under the Substance Abuse Testing Policy for a period of 90 school days.

Third Positive Test Result

1. Parents are notified by school officials in writing and by phone, if possible.
2. The student is excluded from all activities and privileges until a meeting between the parents and the school administration is held.
3. Upon a meeting between the parents and the school administration, the student is excluded from participation in all activities and privileges for a period of one calendar year. The student may resume participation in all activities and privileges after the calendar year exclusion if the student shows proof of participation in an approved substance abuse counseling program (at student/parent expense, if any) and complies with the Return to Participation Clause.

Subsequent Positive Test Result Following the Third Positive Test Result

1. Parents are notified by school officials in writing and by phone, if possible.
2. The student is excluded from all activities and privileges until a meeting between the parents and the school administration is held.
3. Upon a meeting between the parents and the school administration, the student is excluded from participation in all activities and privileges for a period of one calendar year. The student may resume participation in all activities and privileges after the calendar year exclusion if the student shows proof of participation in an approved substance abuse counseling program (at student/parent expense, if any) and complies with the Return to Participation Clause.

Last Review Date: 5/13/2019

Review History: [05/08/2017] [10/21/2016] [3/12/2018] [5/13/2019]

Fighting

Physical altercations are extremely disruptive to the educational processes and will not be tolerated at school or on any school-related property. Fighting is defined as an act of aggression in which a person kicks—or attempts to kick, hits—or attempts to hit, or strikes another in an attempt to injure or do bodily harm. “Hitting back” is the same as fighting. The minimum penalty is the same whether or not the student allegedly started the fight or did not. When it can be determined by the school administration, the one who initiates a fight will receive a more severe consequence. The severity of the fight may result in additional or increased consequences.

Consequences for fighting at school or at a school activity are:

Grade	Offense	Consequence
PreK – 5 th Grade	1 st Offense	3 -5 days Out of School Suspension
	2 nd Offense	5 – 9 days Out of School Suspension with possible recommendation to Alternative School
6 th – 12 th Grade	1 st Offense	5 – 9 Days Alternative In School Detention (ISD) or Out of School Suspension with possible recommendation to alternative school
	2 nd Offense	Up to 10 days Out of School Suspension and recommendation to alternative school or expulsion
Group/Gang related Fight (involving 3 or more students)		Up to 10 days Out of School Suspension and possible recommendation to alternative school or expulsion

NOTE: The CMSD Discipline Codes are not all-inclusive. CMSD administrators reserve the right to assign the actions of any disciplinary consequences based on severity of the infraction.

Bus Discipline Policy and Procedures

CMSD School Board Policy JCDAD

The Superintendent or principals are authorized to institute appropriate disciplinary action including immediate suspension, if warranted, of any student for disorderly conduct or misconduct.

All District rules apply to students in route to and from home and school; this includes bus stops.

Severe Clause – Any student reported for fighting and/or possessing, using or under the influence of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs will receive the corresponding punishment listed elsewhere in this handbook.

1. To the student:

Your bus driver has the responsibility of your safety and the safety of all students assigned to his or her bus. The driver can only perform this responsibility with your cooperation and assistance.

2. To the parent:

The personnel employed each school year to operate our fleet of school buses are carefully selected and trained. Each must show a desire to serve our school system in a safe, dependable and efficient manner. Safety is our first priority. With the following information, we are attempting to inform our students and parents of a few basic rules for proper bus conduct and safe practices. Encourage your children to observe these rules at all times. We feel that the cooperation of students, parents, and drivers is of utmost importance to enable us to continue our safe system of student transportation.

All district-owned regular route buses are equipped with a video/audio monitor surveillance system to monitor student behavior while on a school bus.

3. Meeting the bus:

Be at your bus stop five minutes before the regular pick-up time. Your driver is not permitted to wait for students. Stand on the edge of the roadway - away from the traffic lanes and not on the property of your neighbors. Respect their property rights.

If you must cross the street to board your bus, cross only in front of your bus, never behind it. Your driver will flash the red signal light prior to the bus coming to a complete stop. Students should not cross until they have been directed to do so by the bus driver and they have checked to make sure that all traffic has stopped. Be where your driver can see you at all times when near your bus. WALK - NEVER RUN TO YOUR BUS. Never push or shove your fellow students when loading the bus. Students are expected to board and leave the bus at established neighborhood bus stops. Parents are strongly urged to accompany younger students to and from the bus stop.

4. **Conduct on the bus - STUDENTS MUST:**

- Take assigned seat without crowding or pushing and remain seated while the bus is in motion.
- Load the bus starting from the rear area first for safety reasons.
- Obey the driver promptly.
- Not extend arms, legs, or head out of the bus.
- Never ride on the bumpers or on the outside of the bus.
- Not talk to the driver while the bus is in motion except in an emergency.
- Never tamper with doors and other bus equipment.
- Not fight, scuffle, or throw objects inside the bus.
- Not bring glass containers, water pistols, peashooters or weapons of any type on the bus.
- Not shout at pedestrians or throw objects from the windows.
- Not place books or other objects in the aisles of the bus. (Band instruments will be permitted aboard a bus only if instrument can be held in the student's lap. Instruments may never be placed in the aisle or on the floor at the front of the bus.)
- Not throw paper or other litter on the floor of the bus.
- Not engage in unnecessarily loud talking or laughter on the bus.
- Not deface the bus (willful or careless damage must be paid for by the student).
- Not use profane or indecent language.
- Not smoke or vape on the bus. State regulation prohibits smoking on the bus at any time.
- Not open windows without permission from the driver.
- Not eat or drink on the bus.
- Use the same bus morning and afternoon. A change in bus assignment may be made with a written request from a parent and approval by a school principal. Changes cannot be made mid-route.

5. **Leaving the bus - STUDENTS MUST:**

- Remain seated until the bus comes to a full stop.
- Leave the bus in an orderly manner, allowing students in the front to exit first.
- Move quickly away from the bus to a safe location.
- Leave the bus at a regular stop (unless requested in writing by parent for a different stop and approved by the principal of the school).
- Cross the highway only in front of the bus and after the driver has signaled that it is safe to cross.
- Not throw objects of any type at the school bus (This can cause the students involved to be charged with a felony).

6. **Disciplinary Infractions** (not covered elsewhere under a "severe" clause, above):

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1st Offense: | Conference with student and parental contact (in writing, by telephone or in person). |
| 2nd Offense: | Three-day suspension from the bus |
| 3rd Offense: | Five-day suspension from bus and conference with parent |
| 4th Offense: | Ten-day suspension from bus and recommend to the Superintendent that the student be suspended from the bus for the next 30 days (K-5) or 45 days (6-12). Suspensions not served at the end of the year will carry over to the following year. |

Fighting on the bus: Any student found fighting on the bus will be removed from riding the bus for one (1) Nine Weeks of that calendar year. If the fight takes place within ten (10) days before the end of the nine weeks, the student will be removed from riding the bus for the upcoming nine weeks.

Note: Students who ride the bus during a bus suspension may be suspended out of school for an equal number of days or removed from the bus. Students suspended from his/her bus will not be allowed to ride another bus to/from school.

Any infraction deemed severely disruptive or unsafe by administration will result in immediate removal from the bus and/or suspension from school. In extreme cases students can be removed from the bus for the remainder of the school year. Riding the bus is a privilege. Students have no due process rights regarding school transportation. Parents are not allowed to board the bus for any reason without permission of the driver or school official.

Cell Phones/Electronic Devices

~~Cell phones and other electronic and communication devices—whether working or not working—are not allowed in schools during the academic school day and will be confiscated when discovered.~~ Cell Phones, or any other non-school issued electronic device, are not to be visible at any time during school hours. The “academic school day” is defined as the time between the first bell of the day and the time the student has departed the building at the end of his/her classes. This prohibition applies during after-school tutoring and after-school detention. This does not apply while students are involved in after-school athletics and after-school extracurricular activities. Furthermore, the penalty for violation of the first offense of possession and/or use is confiscation and return to parent at the end of the day.

Personal use of cell phones for texting, listening to music, etc. is not permitted at any time on campus. No phone conversations on personal phones during school hours. Students should continue to use the school telephone in the office or guidance office.

Consequences of Policy Violations: Students who fail to follow these directives will have their item confiscated.

First Offense: The cell phone or electronic device will be impounded and returned only to the parent/guardian (or designee who is on the student’s check out card) upon request no sooner than the end of that school day. The school administrators, faculty, and staff are not responsible for lost or stolen electronic devices. Students who fail to comply will be subject to additional disciplinary consequences.

Second Offense: The cell phone or electronic device will be impounded for five days and returned only to the parent/guardian (or designee who is on the student’s check out card) upon request. The parent (or designee who is on the student’s check out card) must collect the item from the school. The school administrators, faculty, and staff are not responsible for lost or stolen electronic devices. Students who fail to comply will be subject to additional disciplinary consequences.

Third or Consecutive Offense: The cell phone or electronic device will be impounded for thirty days and returned only to the parent/guardian (or designee who is on the student’s check out card) upon request. The parent (or designee who is on the student’s check out card) must collect the item from the school. The school administrators, faculty, and staff are not responsible for lost or stolen electronic devices. Students who fail to comply will be subject to additional disciplinary consequences.

NOTE: All confiscated devices will be turned into the main office by the end of each school day. Parents/guardians will be able to pick up the devices only from the main office of the school.

Filming – Camera or audio recording functions of electronic devices may pose threats to the personal privacy of individuals, be used to exploit personal information, and or compromise the integrity of educational programs. Accordingly, the use of the audio recording or camera functions of electronic devices is strictly prohibited by students on school premises at all times.

1st offense **3 days suspension**

2nd offense (subsequent) **5 days suspension**

Fire Alarm Activation

CMSD School Board Policy JCBE

Any student who deliberately sets off a fire alarm or activates a teacher emergency intercom button is not only interrupting instruction but is creating a false emergency that could endanger everyone in the school. Because these events cause severe disruption to orderly and safe school operations they will be dealt with by serious consequences. Discipline steps for violators are:

1st Offense Five (5) days out-of-school suspension (OSS)

2nd Offense Up to ten (10) days out-of-School Suspension and possible recommendation to alternative school

Bullying Policy

School Board Policy JDDA

The policy of the School Board of the Columbus Municipal School District will not condone bullying or harassing behavior. Any student, school employee or volunteer who feels he/she has been a victim of bullying or harassing behavior, or has witnessed or who has reliable information that a student, school employee or volunteer has been subject to bullying or harassing behavior shall:

- report such contact to a teacher, principal, counselor or other school official promptly but no later than five (5) calendar days after the alleged act or acts occurred.
- the school official shall complete a "Bullying/Harassing Behavior" complaint form which shall include the name of the reporting person, the specific nature and date of the misconduct, the names of the victim of the misconduct, the names of any witnesses and any other information that would assist in the investigation of the complaint.
- the report shall be given promptly to the principal or superintendent or designee who shall institute an immediate investigation.
- a verbal interview will be conducted with the person filing the complaint to the Administrative Team. The Administrative Team will consist of the School Administrator, SRO, Counselor, and Teacher.
- an investigation of the incident will be conducted and a final decision regarding the incident will be made by the Administrative Team.

Complaints against the principal shall be made to the superintendent or designee and complaints against the superintendent shall be made to the Board chairman. For more information, see policy JDDA.

Sexual Harassment Policy

School Board Policies GACN and JB

The policy of the School Board of the Columbus Municipal School District forbids discrimination against any student, employee, or applicant for employment on the basis of sex. The School Board will not tolerate sexual harassment activity by any of its employees or students. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and violates both federal and state laws, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of race, religion, national origin and sex. Title IX prohibits discrimination on

the basis of sex in an educational institution that receives federal funds. In addition to civil law, some forms of sexual harassment may constitute a sexual crime or child abuse under the Mississippi State Criminal code. Individuals who harass may be personally liable under civil suits, particularly Title IX and 1983 actions.

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual or gender-based behavior of a verbal, visual, or physical nature that occurs when one person has formal or informal power over the other when the behavior interferes with learning opportunities or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.

Examples of behaviors that can be sexual harassment if unwanted:

- Direct or indirect threats or bribes for unwanted sexual activity.
- Sexual innuendoes and comments.
- Asking or commenting about a person's sexual activities.
- Humor or jokes about sex or females/males in general.
- Making sexually suggestive remarks, gestures, or jokes, or remarks of a sexual nature about the student's appearance.
- Pestering a person for dates or sexual behavior.
- Sexual touching, pinching, brushing, or patting.
- Displaying offensive sexual illustrations in the school.
- Graffiti about a person's sexuality.
- Spreading rumors about a person's sexuality.
- Name calling such as "bitch," "whore," or "slut;"
- Insulting and belittling a person -- sexual ridicule.
- Letters, notes, telephone calls or materials of a sexual nature.
- Stalking a person either inside or outside the institution; and
- Attempted or actual sexual assault.

Sexual harassment is demeaning and degrading. It affects an individual's self-esteem and can have a negative impact on performance in class. It can make an individual feel angry, powerless and fearful. It can also cause dysfunction and pain in those who are the objects of sexual harassment and those who are not directly sexually harassed but are observers.

The fact that someone did not intend to sexually harass an individual is generally not considered a defense to a complaint of sexual harassment. In most cases it is the effect and characteristics of the behavior, not the intent of the person who is alleged to have harassed that determines whether the behavior constitutes sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment in Columbus schools will not be tolerated and, when observed, should be reported to the school administration.

Vandalism Policy

CMSD School Board Policy JCBD

Any student who willfully destroys, cuts, defaces, damages or injures any school building, equipment or other school property, or private property on school grounds, shall be subject to suspension or expulsion and his/her parents, legal guardians or custodians shall be liable for all damages.

Liability for Damages

The district may institute legal proceedings against and recover damages provided by law from parents of minor students who maliciously and willfully damage or destroy school property.

Reporting Vandalism

Citizens, students, and law enforcement are urged by the board to cooperate in reporting any incidents of vandalism in District property and the name(s) of the person(s) believed to be responsible. All District employees shall notify the principal of the school when they have knowledge that an act of vandalism has or may have occurred. The principal shall notify the Superintendent or his/her designee of all reports of vandalism.

The Superintendent is authorized to sign a criminal complaint and to press charges against perpetrators of vandalism against school property. He/she is further authorized to delegate authority to perform these functions.

Special Education Disciplinary Application

Special education students' disciplinary infractions will be handled according to state and federal rules regarding their disabilities. Where law and district policy conflict, law takes precedence over district policy.

Discipline Consequences Policy

CMSD School Board Policy JCAA Due Process

A student who has been suspended for more than ten (10) days or expelled has the right to due process. All aspects, circumstances and records of the student's case shall be confidential and available only to authorized school officials dealing directly with the student or to the student's parents, legal guardians or attorneys for the student or for the Board. The following procedures provide notice and the opportunity to be heard in such matters.

The superintendent of schools and the principal of a school shall have the power to suspend or expel a pupil for good cause, including misconduct in the school or on school property, as defined in the Mississippi Code of 1972 Section 37-11-29, on the road to and from school, or at any school-related activity or event when such conduct by a pupil, in the determination of the superintendent or principal, renders that pupil's presence in the classroom a disruption to the educational environment of the school or a detriment to the best interest and welfare of the pupils and teacher of such class as a whole, or for any reason for which such pupil might be suspended, dismissed or expelled by the school board under state or federal law or any rule, regulation or policy of the school district.

For any suspension of more than ten (10) days or expulsions, a student shall have the right to:

- A due process hearing
- Be represented by legal counsel, to present evidence.
- Cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district.

The student and the student's parent, legal guardian or person in custody of the student may appeal suspension of more than ten (10) days and expulsions to the school board. The standard of proof in all disciplinary proceedings shall be substantial evidence. The parent or guardian of the child shall be advised of this right to a hearing by the appropriate superintendent or principal and the proper form shall be provided for requesting such a hearing.

All consideration of student disciplinary actions shall be conducted in accordance with standard board procedure. All decisions by the board shall be final.

The superintendent or designee shall establish procedures for informal and formal hearings consistent with this policy.

General Guidelines for Detentions, Suspensions and Expulsions

1. The term "suspension" as used herein shall be defined as the denial of the privilege of attending school in the Columbus Municipal School District (the "District") imposed after due process upon any student of the district at the direction of the principal of the school in which the student is enrolled or his/her designee but shall not include in-school detention, as that term is defined hereinafter.
2. An out-of-school suspension may be either "short term suspension" which is a suspension of duration of less ten school days or a "long term suspension" which is a suspension of duration of more than ten school days.

3. The term "expulsion" as used herein shall be defined as a long-term out-of-school suspension for a duration equal to the remainder of the school year and thereafter unless allowed to re-enter the school district.
4. For purposes of suspension, expulsion, or in-school detention (as that term is defined hereinafter), the term "school day" as used herein shall be defined as any day on which the school from which a student is suspended or expelled is open for regular classroom attendance by students and shall specifically exclude Saturdays, Sundays, and other days when the school is actually closed to students for regular classroom attendance.
5. The term "in-school detention" as used herein shall be defined as the denial of the privilege of attending the regular classes of a student and his/her being required to attend a special class monitored by a CMSD employee and to study and work on his/her homework and other assignments of that student's regular classes. Procedures for Short-Term Suspensions (Nine School Days or Less) shall not in any way affect or relate to in-school detention which is addressed by other rules and regulations issued by the district.
6. Students who have been suspended or expelled from any school within the district shall not trespass upon any school campus while serving said suspension or expulsion except for a pre-arranged conference with a principal or other school administrator. Additionally, while serving a suspension or expulsion, students are prohibited from attending any day or night functions occurring on any school campus of the district.
7. The Superintendent has immediate access to suspension reports through the student database.
8. Any student returning to any school subsequent to a suspension must return to his/her school accompanied by a parent or guardian for a meeting with the principal or his/her designee before the student will be readmitted to the school.
9. Each school principal or his/her designee shall distribute a copy of the school district's Code of Conduct to each student enrolled in the district and the parents, guardian, or custodian of such student shall sign a statement verifying that they have been given notice of the discipline policies of their respective school district.
10. This policy shall not apply to any "disabled student" as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or similar enactments define that term to the extent that it conflicts with those laws.
11. Effects of Suspension - Student suspensions are serious offenses that can jeopardize a student's participation in school activities or functions. As stated in the school constitution, elite contest rules, and student handbook, suspensions may result in students not being able to hold a student body or class office, participate in homecoming, serve as cheerleader, or participate in competitions for the remainder of the school year. Copies of the CHS Constitution, Cheerleader Constitution, and other club or group constitutions and guidelines are on file in the principal's office.

After-School Detention (ASD)

If After-School Detention is assigned, it will consist of a supervised study period at the school imposing the detention and will be imposed in 30-minute increments. Students are required to bring books and materials with which to study. After-School Detention is considered part of the school day, and all policies apply.

In-School Detention (ISD) for Grades 5-12

In-School Detention is a disciplinary measure used for minor rule infractions. Students placed in ISD will be given assignments by their regular classroom teachers and will receive a grade based on the completion of that assigned work. ISD will be held during regular school hours. Rules will be distributed to students who are assigned to ISD. Violation of these rules may result in additional days being added to the original placement. Days assigned to ISD will be counted present at school but may be counted absent from class for exemption purposes.

If Saturday Detention is assigned, it will consist of a supervised study period at the school imposing the detention. Saturday Detention will be held from 7:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Parents are responsible for transportation to and from Saturday detention. Students are required to bring books and materials to

study. All school policies apply during Saturday detention. Failure to report to Saturday Detention will result in the student being assigned ISS.

Rules for In-School Detention:

- Students must have all books and materials necessary to complete work assignments when they enter the ISD room.
- Students must be in correct seat by the tardy bell.
- Students must raise hand for permission to speak, sharpen pencil, or get out of seat.
- No talking during the school day without permission.
- There will be one restroom break in the morning and one in the afternoon. Only exception – students on medical list. If possible, students will be escorted to the restroom.
- ISD students will be escorted to the cafeteria at the appropriate time. No talking on the way to or from during lunch.
- Sleeping, chewing gum, eating candy, or making unnecessary noise will not be permitted.
- Students will not disturb other students in any manner. (Keep hands to self.)
- Students will maintain a good posture with their desk flat on the floor.
- Students will not turn around in seats, pass notes, or make any type gestures.
- No insubordination will be permitted.
- Students must dress according to dress code.
- There will be no grooming of face or hair.
- Sunglasses, hats, gloves, radios, or other music players will not be permitted.
- All regular school rules will also be enforced.
- Any student written up while in ISD may receive 1 to 5 days Out-of-School Suspension depending on the severity of the offense.
- Students will be accountable for any writing on or destruction of cubicles, desks, or any other school property.

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) and Expulsions

A student who has been suspended or expelled or otherwise denied admission to attend school has the right to further due process. All aspects, circumstances and records of the student's case shall be confidential and available only to authorized school officials dealing directly with the student or to the student's parents, legal guardians or attorneys for the student or for the Board. The following procedures provide notice and opportunity to be heard in such matters.

A student who has been suspended or expelled or otherwise denied admission to attend school shall not trespass upon any school campus, athletic facility, or school bus while serving said suspension or expulsion except for a pre-arranged conference with a principal or other school administrator or while assigned to attendance in the district's alternative school program. Additionally, while serving a suspension or expulsion, a student is prohibited from attending any day or night functions occurring at any school facility of the district.

General Guidelines

1. **SUSPENSION OF 9 DAYS OR LESS:** The principal may issue to the student and legal guardian a notice of suspension not longer than 9 consecutive school days. The suspension is effective immediately and no further due process is required.
2. **IMMEDIATE REMOVAL:** The principal may immediately dismiss the student from school for the day when such is necessary to restore order, to protect the safety of the student or others and/or to resume normal school functions but when an immediate suspension is not or may not be appropriate. A student sent home under these circumstances shall be instructed to return the

following day with his legal guardian. Should the student not return as instructed, the principal shall mail a "Notice of Suspension" for 9 days or less, as appropriate.

However, no student shall be sent home prior to the end of any school day without the student's parent or guardian being notified before the student is dismissed. If the parent or guardian cannot be contacted, the student shall be kept at the school until the end of the school day. Furthermore, if the principal or his/her designee believes that the student's continued presence in the school presents a danger to the student or to other persons or property, or if the student poses an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process, the student may be summarily suspended from the school campus without notification to the student's parent or guardian. In the event the student is summarily suspended from the school campus, any necessary due process procedures will follow as soon as practical.

3. IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION AND RECOMMENDATION OF EXPULSION: The principal or Superintendent shall immediately suspend a student for up to 10 days and recommend expulsion when there is reason to believe that the student committed an unlawful or violent act, as defined or otherwise provided by District policy. The suspension shall be effective immediately, pending conclusion of due process on the recommendation of expulsion.
4. DENIAL OF ADMISSION: The principal or Superintendent may recommend a denial of admission that shall be effective immediately, pending the conclusion of due process.
5. MAKE-UP WORK: The days a student is serving an out-of-school suspension will not be counted against the student's allowed absences for credit purposes. Student serving OSS are encouraged to request assignments from teachers through the counselors' office but must complete those assignments during the OSS and submit them to the teacher *immediately* upon returning to the class.
6. REQUIRED CONFERENCE: Any student returning to any school subsequent to a suspension which was for a duration of nine (9) days or less must return to his/her school accompanied by a parent or guardian for a conference with the principal or his/her designee before the student will be readmitted to regular classes. No student will be readmitted to regular student status without first returning to school accompanied by a parent for a student-parent-administrator conference.
7. REPORT TO THE SUPERINTENDENT: All principals shall make a written report of each suspension and/or expulsion to the Superintendent of the district by immediately recording that suspension and/or expulsion on the district's computerized Student Information System.
8. DISTRIBUTION OF DISCIPLINE POLICIES: Each year, the school principal of each district school or his/her designee shall review a copy of the district's student-parent handbook containing the district's code of student conduct with all students enrolled in the district's school. The principal shall require a signed statement from the student, parent, guardian, or custodian of such student verifying that they have received a notice of the discipline policies of their respective schools. The district's student-parent handbook will be online, and copies will be available upon request.
9. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: This policy shall not apply to any disabled student as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or similar enactment define that term to the extent that it conflicts with those statutes.

Procedure for Due Process

CMSD School Board Policy JCAA

Step One: Initial Hearing Before a School Administrator

Applies to: All disciplinary actions by an administrator

1. An initial informal hearing before a school administrator is required in each case where disciplinary action may be taken against a student and where an expelled student makes application of readmission following the conclusion of the expulsion period. After an initial investigation appropriate under the circumstances, the principal, Superintendent or designee shall:
 - 1.1. Advise the student of the charges against him or reasons for non-admission.
 - 1.2. Afford the student a full opportunity to respond; and
 - 1.3. If the student denies the charges or contests the reasons for non-admission, explain the evidence in support thereof.
2. After the informal hearing, the principal may take the following actions:
 - 2.1. Suspension of nine (9) days or less,
 - 2.2. Immediate removal,
 - 2.3. Immediate suspension and recommendation for expulsion,
 - 2.4. Denial of admission
3. When possible, one of the parents, guardians, or custodians of the student shall be notified by telephone immediately of the suspension, but in all cases one of the parents, guardians, or custodians of the student together with the student shall be hand delivered personally or mailed through the US Postal Service by regular mail a notice. That notice shall contain:
 - 3.1. The notification that the student has been suspended from school attendance,
 - 3.2. The length of the suspension,
 - 3.3. The reason(s) for the suspension, and
 - 3.4. A description of the evidence against the student.

Step Two: Formal Appeal Before a Hearing Officer

Applies to: *Suspensions*
 Expulsions
 Denials of admission

If after the initial hearing before a school administrator the principal or Superintendent determines that a recommendation of suspension for 11 days or more, expulsion or other denial of admission is the appropriate disciplinary action:

1. The principal or Superintendent shall give the student a written "Notice of Suspension and Recommendation of Expulsion/Non-admission and Statement of Rights" in a form provided by the Superintendent for such purposes.
2. The notice shall contain a statement of the charges/reasons, advise the student of his/her rights to legal counsel, to present witnesses and to cross-examine witnesses presented against him/her and state the date, time and place for hearing. A copy of the notice will be hand-delivered to the student when possible and the original hand-delivered or mailed to the legal guardian.
3. A hearing before the district's hearing officer shall automatically be scheduled no later than the ninth(9th) school day following the date of notice.
4. Pending the outcome of the hearing before the district's hearing officer:
 - 4.1. The student may be offered temporary placement in the Alternative School Program when the counselor verifies the student's suitability for such program and, in such case, the hearing before the district's hearing officer may be held at any appropriate time without application of the 10-day limitation. However, the District may not offer temporary placement when the offense upon which the action is based is gang or group-related fighting, violation of prohibitions against weapons or controlled substances, assault of a staff member or other unlawful or violent act.
 - 4.2. The student may be allowed to remain in school if the principal or, in the case of non-admission, the Superintendent determines that his continued presence is not detrimental to the normal functioning of the school program and, in such case, the hearing before the district's hearing officer may be held at any appropriate time without application of the 10-day limitation.
 - 4.3. The hearing will be before the district's hearing officer:
 - 4.3.1. The district's hearing officer shall be an attorney.
 - 4.3.2. The Superintendent's designee will serve as the investigator and offer administrative assistance to the hearing officer but shall have no vote in the determination of the hearing.
 - 4.4. The district's hearing officer shall hear and consider all cases presented and is authorized to:
 - 4.4.1. To concur or not concur in the suspension, expulsion or non-admission recommendation.
 - 4.4.2. To confirm or specify the duration of a suspension of eleven (11) days or more, to remove the suspension or expulsion or to recommend admission; and
 - 4.4.3. Subject to review and approval of the Superintendent, to recommend limited or unlimited expulsion or non-admission to the board.
 - 4.4.4. The district's hearing officer shall prepare a written summary of each case.
 - 4.5. All expulsion and non-admission recommendations shall be subject to review by the Superintendent and by the board.
 - 4.6. After completing the Superintendent's review, a parent, legal guardian or custodian aggrieved by a decision to suspend, expel, or deny admission to her/his child may request review of the decision by the board. A request for review must be submitted to the board within two (2) days after receiving a decision at this appeal step.

Step Three: Review by the Superintendent

Applies to: *Expulsions*
 Denials of admission

The Superintendent shall review all recommendations by the district's hearing officer for expulsions or denials of admission:

1. If the Superintendent concurs in the decision of the district's hearing officer, he shall submit the recommendation to the Board for final action.
2. If the Superintendent does not concur in the decision of the district's hearing officer, he may remove expulsion, assign an appropriate duration of suspension or recommend expulsion or, in the case of other denial of admission, recommend admission.
3. All recommendations by the Superintendent for expulsions or denials of admission shall be subject to review by the board.

Step Four: Review by the School Board

Applies to: *Suspension*
 Expulsions
 Denials of admission

The board shall, at its next regular or special meeting following the recommendation, review and take final action on all recommendations for expulsions, denial of admission and any requests for review of suspensions. All consideration of student disciplinary actions shall be conducted in accordance with standard board procedure. All decisions by the board shall be final.

According to a 1998 Attorney General Opinion, automatic fail provision of an absences policy may not apply against legal, excused absences. Such absences policies may not be applied against absences resulting from disciplinary suspensions if absences policies are applied to truant children who are otherwise passing, the district must afford the child procedural due process. (Attorney General Opinion, Carter, 1-9-98) (#183) (97-0817)

Procedure for Alternative Education Program Placement

1. Student Placement

Any student of the district may be recommended for placement in the Alternative Program by that student's principal. In addition, pursuant to Mississippi Code Annotated §37-13-92 (1972), as amended, the Alternative Program shall be established, maintained, and operated, but not limited to, the following categories of compulsory-school age students:

- A. Any compulsory school-age child referred to the Alternative Program by any chancellor or youth court judge having jurisdiction in the district, including, but not limited to, non-violent juvenile offenders confined in any youth court detention facility, with the consent of the Superintendent.
- B. Any compulsory school-age child who has (1) dropped out of school in violation of the Compulsory School Attendance Law, (2) has been suspended for more than ten (10) days or expelled from school, except for any student expelled for possession of a weapon or other felonious conduct, or (3) committed disciplinary infractions which will result in expulsion from school.
- C. Any compulsory-school-age child referred to such Alternative Program based upon a documented need by the parent, legal guardian, or custodian of such child due to disciplinary problems.
- D. Any student not covered under compulsory attendance requirements who violates the district's established Code of Conduct by committing offenses that warrant Alternative Program Placement as determined by the Alternative Program Admissions Committee.

Any student of the district may be recommended for placement in the Alternative Program by that student's principal. The principal of the Alternative Program shall require verification from the appropriate guidance counselor of any such child referred to the Alternative Program regarding the suitability of such child for attendance at the Alternative Program. Before a student may be removed to the Alternative Program, the Superintendent must determine that the written and distributed disciplinary policy for the district is followed.

Subject to the above stated qualifications and conditions, admission to, and release from, the Alternative Program will be determined by the Alternative Program Admissions Committee. The only exception is for special education students. On these students, the Alternative Admissions Committee's only action is to record the action of the IEP Committee regarding placement.

Students may not be moved to or from the Alternative Program without the action of the Alternative Program Admissions Committee, the Superintendent or his designees, or the School Board.

Prior to any student who has been identified as a disabled student under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. SS1400, et set., and any amendments thereto, being placed in the Alternative Program, the district will convene the student's Individualized Educational Program (IEP) Committee to review the placement and will extend all due process required by IDEA regarding the placement.

2. **Organization Structure**

The Alternative Program shall be a program designed to address the needs of students of the Columbus Municipal School District. Requirements of Mississippi law and recognized district needs have necessitated the formation of this program. The components of the program are described below:

- A. **Regular Education/Elementary** – This component of the program serves elementary age students demonstrating social/behavioral problems. These students commit minor conduct code offenses that have become chronic or commit major conduct code violations. Students in this program are required to have behavioral contracts. Program staff, the parent(s), and the student, when appropriate will develop the contracts jointly. Behavioral contract requirements, beyond those rules outlined in the Code of Conduct, will include those offenses that have necessitated the Alternative Program Placement, and will be specifically for an individual student. The requirements will be documented and signed by the student, his or her parent or guardian, and the Alternative Program Principal. Breaches of the contract will result in a lengthening of the required stay or expulsion by the school board, if the breach involves any criminal or violent behavior as described in Mississippi Code 1972 §37-13-92(a).
- B. **Regular Education/Secondary** – This component of the program serves secondary age students who have committed minor conduct code offenses and/or who have chronic or severe and habitual discipline violations according to the District's Code of Conduct. Students in this program are required to have behavioral contracts. Program staff, the parent(s), and the student, when appropriate will develop the contracts jointly. Behavioral contract requirements, beyond those rules outlined in the Code of Conduct, will include those offenses that have necessitated the Alternative Program Placement, and will be specifically for an individual student. The requirements will be documented and signed by the student, his or her parent or guardian, and the Alternative Program Principal. Breaches of the contract will result in a lengthening of the required stay or expulsion by the school board, if the breach involves any criminal or violent behavior as described in Mississippi Code 1972 §37-13-92(a).
- C. **Special Education (Elementary & Secondary)** - Serves elementary and secondary students with disabilities recognized under IDEA. The IEP Committees of these students have determined that home school placement is not the least restrictive environment for these students because of social/behavioral problems and/or the need for a smaller, more structured setting. Students in this program are required to have behavior addressed in their IEPs.

3. **Length of Stay**

A student will be enrolled in the alternative education program for approximately 45 days (nine-week period). Students enrolled in the regular education component of the program may remain in the program through the end of the semester (unless a longer placement is required by board action or state law) if the 45 days end prior to its end. They must show marked progress in behavior and academics. Behavior improvement will be determined by documented evidence of completion of all parts of their behavioral contracts. At the end of each semester, there will be a review of progress. The Alternative Program Admissions Committee will make the final decision on recommendation for return to the home school.

The length of stay for a student with a disability (under IDEA) will be determined in an IEP meeting by the student's IEP Committee. During the IEP Committee meeting where the change of placement decision is made, the committee will also address the requirements of the probationary period and structure the IEP such that a change of placement may occur without a long delay when there has been a Conduct Code violation.

4. **Probationary Period After Return to Home School**

Students re-enter their home school on a probationary status, which ends after the first full grading period of their return. Any violation of the Code of Conduct that results in suspension (OSS) within the first grading period after re-entry may result in an automatic return to the Alternative Program.

Upon returning to the Alternative Program, students may not commit offenses above the minor offense level on the Code of Conduct. Violations may result in automatic recommendation for expulsion. The probationary period for a special education student will be the same as that of a regular education student.

Special Education students may be moved to or from the Alternative Program based on decisions of their Individualized Education Plan Committees. These committees determine the length of the placement for SPED students. The Admissions Committee will record IEP Committee actions in its minutes at the next convened meeting after a change of placement occurs.

5. **Participation of Extracurricular Activities**

Student will not be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities while placed at the Alternative School.

Elementary Guidelines

THE POLICIES IN THIS SECTION ARE IN EFFECT AT:

JOE COOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, STOKES-BEARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, and COLUMBUS SUCCESS ACADEMY

PHONE NUMBERS

Joe Cook Elementary School	(662) 241-7180
Fairview Aerospace & Science Magnet School	(662) 241-7140
Franklin Academy Medical Sciences & Wellness Magnet School	(662) 241-7150
Sale Elementary School	(662) 241-7260
Stokes-Beard Elementary School	(662) 241-7270
Columbus Success Academy	(662) 241-7250

Arrivals and Departures of Students

Students riding in cars should not arrive on the elementary school campus before 7:00 a.m. In order to ensure that students go home in the way in which the parent intends, transportation changes should not be made after 2:00 p.m. Please refer to the secondary portion of the handbook for times related to Columbus Success Academy.

Dismissals – To protect instructional time and to ensure smooth dismissal processes, parents are asked to not check out students after 1:45 p.m. Parents who arrange to pick up their child after school are expected to do so before the teachers' workday ends. Students who are not picked up within a reasonable time after school is dismissed will be referred to the authorities after efforts to contact parents have been made. Please refer to the secondary portion of the handbook for times related to Columbus Success Academy.

Daily Elementary Schedule

School	Drop Off Times	Instruction Begins	Dismissal
Stokes Elementary School (PreK-1)	7:00-7:25	7:30	2:25
Cook Elementary School (Grades 2-3)	7:15-7:50	7:55	2:40
Sale Elementary School (Grade 4)	7:15-7:55	8:00	2:55

Attendance Policies and Procedures at Elementary Schools

For more information see "Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law"

Punctual and regular attendance is an extremely important part of a student's school record. Therefore, each student should attend school each day. The following guidelines are in effect for all elementary schools:

1. A student who is absent from school must assume the responsibility of completing the missed assignments.
2. Each student, upon returning to school with 2 days, must have a note stating the reason for his/her absence. With five consecutive absences a doctor's note is required for excused absences.
3. Mississippi law requires that, after five (5) days of unexcused absences, these absences will be reported to the attendance officer.

In keeping with the commitment to provide the maximum amount of quality instruction and to ensure smooth dismissal processes, parents are asked to not check students out after 2:30 p.m. An early checkout disturbs the entire classroom, not just the student checking out. Please understand that students should not be checked out of school except in an emergency. Students will be released only by permission from the parent or guardian. All students must be signed out in the office before leaving the school campus early.

Excused Absences: Absences classified as excused are:

1. Absences due to personal illness
2. Absences due to serious illness or death in immediate family
3. Other reasons deemed excused by state law and approved by an administrator.

Prior to the absence, the principal may approve absences for other circumstances. A school administrator will determine whether a student's absence is excused or unexcused. The student is responsible for contacting the teacher before or after school to acquire make-up work assignments. Work missed under an excused absence must be made up within five (5) school days of the absence or the student must make special arrangements with the teacher. A parent note can be used to excuse an absence only eight (8) days per year. Any additional absences must have a doctor's note to be excused.

If a student exceeds 21 absences during the school year, excused or unexcused, the student may be retained. The parent may request an appeal to be determined by the attendance review committee.

Unexcused Absences: Any absence from class or school that is not excused by the Attendance Office, or an administrator is an unexcused absence. All unexcused absences that are not cleared upon return by an approved method will remain unexcused.

Tardy Policy and Procedures at Elementary Schools

Parents are strongly urged to be sure that their children arrive at school in time to be in class at the announced time (7:25 a.m.) for beginning school. In most cases at the elementary level, parents determine when a child gets to school. Late students must stop by the office, accompanied by a parent, for a tardy pass before going to class.

1. Students are expected to be in class at the announced times for school to begin.
2. Parents must make every effort to help their children arrive at school on time.
3. After the fourth tardy, disciplinary action may be taken and a special parent-administrator conference will be held. After the conference, the student's attendance information may be turned over to the state attendance officer. The student will not be eligible for a perfect attendance award for the year.

Birthdays

The integrity of the instructional day is very important to us. We make every effort to ensure that our students spend their school day in meaningful learning activities. Therefore, elementary classes will not have birthday parties, but a parent may arrange to bring healthy treats to the class at recess.

Cooperation Between the Home and School Reporting Student Progress

The educators in the Columbus Municipal School System believe that it is in the best interest of the students that the home and schoolwork together as partners in education. This communication time is so important to us that we establish a Parent-Teacher Conference Day in our academic calendar. The day will be a student holiday with dedicated times established for communications between parents and their child's teacher(s). Parents are encouraged to be active participants in the parent-teacher organization and other school activities.

The principal or teacher can offer specific suggestions that parents can follow to help their children learn as much as possible. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in seeing that their child completes homework practice assignments since it is given as a means of reinforcing skills.

Conferences between parent and teacher are encouraged and can be initiated by either. Parents' interest in their child and his/her schoolwork is one of the major factors ensuring a child's school success and healthy development. Parents should call the school office to arrange a conference. The school secretary will be glad to help arrange a convenient conference time.

Discipline

See also ***DISCIPLINE POLICIES***, previously mentioned in this book.

The educators of the elementary schools in Columbus believe that no student can be allowed to interfere with a teacher's right to teach, and that no student can be allowed to interfere with another student's right to learn. Furthermore, students cannot be allowed to cause harm to themselves or others.

Each school has a school-wide discipline plan, and each teacher has a classroom plan. The plans consist of rules, negative consequences for breaking the rules, and rewards for obeying the rules. The discipline plans will be carefully explained to the students, and parents will be asked to acknowledge, by signature, that they have received information about the discipline plan.

Consequences of behavior problems may include—but are not limited to—isolation, parent conferences, recess or after school detention, short-term suspension, and long-term suspension. Students who exhibit chronic or severe behavior problems may be referred to the Alternative Admissions Committee.

The CMSD Discipline Codes are not all-inclusive. CMSD administrators reserve the right to assign the actions of any disciplinary consequences based on severity of the infraction.

Elementary Discipline Ladder

1. Incentive is provided for the student to improve his/her behavior through provisions of a probationary period that allows a student to remove himself/herself from the Discipline Ladder by improved conduct.
2. A student may enter the Discipline Ladder at any step, depending upon the nature of the offense.
3. Failure to complete the punishment as designated may result in escalation to the next step in the ladder.

4. Return to the office during the probationary period prescribed in the Discipline Step may result in escalation to the next step.
5. Loss of all privileges means that during the time stated the student cannot participate in assemblies or any school function designated as an extra activity, including athletic events, dances, plays, extracurricular programs, field trips, school-sponsored activities, etc.
6. A student may be suspended from riding to and from school on the school bus because of misbehavior on the bus.
7. In all disciplinary matters, a student will be given due process under district policy JCAA governing student rights.
8. All disciplinary actions are subject to administrative discretion as to the placement on the disciplinary ladder in keeping with the severity of the student misbehavior.
9. A student may be placed in Alternative Education either through action by the Board of Trustees or through Administrative Placement.
10. Any discipline problem resulting in the student's placement on Steps 4-7 may be reported to police if appropriate.
11. Cumulative misbehavior, singularly inappropriate misbehavior, or misbehavior which occurs after placement on Step 5 on the Discipline Ladder may result in placement on Step 7 of the Ladder.
12. The school principal, reporting teacher and student's parent/guardian shall create a written behavior modification plan for any child who for the second time causes a disruption in the classroom which seriously interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate with the students in a classroom, with students' ability to learn, or with the operation of a school or school-related activity. The creation of this plan is not required for disruptions which are violations of law or offenses which amount to a Step 7 offense. If the child fails to follow the behavior modification plan, he/she may be deemed "habitually disruptive" and recommended for expulsion.

Step 1

Warning; contact parent or legal guardian

Step 2

1. Contact parent or legal guardian + minimum one to three days In-School Detention or other discipline consequences as deemed appropriate by the administrator (suspension off the bus three days).
2. Parent may be required to attend classes with student.
3. Loss of all privileges during time of detention and a loss of the right to privileges and/or the right to participate in any extracurricular activity.
4. Students will be removed from the discipline ladder if they do not receive office referrals for ten school days from the date of the infraction.

Step 3

1. Contact parent or legal guardian (parent conference before student may be admitted to class/ride the bus).
2. Minimum three to five days In-School Detention (suspension off the bus five days).
3. Loss of all privileges during time of detention and a loss of the right to privileges and/or the right to participate in any extracurricular activity.

4. Students will be removed from the discipline ladder if they do not receive office referrals for fifteen school days from the date of the infraction.
5. Parent may be required to attend classes with student.

Step 4

1. Contact parent or legal guardian (parent conference before student may be admitted to class/ride the bus).
2. Minimum three to five days In-School Detention or OSS (suspension off the bus five days with recommendation of thirty-day bus suspension).
3. Loss of all privileges during the time of reassignment and a loss of the right to privileges and/or the right to participate in any extracurricular activity.
4. Students will be removed from the discipline ladder if they do not receive office referrals for twenty school days from the date of the infraction.
5. Parent may be required to attend classes with student.

Step 5

1. Contact parent or legal guardian (parent conference before student may be admitted to class).
2. Minimum three to five days In-School Detention or OSS.
3. Loss of all privileges during the time of reassignment and a loss of the right to privileges and/or the right to participate in any extracurricular activity.
4. Students will be removed from the discipline ladder if they do not receive office referrals for thirty school days from the date of the infraction.
5. Parent may be required to attend classes with student.

Step 6

1. Contact parent or legal guardian (parent conference before student may return to school).
2. Minimum three to five days Out of School Suspension.
3. A student may be recommended for Out of School Suspension at any time if the administrator deems the student's actions warrant such recommendation.
4. Loss of all privileges during time of suspension and a loss of the right to privileges and/or the right to participate in any extracurricular activity.
5. Students will be removed from the discipline ladder if they do not receive office referrals for forty school days from the date of the infraction.

Step 7

1. Contact parent or legal guardian (parent conference before student may return to school).
2. Minimum five to nine days Out of School Suspension with referral to Alternative School Placement for a minimum of 45 school days.
3. A student may be recommended for expulsion at any time if the administrator deems the student's actions warrant such recommendation.
4. Loss of all privileges during time of suspension and a loss of the right to privileges and/or the right to participate in any extracurricular activity.
5. Students will be removed from the discipline ladder if they do not receive office referrals for forty-five school days from the date of the infraction.

Consequences

Possession of a weapon as defined in student handbook (Reported to Police)	Step 7
Bomb threat (37-11-20)	Step 7
Physical assault on school personnel	Step 7
Use or possession of fireworks	Steps 5-7
Use, sale, or possession of drugs, drug paraphernalia or	

alcohol or alcohol-related product	Step 7
Use, sale, or possession of tobacco or tobacco-related products	Steps 5-7
Cheating, stealing and gambling or possession of gambling devices	Steps 1-4
Possession of pornography	Steps 1-7
Profanity or vulgarity (to include acts, gestures, or symbols directed at another person)	Steps 1-7
Harassment, intimidation, or threatening of other students or staff	Steps 1-7
Fighting	Steps 5-7
Use or possession of dangerous objects	Steps 5-6
Gang activity, association	Steps 3-7
Sexual harassment/assault	Steps 1-7
Horse playing	Steps 1-4
Public display of affection	Steps 1-3
Dress code violations	Steps 1-3
Defacing or otherwise vandalizing school district property (includes restitution for damages)	Steps 1-4
School bus or school bus stop disturbance	Steps 1-4
Disrespectful behavior to staff members	Steps 1-6
Defiance of authority	Steps 1-6
Lying to authorities	Steps 1-3
Unauthorized fund raising, including sale of candy	Steps 2-5
Biting	Steps 5-7

The Superintendent or principals are authorized to institute appropriate disciplinary action including immediate suspension, if warranted, of any student for disorderly conduct or misconduct.

NOTE: The CMSD Discipline Codes are not all-inclusive. CMSD administrators reserve the right to assign the actions of any disciplinary consequences based on severity of the infraction.

Educational Programs

Regular curriculum offerings in grades PreK-5 include reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. In addition, classes for elementary students include music, physical education, and library.

The pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs stress development of the total child, enabling the child to grow educationally, socially, mentally, physically, and emotionally. Pre and post year assessments are given to all pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students to measure their growth and adjust our educational programs to the needs of the students.

Special Education, Gifted, English Language Learners, and Homebound services are available for eligible students.

Emergency Drills – Fire and Tornado

Fire and tornado drills will be held periodically throughout the school year. Students will be informed of drill procedures and assigned areas to report to in emergency situations. Verbal instructions will be used to indicate tornado and other disaster drills.

Fees/Supplies

Each student must have the proper school supplies so that classroom assignments can be completed. Teachers will provide parents with a list of needed supplies and fees. Parents will be notified when additional supplies are needed.

SPIRIT Fee - \$10.00

Registration fee - \$10.00

Field Trips

The classroom teacher and/or principal, as a part of the educational program, sometimes arranges field trips. Although parents are asked to sign a blanket permission slip at the beginning of each year, written permission will be obtained prior to each trip. Parents will be notified of all trips. No student is permitted to go on a field trip without written permission from the parent.

First Aid/Health

A student who is obviously ill should not come to school. Parents will be notified immediately when a child is ill so that arrangements can be made for the child to go home and in highly contagious instances may need a doctor's note to return to school. Schools are not equipped to care for ill students.

Grading System

The evaluation of student achievement is one of the important functions of the teacher. The accepted marking system in grades 1-5 is as follows:

A.....	Excellent.....	90-100
B.....	Above Average.....	80-89
C.....	Average.....	70-79
D.....	Below Average.....	65-69
F.....	Failing.....	Below 65

Students in grades 1-5 who make all A's during a grading period will be placed on the Superintendent's List, and students in grades 1-5 who make all A's and/or B's during a grading period will be placed on the Principal's List.

Grade reports are issued four (4) times during the year at the end of every nine-week period.

Cheating

Cheating is a very serious offense. Students should not have any part in aiding someone to cheat or cheating themselves on class work, tests, or assignments. Anyone involved in cheating will have his or her work taken up, a grade of zero will be given, and disciplinary action may be taken.

Guidance Services

The Columbus Municipal School District provides developmentally appropriate guidance and counseling services to all elementary students. Direct services to students include classroom guidance, small groups, and individual sessions. School staff, parents, and the students themselves make referrals for small groups and individual counseling.

Home/School Communications

Each elementary school sends home a newsletter at the beginning of each month. Parents are urged to watch for the newsletters as they are sent home. Children are more likely to give parents communications from the school if the parent requests it.

Student Information/Handbook Receipt

When students enroll in school, parents must complete enrollment information that is kept on file in the school office. **The information is used to make parental contact in case of an emergency and should be updated when there is a change in employment, address or telephone numbers.** There is also a place for parents to sign indicating they have **reviewed, received, or read** this handbook.

School Assignment

In agreement with the US Federal Court and the US Department of Justice, enrollment at CMSD PreK-5 schools will no longer be determined by residence within individual school zones. Instead, school assignments for PreK-5 schools will be determined by a lottery system. Parents or guardians living with their children in the boundaries of the Columbus Municipal School District who desire to enroll their children in one of the district's PreK-5 schools must bring registration documents to the Office of the Superintendent, Brandon Central Services Center, 2630 McArthur Drive, in Columbus.

Snacks

Educators recognize the possible link between the excessive use of sugar and inappropriate behavior. If allowed, nutritious snacks may be brought to eat at the time and place designated by the school principal. Parents who bring snacks for their child's class are expected to make every effort to bring nutritious snacks that comply with the district's Healthy Schools Policy. However, in the students' best interests, parents must not bring gum to school.

Federal and state guidelines for school cafeterias prohibit the selling of any food items from one hour before lunch until the end of the serving time, except through the regular cafeteria service. There are no exceptions to this policy.

Toys/Valuable Possessions

Children are not to bring toys and other valuables, especially iPods and electronic games, from home. The school will not be responsible for loss, theft, or damage of items of this nature, and items may be confiscated by teachers and principals and returned to parents at the principal's discretion. Teachers of younger students will notify parents of special times when items from home may be brought for "Show and Tell" or special occasions. Parents are asked not to allow children to bring excessive amounts of money to school.

Hunt Intermediate & Columbus Middle School Guidelines

HUNT INTERMEDIATE PHONE NUMBERS

Main Office(662) 241-7160

COLUMBUS MIDDLE SCHOOL PHONE NUMBERS

Main Office(662) 241-7300

Attendance

For more information see “Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law”

The Columbus School District complies with the Compulsory Education Law (Mississippi Code of 1972, Section 37-13-91). Regular daily attendance at school is the responsibility of each student and his/her parents or guardians. Daily classroom grades will reflect participation that is based on regular attendance.

Regular and punctual attendance of all students is necessary during the school year. Students in a homebound program, students who are under a physician's care for long-term or chronic illness, or students who have unusual or extenuating circumstances beyond their control who otherwise maintain a passing average will be considered on an individual basis by the building principal and submitted in writing to the Superintendent for approval. The following guidelines are offered:

1. **Admittance Slip:** Following **ALL** absences from school, the student **MUST** secure a re-admittance slip from the homeroom teacher prior to first period. Losing and/or failing to pick up the slip will result in a tardy for each occurrence during the day.
2. **Checkout:** Any student who needs to leave school during the day for an appointment or because of illness must check out in the office prior to leaving the school building. No student will be dismissed unless one of the following has occurred:
 - A. A note has been received from the parent/guardian to arrange for the dismissal.
 - B. The office has contacted the parents/guardians to arrange for the dismissal (in case of illness).
 - C. No student is to leave school (or school grounds) after arriving at school unless he/she has checked out through the office before leaving the building.
3. **Withdrawals:** Students withdrawing or transferring to another school must proceed as follows:
 - A. The student's parent/legal guardian must be present at the school in order to withdraw a student.
 - B. The parent/legal guardian should take the student to the CMS Guidance Counselor's office as soon as the school day begins. The counselor will issue a withdrawal form.
 - C. The parent/legal guardian should be prepared to give the name and location of school to which the student will be transferring.
 - D. Each subject area teacher, bookkeeper, and the media specialist (Librarian) must sign the withdrawal form and indicate current grade and/or condition of books returned. Lost and damaged textbooks or library books must be paid for according to the price list furnished to each teacher.
4. **Perfect Attendance Policy:** A student is considered as present or absent for each class in which he/she is enrolled. To be considered as not missing an entire day, the student must attend 63% of the school day. A student absent from a class for more than 15 minutes will be considered absent from that class for the period. Exceptions will include students involved in school activities.
5. **Tardy Policy and Procedures: Class time is instructional time.** This policy sends the message that being tardy will not be tolerated. At the beginning of the new school year, students are given three days to adjust to their schedule. All tardy and cutting class policies will go into effect immediately on the fourth day. They will remain in effect until the last day of school.

Tardy: A tardy bell will sound to signal the end of the class exchange and the beginning of a new class period. Any student entering class after the tardy bell has sounded is considered tardy. Tardy students are required to enter the class quietly and immediately take their seats without disrupting the class. Teachers will record tardies in their grade book and in INOW (school administrative software) within five minutes of the tardy bell.

Penalties for Tardies: Students are expected to be in class by the time the tardy bell sounds. When a student is tardy to school, a note stating the reason for tardiness must accompany the student. Tardies are cumulative for one full semester. The consequence ladder starts over at the beginning of each semester.

1st and 2nd tardy – Warning from the teacher

3rd tardy –	Referral to administration; Warning/Parent Contacted
4th and 5th tardy –	Referral to administration (½ day ISD)
6th, 7th, and 8th tardy –	Referral to administration (1 day ISD)
9th tardy or more –	Referral to administration (1 day Alternative ISD)
Note: Failure to serve ASD will result in ISD.	

Assemblies and Programs

Students' behavior in assemblies should be refined and courteous at all times. An indication of the maturity of students and the cultural level of the school is the conduct of its students in an assembly. Whether guests are present or not, each student is personally responsible for the impression made by the school as a whole. Unacceptable conduct includes whistling, uncalled-for clapping, laughing, talking, shouting, stomping, or making fun of program participants. Students should move quickly and quietly to assembly and sit in their assigned seat unless participating in the program.

Books

All books checked out to students are the property of the Columbus Municipal School District. These materials are loaned for student use and are expected to be returned so that they may be loaned out again the following year. Students are responsible for showing the teacher any marks or other minor defects or damages when the book is first checked out. The teacher will note those items on the student's checkout sheet. Any different book that is turned in will require the student to either find his/her original book or pay the current, full replacement cost. Books damaged beyond repair, lost, or stolen are the full responsibility of the student to whom they were checked out.

Cheating

Cheating is a very serious offense. Students should not have any part in aiding someone to cheat or cheating themselves on class work, tests, or assignments. Anyone involved in cheating will have his or her work taken up, a grade of zero will be given, and disciplinary action may be taken.

Code of Conduct

All students at Columbus Middle School have the right to attend classes without interference or disruption. No student will be permitted to interfere with the right to the education of our students. CMS will maintain a safe environment for the welfare of all students, and the code of conduct is designed to help provide a positive learning environment for faculty, staff, and students. Discipline will be enacted upon any student who denies this right to an education to others or who is defiant of the rules necessary to provide a secure and productive environment in which a quality education may occur. The student is responsible for making himself/herself aware of the Code of Conduct used for behavior and attendance related problems, which will be given to each student at the beginning of the year and sent home for parents to read also.

Columbus Middle School will institute a Five-Step Intervention Plan to help students correct their behavior before being referred to the office for further disciplinary action. The following procedures will be implemented in team classes, but if the offense is more severe or occurs away from team classes, the teacher will refer the student to the building level administrator for disciplinary consequences.

***Note: The Four-Step Intervention Plan will start over each semester for each student.**

Teacher Procedures for Behavior Interventions

1st Step – The student will be warned, the teacher will document behavior, and the teacher will make a documented attempt to contact the parents.

2nd Step – The student will meet with the team teachers and a letter will be mailed home to the parent documenting behavior.

3rd Step – The student will meet with the grade-level administrator and the student's team teachers. The parent will be notified prior to the meeting and given an opportunity to attend.

4th Step – The student will be referred to the office to the building level principal.

Administrative Procedures for Behavior Discipline Ladder

To ensure consistency and fairness, the following steps will be applied by administrators for student discipline.

Step 1

Warning; contact parent or legal guardian

Step 2

1. Contact parent or legal guardian + minimum ½ Day to three days In-School Detention or other discipline consequences as deemed appropriate by the administrator (suspension off the bus three days).
2. Loss of all privileges during time of detention and a loss of the right to privileges and/or the right to participate in any extracurricular activity.
3. Students will be removed from the discipline ladder if they do not receive office referrals for ten school days from the date of the infraction.

Step 3

1. Contact parent or legal guardian
2. Minimum one to three days In-School Detention (suspension off the bus five days).
3. Loss of all privileges during time of detention and a loss of the right to privileges and/or the right to participate in any extracurricular activity.
4. Students will be removed from the discipline ladder if they do not receive office referrals for fifteen school days from the date of the infraction.

Step 4

1. Contact parent or legal guardian (parent conference before student may be admitted to class/ride the bus).
2. Minimum three to five days In-School Detention (suspension off the bus five days with recommendation of thirty-day bus suspension).
3. Loss of all privileges during the time of reassignment and a loss of the right to privileges and/or the right to participate in any extracurricular activity.
4. Students will be removed from the discipline ladder if they do not receive office referrals for twenty school days from the date of the infraction.
5. Parent may be required to attend classes with student.

Step 5

1. Contact parent or legal guardian (parent conference before student may be admitted to class).
2. Minimum one to three days Alternative In-School Detention or OSS.
3. Loss of all privileges during the time of reassignment and a loss of the right to privileges and/or the right to participate in any extracurricular activity.
4. Students will be removed from the discipline ladder if they do not receive office referrals for thirty school days from the date of the infraction.
5. Parent may be required to attend classes with student.

Step 6

1. Contact parent or legal guardian (parent conference before student may return to school).
2. Minimum three to five days Alternative ISD or Out of School Suspension.
3. A student may be recommended for Out of School Suspension at any time if the administrator deems the student's actions warrant such recommendation.
4. Loss of all privileges during time of suspension and a loss of the right to privileges and/or the right to participate in any extracurricular activity.
5. Students will be removed from the discipline ladder if they do not receive office referrals for forty school days from the date of the infraction.

Step 7

1. Contact parent or legal guardian (parent conference before student may return to school).
2. Minimum five to nine days Out of School Suspension with possible referral to Alternative School Placement for a minimum of 45 school days.
3. A student may be recommended for expulsion at any time if the administrator deems the student's actions warrant such recommendation.
4. Contact proper law enforcement authorities.
5. Loss of all privileges during time of suspension and a loss of the right to privileges and/or the right to participate in any extracurricular activity.
6. Students will be removed from the discipline ladder if they do not receive office referrals for forty-five school days from the date of the infraction.

The following is a list of some—but not all—of the various discipline infractions that result in an office referral. The administrator assigned consequences are shown. (See above)

Infractions

Exhaustion of discipline steps
 Dress Code violations
 Cutting class
 Selling food or drinks
 Possession of a noise-making device
 "Horse-playing"
 Other behaviors as determined by the administrators
 Defacing school property (vandalism)
 Profanity
 Profanity directed towards a teacher/Administrator
 Use or possession of a dangerous object
 Tobacco use and possession
 Gang activity
 Open defiance of a teacher
 Threatening school personnel
 Assault on school personnel
 Provoking a fight/instigating a disturbance
 Fighting – 1st offense
 Fighting – 2nd offense
 Harassment, intimidation (bullying), or threatening a student
 Weapon possession or use
 Illegal drug possession, use, or under the influence

Administrator Assigned Consequences

Steps 1-6
 Steps 1-6
 Steps 2-5
 Steps 1-6
 Steps 1-3
 Steps 2-4
 Steps 1-7
 Steps 3-6 (plus restitution for damages – Policy JCBD)
 Steps 3-5
 Steps 4-5
 Steps 4-5
 Steps 5-7 Refer to page 52
 Steps 5-7 Refer to page 52
 Steps 3-5
 Steps 6-7 Refer to page 55
 Step 7 Refer to page 55
 Steps 4-5
 Step 6
 Step 7
 Steps 1-7
 Step 7 Refer to page 53
 Step 7 Refer to page 55

The CMSD Discipline Codes are not all-inclusive. CMSD administrators reserve the right to assign the actions of any disciplinary consequences based on severity of the infraction.

Counseling Services

The basic purpose of the professional counselors at Hunt Intermediate School and Columbus Middle School is to help each individual student understand and help himself/herself. The counseling program strives to assist the students in making the most of their capacities, interests, and other qualities. Counselors seek to help each student successfully adjust at school and with his/her fellow students.

Students and parents are welcome to make an appointment with the counselor to discuss education, vocation, social, or personal problems. Students must have a hall permit from a teacher in order to see a counselor during regular class periods. Appointments may be made before and after school or between classes by signing up in the counseling office.

There are two counselors to work with students. The counselor will be happy to review a student's cumulative record and interpret test scores and past achievements in terms of the student's ability. Guidance materials are available both in the guidance office and in the library to assist students in many areas, including educational, vocational, personal, and social problems.

In-School Detention Procedures

Philosophy

Establishing a positive school culture and climate is paramount to the success of students who attend the Columbus Municipal School District. Maintaining appropriate school discipline builds a positive learning environment. The In-School Detention (ISD) program is designed to provide positive constructive learning experiences for students who have violated the school behavior standards. The primary purpose of the program's design is to administer consequences for unacceptable behavior. The punitive aspect of discipline has been de-emphasized while stressing the positive learning experiences by providing behavioral interventions that require students to reflect on their actions and the negative affect they have on others.

Goals

1. Provide an alternative measure for corrective behavior for disruptive students.
2. Guide students in setting goals for behavioral improvement.
3. Encourage respect for the rules and regulations of the school community.

Assignment of In School Detention

Building level administrators will assign ISD to students who violate the Code of Conduct in accordance with the Behavior Discipline Ladder located in the Handbook for Students and Parents.

Rules for In-School Detention

1. Students will complete the Reflection Assignment.
2. Students must have all books and materials necessary to complete work assignments when they enter the ISD room.
3. Students must raise hand for permission to speak, sharpen pencils, or get out of seat.
4. Sleeping, chewing gum, or eating will not be permitted.
5. Students will be escorted to the cafeteria at the appropriate time.
6. Students will not disturb other students in any manner (keep hands to self).
7. Students will not turn around in seat, pass notes, or make gestures.
8. No insubordination will be permitted.

9. All regular school rules will be enforced.
10. Any student written up while in ISD may receive 1-5 additional days of ISD or Alternative ISD, depending on the severity of the offense.
11. Any student who is absent or checks out during their assigned ISD or Alternative ISD placement will be required to complete their assigned time upon return to school.

Cutting School

A student will be assigned a maximum of 5 days ISD for cutting consecutive days of school. Days of ISD will increase by one day for each office visit for cutting during a school year.

1st Incident Parent/guardian must accompany student back to school for student-parent administrator conference

2nd day missed May result in Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) - Parent/guardian must accompany student back to school for student-parent-administrator conference

Schedule			
School	Drop Off Times	Instruction Begins	Dismissal
Hunt Intermediate School (Grades 5-6)	7:30–8:10	8:15	3:05
Columbus Middle School (Grades 7-8)	7:50–8:20	8:25	3:30

NOTE: Schedule is subject to change

Delivery of Gifts

Secondary schools of the Columbus Municipal School District will not accept deliveries nor be responsible for students receiving flowers, balloons, or other favors. Such deliveries should be made to the student at home. This includes special days such as Valentines, birthdays, anniversaries, etc.

Early Arrivals

Students should not come or be dropped off at school before the "Drop Off Times" list on the previous page.

Eating/Drinking

CMS prohibits eating snacks or candy, or consuming drinks in classrooms. Food and drinks will only be consumed in the cafeteria. Eating and/or drinking is not permitted in the hallways at any time during the school day. Food and drinks cannot be taken from the cafeteria. All drinks must remain in a sealed container outside of the cafeteria.

Emergency Drills – Fire and Tornado

Fire and tornado drills will be held periodically throughout the school year. Students will be informed of drill procedures and assigned areas to report to in emergency situations. Verbal instructions will be used to indicate tornado and other disaster drills.

Columbus Middle School Fees

Registration Fee	\$10.00
Band Fee (Band students)	\$10.00
SPIRIT Fee (SPIRIT students)	\$10.00
Chorus Fee (Chorus students)	\$10.00
Science Fee	\$10.00 (7 th and 8 th)

Clear or mesh book bag is required for CMS.

Grading System **CMSD School Board Policy IHE, JF**

Nine Weeks, Semester, and Yearly Averages

- 1. First, Second, Third and Fourth Nine Weeks**
 - A. Daily grade average (comprised of daily test, homework, etc.), chapter, weekly, and unit tests make up **80%** of the nine-week average.
 - B. Nine Weeks exam will count as **20%** of the nine-week average.
- 2. Second and Fourth Nine Weeks** - The grade is comprised of daily grade average, chapter, weekly, and unit tests.
- 3. Semester Average** - To get a semester average, the two nine-week grades are averaged. If there is exemption from the final exam, the two nine-week grades are added and divided by two for the semester average.
- 4. Yearly Average** - The two semester grades are totaled and divided by two for the final yearly average.
- 5. Exemptions** – To be eligible for exemption in any course from the second (2nd) semester comprehensive exam only, a student must have perfect attendance for the year in that class, all fees and fines paid, and have a 90 average OR have a 95 average in that class. **Note: Students are exempt for the exams in courses, not from attending school.**
- 6. Exams** - Nine-weeks tests, mid-term exams, and final exams will be given in all subjects.
- 7. The grading standard** for evaluation is, as follows:

A.....	90-100.....	Excellent
B.....	80-89.....	Above Average
C.....	70-79.....	Average
D.....	65-69.....	Below Average
F.....	Below 65.....	Failing (no credit)

Homework/Class Work

As students progress through the middle school, academic requirements and the level of difficulty of the class work will increase. In order to provide a better understanding of the classroom work, it will be necessary to assign work to be completed outside of the classroom.

Middle school-age students need to become involved in activities, but a high priority must be placed on academic needs. Teachers will require assignments as necessary but will keep in mind the balance that is needed to provide for the middle school experience.

Parental support is needed to ensure that this balance is provided at home also. Concerns about the homework situation can be addressed by contacting the teacher directly.

Teachers will set time aside after school for students to complete missing or incomplete assignments. Parents will be notified of this time so students can benefit from the extra help.

Guidelines for Homework:

1. All work is due on the date and time for which it is assigned. Unless a student has an excused absence, assignments turned in after the assigned date and time will be considered late assignments.
2. In the case of an absence, the student has three (3) days to make up any work or tests missed. The teacher can grant time beyond the three days if extenuating circumstances are present. In the case of an extended absence, the time allowed for make-up will be left to the discretion of the teacher.
3. It is the responsibility of a student to get his/her own homework if absent. If a student is to be absent over three days, parents should call the school before 9:00 a.m. and request homework. This should be picked up in the office after 1:30 PM on the day requested. Absences of less than three days should not require phoning the school for assignments.
4. An assignment may be turned in one (1) day after it was due but a grade of 70 will be the highest mark given as a grade on that assignment. If the assignment is not turned in the day after it was due, a zero will be recorded for that assignment.

Library

A library is a place for enjoyment and research. Students are welcome in the library, and since it is a place for quiet work, they are expected to be on their very best behavior. Students are encouraged to use the library as often as possible. The librarian will be glad to help find information or suggest books. Students who find it is necessary to go to the library during class time must have written permission from the teacher, and then, upon entering the library, inform the librarian of their needs.

Books are checked out for two (2) weeks. A \$.05 per day fine is charged for overdue books. If books are not returned, students will be responsible for paying the replacement cost of the books. It will be the responsibility of the parents to ensure that fines, books and damages are taken care of in an expedient manner.

National Junior Honor Society

Students eligible to become active members of the National Junior Honor Society must have a high academic average and must display outstanding qualifications in the areas of citizenship, human relations, and school service. The Columbus Middle School Faculty Council determines the academic average necessary each year.

Parent Conferences

Conferences with teachers should be arranged by calling the counselor's office. Exploratory teacher conferences may also be arranged by calling the counselor. Parents and guardians are a very important link in their child's success. The difference between a student's motivation toward being successful and not achieving personal success can be the support that is given by a parent/guardian at home. Parents and guardians should encourage their child to become involved in the total middle school program. We strongly urge parents and guardians to take an active interest in how they are doing. We believe that parents will see very positive results.

Personal Belongings

Each student is responsible for his/her belongings. All items should be marked with the student's name. Students should bring only school-related items to school. Inappropriate items will be confiscated from the student and a parent must come to CMS to get them. Students should never be in possession of more than \$5.00 while at school unless they have brought it for a school-sponsored event. The selling of candy, chewing gum, toys or other items at school is not allowed and such items will be confiscated and held for parents to pick up or may be disposed of. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Progress Report

Students will receive a progress report on a designated date each nine-week term. Dates are noted on the district's academic calendar. Through close cooperation of parents, students, and teachers, failures should be kept to a minimum. Parents should contact teachers by email or phone if they have questions about progress reports.

School Property Damage

Any student who damages school property, deliberately or while playing around, will be responsible for paying for the destruction and/or restoring it to the original value. Students may be subject to suspension or expulsion, or placed in the alternative program, depending upon the severity of the situation.

Student Responsibilities

- 1. IF YOU HAVE BEEN ABSENT:** A student returning to school must bring a written parental explanation to be given to the homeroom teacher as soon as the student enters class. If ill for more than two (2) days, a student may request assignments through the counselor. Be sure to ask your teacher for make-up work upon your return to school. Students should make up missed work within three (3) days of their absence. All assignments must, however, be made up within two (2) weeks of the student's return to school.
- 2. IF YOU ARE TARDY OR YOUR BUS IS LATE:** If you arrive at school during first period, report to the office.
- 3. IF YOU MISS THE BUS:** If you miss the bus in the morning, your parents are responsible for bringing you to school. If you miss your bus after school, you may use the phone to call your parents.
- 4. IF YOU NEED TO CHANGE YOUR BUS ARRANGEMENTS:** If, for any reason, you need to ride a bus other than your assigned one or need to get off your bus at a stop other than your usual one, you must bring a note from your parents. Bring this note to the main office and you will be issued a ticket enabling you to make the necessary change.
- 5. IF YOU LOSE YOUR ADMITTANCE SLIP:** You must report to the office to secure another one. This will constitute a TARDY in each class.

CHS Phone Numbers

McKellar Phone Numbers

McKellar Main Office.....	(662) 241-7290
McKellar Main Office Fax.....	(662) 241-7293

McKellar Phone Numbers

McKellar Main Office..... (662) 241-7290
McKellar Main Office Fax..... (662) 241-7293

CHS operates on a 4x4 block schedule. A copy of the bell schedule is below and is available online at the school's website. Copies will also be available in the main office throughout the year.

Columbus High School

Bell Schedule

2026-2027

Columbus Municipal School District Student Parent Handbook 2026-2027

Emergency Bells

CMSD School Board Policy EBBC

Emergency warnings signaling a fire or tornado may be given at any time. Drills are exercised numerous times throughout the year to ensure the safety of students in the event an actual fire or tornado should occur. Students are taught the proper procedures to follow during drills so that they know what each ring signifies and are prepared to respond correctly. When these signals are given, students should go to the assigned areas and respond according to proper procedures taught and reinforced throughout the school year.

Fire – warning announcements will be made
Tornado – warning announcements will be made

Fees

CMSD School Board Policies JS

Registration Fee (9th -11th grade)\$10.00
 Registration Fee (12th grade – includes composite portrait fee).....\$15.00
 McKellar Technology Center Requirement Students in classes with
 a hands-on component will be required to purchase uniforms and/or lab coats.

Parental and Family Engagement

Parental and Family Engagement is a vital element in any successful effort to educate children. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the educational experience of their high school students. Columbus High School affirms its commitment to family involvement by providing the following opportunities:

1. Open House – Teachers and staff welcome parents (and students) into the classrooms to consult with parents concerning the manner in which the school and parents can work together to achieve the program's objectives.
2. Parent/Teacher Conferences – Parents can contact their child's teacher by phone or by email. Conferences are set up through the office. (241-7200)
3. Counselor – The school counselors are available (by appointment) to meet with parents as well as students to review academic progress and personal concerns.
4. School Administration – Parents are welcome to schedule an appointment at the office (241-7200) to discuss any questions or concerns.
5. Parent Visitation – Parents are encouraged to visit the school during the year. Opportunities for parental involvement will be offered through School programs and parent-teacher conferences.
6. Ongoing Communication – Parents are notified concerning school activities through newsletters, memos, phone calls, emails, school/district websites, and social media.
7. Educational Compact – Parents, teachers, principal and student sign this document each year. The compact will specifically outline how each party is responsible for promoting high student achievement.

Assemblies and Programs

In assemblies, each student's behavior should be respectful and courteous at all times. Unacceptable conduct includes whistling, uncalled-for clapping, standing to get attention, laughing, talking, shouting, stomping, or making fun of program participants. If seats are assigned, each student should move quickly and quietly to his/her designated area. Disciplinary action will result for students who are unaccounted for during an assembly, or who fail to comply with teacher/staff/administrator instructions concerning conduct.

Attendance

CMSD School Board Policies JBA, JBD, JBAC See also "Attendance Law" in GENERAL INFORMATION

Columbus High School complies with the Compulsory Attendance Law (Mississippi Code of 1972, Section 37-1392). Regular and punctual attendance of all students is necessary during the school year. Students in a homebound program, students who are under a physician's care for long-term or chronic illness, or students who have unusual or extenuating circumstances beyond their control or otherwise maintain a passing average will be considered on an individual basis by the building principal and submitted in writing to the Superintendent for approval.

A student's regular attendance in class directly affects his/her level of success. The procedures regarding attendance are designed to reward attendance at school and to provide guidelines for students to follow when absenteeism is unavoidable.

Attendance Guidelines

A student should adhere to the following guidelines to assist in the earning of credit or promotion to the next grade for students on the block system who are attempting to earn Carnegie Units in grades 8-12.

- Must be present 42 days for a half-credit course (maximum of 3 unexcused absences)
- Must be present 84 days for a one-credit course (maximum of 6 unexcused absences)
- Must be present 168 days for a year-long course (maximum of 12 unexcused absences)

Additional absences may be granted at the discretion of the Columbus Municipal School District for military-connected students whose parents are experiencing a deployment. The conditions under which absences may be approved are:

1. The absence is preapproved.
2. The student is in good standing.
3. The student has a prior record of good attendance.
4. Missed work is completed and turned in within the school's allotted time period.
5. The absence is not during state testing dates.

Students who exceed these guidelines may not receive a grade nor Carnegie Unit in the course. No Credit (NC) will be recorded on the report card and transcript. Students who have excessive absences may be afforded the opportunity to make up the seat time missed due to these absences. Students may have access to an online/computer curriculum in order to obtain initial credit as well as through Mississippi Virtual Public School in cases determined necessary by the Teacher Support Team.

NOTE: According to a 1998 Attorney General Opinion, automatic fail provision of an absences policy may not apply against legal, excused absences. Such absences policies may not be applied against absences resulting from disciplinary suspensions if absences policies are applied to truant children who are otherwise passing, the district must afford the child procedural due process. (Attorney General Opinion, Carter, 1-9-98) (#183) (970817)

66% Rule for Extracurricular or After School Participation

Students are required to be present at school for a minimum of 66% of the school day in order to participate in after-school activities or sports. This rule may be modified due to extenuating circumstances. Students who do not have a full schedule must leave campus at the conclusion of their last classes.

Absences: Policies and Procedures

Attendance Office Phone – 662-241-7206

For more information see “Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law” – page 23

When a student is absent from school, his/her parent/guardian must do one of the following:

1. Bring the student to school to the attendance office and explain why the student was absent. If the explanation of the absence meets all established criteria for excused absences, an excused absence will be issued.
2. **Any student that arrives to school after 8:25 a.m. must be checked in by a parent or guardian.**
3. The student can bring a note containing the student’s full name, reason for absence, dates missed, and parent/guardian signature for admittance. The school administrator will review the note submitted following the absence, and if the explanation of absence meets all the established criteria for excused absence, an excused absence will be issued. A parent note can be used to excuse an absence only five (5) times per semester.
4. The student can also bring a doctor’s excuse, court papers, or other documentation.
5. All notes, excuses, and documentation must be submitted within two (2) days of the absence.
6. Students should pick up admission slips from the designated areas in adequate time to make it to class prior to the tardy bell. Students arriving five (5) or more minutes after the first-period tardy bell should report directly to the Attendance Office.
7. Failure to follow one of the above procedures will result in an unexcused absence.

Phone calls are NOT an acceptable means to excuse a student’s absence.

Excused Absences:

Absences classified as excused are:

1. Absences due to personal illness
2. Absences due to serious illness or death in immediate family
3. Other reasons deemed excused by state law and approved by an administrator.

Prior to the absence, the principal may approve absences for other circumstances. A school administrator will determine whether a student’s absence is excused or unexcused. The student is responsible for contacting the teacher before or after school to acquire make-up work assignments. Work missed during an absence must be made up within five (5) school days of the absence or the student must make special arrangements with the teacher.

Unexcused Absences:

Any absence from class or school that is not excused by the Attendance Office, or an administrator is an unexcused absence. All unexcused absences that are not cleared within two (2) days of the absence by an approved method will remain unexcused. A letter from the Lowndes County Attendance Officer will be sent to the parents/guardians of students who have five or more unexcused absences. The student is responsible for contacting the teacher to acquire make-up assignments. Work missed under an unexcused absence must be made up within five (5) school days of the absence.

College Visits / Non-Emergency Absences:

1. Graduating seniors are permitted four (4) college visits per year. Official documentation must be brought to the Attendance Office upon the student's return to school to receive an admission slip.
2. Students are responsible for the missed assignments during the absence and must make-up any necessary work upon their return.

Admittance Slip:

Following ALL absences from school, the student MUST secure a re-admittance slip from the designated area prior to first period. The student is responsible for keeping up with the admittance slip during the entire school day.

Checkout:

Any student who needs to leave school during the day must check out in the attendance office prior to leaving the school building. If a student becomes sick during a class, the teacher will issue a pass to go to the attendance office or the school nurse. If a student becomes sick between classes, he/she is to report to his/her next class and acquire a pass from that teacher to go to the attendance office or school nurse.

Phone calls are not acceptable for check-outs. No student will be dismissed unless one of the following has occurred:

1. The office has contacted the parent/guardian to arrange for the dismissal (in the case of illness).
2. The student can bring a note from their parent/guardian. Notes will be verified via phone call.
3. Students must remain in their assigned class until called by the Attendance office for checkout. Any student that does not remain in class until called will be considered cutting class.

A student must bring a note within two (2) days of their return to school to receive an excused absence. If the student fails to bring a note the checkout absence will remain unexcused.

Dismissals – To protect instructional time and to ensure smooth dismissal processes, parents are asked to not check out students after 2:45 p.m. Parents who arrange to pick up their child after school are expected to do so before the teachers' workday ends. Students who are not picked up within a reasonable time after school is dismissed will be referred to the authorities after efforts to contact parents have been made.

Perfect Attendance Policy:

A student is considered present or absent for each class in which he/she is enrolled. Students are considered present when assigned to ISD/Alt ISD. Exceptions will include students involved in sanctioned school activities or mandatory supervised academic tutoring/remediation sessions.

REMINDER: No student is to leave school (or school grounds) after arriving at school without first checking out through the Attendance Office before leaving the building. Parents/guardians are strongly urged to make dental and doctor appointments for their students before or after school hours because all absences fall under the Compulsory Education Law. Leaving school without properly checking out will result in disciplinary action.

Withdrawals:

Students withdrawing or transferring to another school must follow the following procedures:

1. The student's parent or legal guardian must be present at the school in order to withdraw a student.
2. The parent or legal guardian should take the student to the CHS Guidance Counselor's office as soon as the school day begins. The counselor will issue a withdrawal form.

3. The parent or legal guardian should be prepared to give the name and location of school to which the student will be transferring.
4. The student must acquire each subject area teacher's signature, the bookkeeper's signature, and the media specialist's (Librarian's) signature on the withdrawal form to indicate the current grade and/or condition of books returned, and to indicate that fees/fines have been cleared. Lost and damaged textbooks or library books must be paid according to the price list furnished to each teacher. Also, all fees/fines must be paid to clear the student for transfer.
5. All school issued electronic devices must be returned before a student can withdraw.
6. The record keeper or designated staff will issue a withdrawal form indicating that the student is clear to withdraw.

If a student has been absent for fifteen (15) consecutive school days without notifying the school office, he/she will be formally removed from the student roll. The school attendance office will be notified.

Attendance Office Phone – 241-7206

Tardy Policy and Procedures

Class time is instructional time. This policy sends the message that being tardy will not be tolerated. At the beginning of the new school year, students are given three days to adjust to their schedule. All tardy and cutting class policies will go into effect immediately on the fourth day. They will remain in effect until the last day of school.

Tardy:

A tardy bell will sound to signal the end of the class exchange and the beginning of a new class period. Any student entering class after the tardy bell has sounded is considered tardy. Students who are tardy are required to enter the class quietly and immediately take their seats without disrupting the class. Teachers will record tardies in their grade book and in PowerSchool (school administrative software) within five minutes of the tardy bell.

Penalties for Tardies:

Students are expected to be in class by the time the tardy bell rings. When a student is tardy to school, a note stating the reason for tardiness must accompany the student. Tardies are cumulative for one full semester. The consequence ladder starts over at the beginning of each semester.

1st and 2nd tardy – Warning from the teacher

3rd tardy – Referral to administration; Warning/Parent Contacted

4th and 5th tardy – Referral to administration (1 day afterschool detention with teacher)

6th, 7th, and 8th tardy – Referral to administration (1 day IS)

9th tardy or more – Referral to administration (1 day Alternative ISS)

Note: Failure to serve ASD will result in ISS.

Cutting Class:

"Cutting" is defined as not being in your scheduled class or assigned area. A student should not leave a class or assigned area without a properly signed and dated hall pass. All students that are "cutting" will be referred to an administrator for disciplinary action. Any student that is not in his assigned class 5 minutes after the tardy bell will be considered cutting class.

Penalties for Cutting Class:

Cutting class penalties are cumulative and are recorded. A student who cuts class will only be allowed to make up work before or after school. To ensure integrity in grading, any tests missed due to cutting class will not be the same test that was given to other students. Cutting any portion of a class will count against perfect attendance for that class period. Cutting class offenses will be cumulative for the entire year. The Consequence Ladder does not start over at the beginning of 2nd semester. The following penalties will be strictly enforced to ensure the safety of all students:

1. **1st Offense:**CHS administrator issues one (1) day in ISD
2. **2nd Offense:**CHS administrator issues two (2) days in ISD
3. **3rd Offense:** CHS administrator issues one (1) day OSS or Alternative ISD, parent must return for conference.
4. **Any subsequent incidences of CUTTING CLASS during the school year:** CHS administrator issues a minimum of two (2) days of OSS or Alternative ISD and parent must come to school for conference.
5. **Students who leave campus without permission:** 1st offense - 3 days ISD, 2nd (subsequent) offense - 3 days OSS or Alternative ISD and parent must come to school for conference. Parents will be notified when administration is aware of the infraction.

Exceptions to Tardy and Cutting Class Policies:

If there is a legitimate reason for a student being late to class, that decision will be made by the attendance office administrator or the principal. The student will bring an "Administrator's Pass" to class from that administrator. Bus students who arrive at school after the tardy bell has rung will be admitted to class with a bus pass.

Cafeteria/Closed Campus Lunch

Columbus High School has a closed campus lunch. A closed campus lunch means a student may not leave campus during lunch. Anyone leaving campus during lunch is cutting class. Additionally, no student should leave the designated areas without a pass from his/her teacher. While in the cafeteria, students should exercise courtesy, demonstrate proper table manners, and ensure a healthy, clean environment.

Parents and guardians are always invited to eat with their students. Parents/guardians must sign-in through the main office and receive a visitor's badge. Because of federal guidelines, commercially prepared foods (such as fast food, restaurant "to-go" orders, etc.) may not be brought into the school during lunch times.

Dress Code 9-12

There appears to be a definite relationship between good dress habits, good work habits, and proper school behavior. Any type of attire which attracts undue attention to the wearer, and thus causes a disturbance in the school, is in bad taste and not acceptable.

There are no set standards for what is appropriate to wear at all times, although a person with good judgment and a strong sense of pride will always be appropriately dressed regardless of the occasion. One's dress and general appearance is a factor in the way a person conducts themselves. Appropriate school dress helps promote the best learning situation. The manner in which a student dresses directly reflects the home, school and the community.

Student dress should not distract from the learning environment or interfere with another student's right to learn. Clothing or lack of clothing that is disruptive is not permitted.

The Principal or his designee has final authority to make judgments about whether a student is properly attired or groomed. Clothing judged by the Principal as indecent or inappropriate for school will not be allowed. Immodest clothing will not be tolerated.

Articles of clothing, book bags, notebooks, jewelry, personal items or physical body must be free of the following:

- Symbols or words alluding to substances or activities illegal by law for minors: tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or gambling.
- Gang symbols, signs, tattoos, body markings, or language associated with gangs or gang activity
- Profane, sexual, pornographic, violent, or suggestive language
- Derogatory symbols, pictures, or language directed to any person or group.
- Fraternity and sorority emblems or references
- Weapons
- Obscene or indecent nature or otherwise deemed inappropriate.
- Students may not wear dark glasses unless under a doctor's prescription.
- Students may not wear hats, caps, head coverings (except under extenuating circumstances approved by administration) curlers, picks, bandanas, scarves, durags, bonnets, wraps, or sweatbands etc. Items will be confiscated.
- Students may not wear shirts or blouses that expose the midriff while sitting or standing.
- Students may not wear see-through garments, muscle shirts, tank tops, or halter tops.
- Shirts or blouses must have straps 3 inches wide at the top of the shoulder.
- Strapless, racerback, spaghetti straps, tank top, scoop neck, low cut, or off the shoulder shirts or dresses are not permitted at school.
- Any style of clothing that exposes undergarments is not appropriate for school.
- Students may not wear basketball jerseys, muscle shirts/tank tops (unless worn as a vest type garment over an appropriate shirt); no shirts with sleeves cut off.
- Hooded jackets and sweatshirts will be allowed but hoods cannot be worn on the head during school.
- Students may not wear joggers (any color), silk boxers, compression shorts/pants, pajama/lounge pants.
- Belts must be worn for clothing with belt loops.
- Leggings/jeggings (with or without pockets)/tights/yoga pants/palazzo pants may be worn with the appropriate knee length skirt, shirt, or shorts.
- All shorts, skirts, dresses must be knee length or longer. No Gym shorts are allowable except during P.E class.
- Pants must be free of rips, tears, frays, holes, etc.
- Students must wear closed toe and heel shoes at all times. House shoes, Crocs, slippers, slides, or shoes with taps, cleats, or spikes are not allowed.
- Students with tattoos may be requested to keep them covered.
- Students may not groom in classrooms, halls, cafeteria, or commons area.
- Any style of dress, hair color, hairstyle, or makeup that is distracting to students or teachers should be brought to the attention of the administration.
- All athletic uniforms or clothing associated with an extracurricular activity may be worn only on game days or for a school-related activity.

- Sagging pants are not allowed. Sagging pants are those which sag so that the top of the trousers is significantly below the waist, sometimes revealing much of the undergarments.

Consequences for Dress Code Violations:

1st Offense: Warning and must correct infraction.

2nd Offense: 1 day In-School Detention (ISD)

3rd Offense: 2 days ISD

4th Offense: 1 day Alt ISD

Subsequent offenses will receive 2 days Alternative ISD

Students must follow dress code guidelines for ISD and Alternate ISD

Items Not Appropriate for School

If an article is not needed for school, do not bring it to school. Items such as wallet/bicycle chains, toothpicks, sunglasses, toy guns, water pistols, slingshots, knives, real or look-alike bullets, hair picks, hats, skateboards, stickpins, CD players, firearms, radios, electronic games, fireworks, incense, bandanas, suggestive jewelry or clothing advertising gangs, drugs, or satanic symbols, and any item which can be considered a weapon are not permitted. If brought to school, items will be impounded. In addition to being impounded, disciplinary action may be taken. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or impounded articles.

Conduct and Discipline

The purpose of education at Columbus High School is to aid young persons to prepare themselves to live their adult lives at a maximum level of productivity, self-awareness, happiness, self-control, and in harmony with their community. In addition, the students should develop a perceptive awareness of high standards of behavior, appearance and grooming. Those who are responsible for developing and implementing conduct and personal appearance regulations should keep in mind that the primary responsibility for the conduct and personal appearance of a student rests with the student and the parents. Every effort should be made to impress upon the student and the parents that discipline and order can only be maintained in the school when the school is not used as a vehicle for disruptive influence. With this educational purpose in mind, Columbus High School has defined the minimum standards of conduct, dress, and grooming which will be acceptable for participants at this school.

General School Rules

The rules set forth at Columbus High School serve two main purposes---to enhance safety for all and to provide a maximum educational environment for students. While the rules described below are enforced, any unstated or unexpected event that threatens the quality or safety of the educational environment will be dealt with in a firm, fair, and consistent manner.

1. Students must show respect to fellow students, teachers, and other school personnel at all times.
2. Students are never to engage in horseplay or loud, boisterous behavior in classrooms, halls, or any commons area, including car and bus lanes.
3. Students are not allowed to bring items having no relationship to school functions or personal needs, including electronic devices (radio, CD/cassette players, earphones, cameras, etc.), sunglasses, toys, games, sports cards, slam books, photos, etc. These items may be confiscated and returned at discretion of teacher or administrator. The school and/or any employee of the school will not be responsible if any of these items are lost.)
4. The sale of candy, chewing gum, toys, or other items is prohibited. Items will be confiscated and not returned.

5. No food, snacks, or open drink containers will be allowed in halls or commons areas (seal should not be broken until it is consumed). Lunch must be in a sack or lunch box. No glass containers.
6. Students are to enter and exit the building at designated doors only, observing all arrival and dismissal guidelines.
7. Students are expected to demonstrate pride and responsibility by keeping bathrooms, classrooms, halls, cafeteria, and commons area clean and litter-free.

Discipline Ladder for Columbus High School

When a student who is already on the discipline ladder is found to have violated another infraction on the discipline ladder, he/she automatically moves to the next step on the discipline ladder, below. The purpose of the progression along the ladder is to encourage students to discontinue a pattern of misbehavior.

Description of Behaviors Determined to be Severe Disruptions

Assault on school personnel	Step 6 Refer to page 55
Any public display of affection or inappropriate contact between students (including, but not limited to, hugging, holding hands, kissing)	Steps 1-6
Alcohol use, possession, or under the influence	Steps 5-6 Refer to page 55
Brandishing or use of other weapon	Step 6 Refer to page 53
Bullying	Steps 3-5
Cheating	Steps 1-3
Defacing school property	Steps 1-3, and restitution
Disruptive behavior during a school function	Steps 3-4
Fighting at school or at school activity – 1st offense	Step 5 Refer to page 103
Fighting at school or at school activity – 2nd offense	Step 6 Refer to page 103
Fire alarm activation	Steps 5-6 Refer to page 63
Gambling	Steps 4-5
Gang activity	Steps 3-5
Harassment, intimidation (bullying), or threatening another student	Steps 2-5
Illegal drug possession, use, or under the influence of	Step 6 Refer to page 55
Improper behavior at school	Step 1
Misbehavior in ISD	Steps 3-5
Open defiance of a teacher or administrator	Steps 1-4
Other behaviors as determined by the administration	Steps 1-5
Physical altercation (pushing, bumping, shoving, horseplay, instigating (boosting) inappropriate behavior, verbal or physical posturing)	Steps 4-6
Possession of noise making devices	Step 1 and confiscation*
Possession or use of dangerous objects (including fireworks)	Steps 3-6
Profanity	Steps 1-2
Profanity or verbal abuse directed towards school personnel	Steps 4-5
Provoking a fight/instigating a disturbance	Steps 1-2
Refusal to identify oneself when requested to do so	Step 1
Selling food or drink	Step 1 confiscation, and disposal
Theft	Steps 2-4 and restitution
Threatening school personnel	Steps 5-6 Refer to page 55
Tobacco use or possession/Vape use or possession	Steps 4-6 Refer to page 52
Verbal altercation	Steps 2-4
Weapon possession or use	Step 6 Refer to page 53

Step 1	1. Contact parent/guardian 2. Assigned a minimum of one to three (1-3) days In-School Detention (ISD) 3. Removal from Discipline Ladder after 45 school days without an administrative referral
Step 2	1. Contact parent/guardian 4. Assigned minimum of three to five (3-5) days of In-School Detention (ISD) 2. Removal from Discipline Ladder after 45 school days without an administrative referral
Step 3	1. Contact parent/guardian 2. Contact proper authorities, if necessary 3. Assigned one to three (1-3) days of Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) or Alternative ISD
Step 4	1. Contact parent/guardian 2. Contact proper authorities, if necessary 3. Assigned a minimum of three to five (3-5) days of Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) 4. Possible Alternative School placement
Step 5	1. Contact parent/guardian 2. Contact proper authorities, if necessary 3. Assigned five to nine (5-9) days of Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) 4. Possible Alternative School placement 5. Possible recommendation for expulsion for one year
Step 6	1. Contact parent/guardian 2. Contact proper authorities, if necessary 3. Assigned (nine (9) days of Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) 4. Possible Alternative School placement 5. Possible recommendation for expulsion for one year

NOTE: The CMSD Discipline Codes are not all-inclusive. CMSD administrators reserve the right to assign the actions of any disciplinary consequences based on severity of the infraction.

Fighting

Physical altercations are extremely disruptive to the educational processes and will not be tolerated. Fighting is defined as an act of aggression in which a person kicks—or attempts to kick, hits—or attempts to hit, or strikes another in an attempt to injure or do bodily harm. “Hitting back” is the same as fighting. The minimum penalty is the same whether or not the student allegedly started the fight or did not. When it can be determined by the school administration, the one who initiates a fight will get a more severe consequence. The severity of the fight may result in additional or increased consequences.

Consequences for fighting at school or at school activity are:

Grade	Offense	Consequence
6 th – 12 th Grade	1 st Offense	5 – 9 Days Alternative In School Detention (ISD) or Out of School Suspension with possible recommendation to alternative school
	2 nd Offense	Up to 10 days Out of School Suspension and recommendation to alternative school or expulsion
Group/Gang related Fight (involving 3 or more students)		Up to 10 days Out of School Suspension and possible recommendation to alternative school or expulsion

Initiations

Fraternities, sororities, clubs or any other organizations are not permitted to hold any form of initiations or hazing at Columbus High School. This includes, but is not limited to, items related to dress, hair, makeup, or speech.

Halls

Students are not allowed in the halls before school without permission. All students should be in the cafeteria. Students are not to leave a teacher's class unless they have a hall pass. The student should go only to the area designated and return immediately to his/her classroom. Students found out of the designated area will be considered cutting class or out of area (SKIPPING). Students are not permitted to wear ear buds or use cell phones in the hallways.

Food and Drink

Students are permitted to eat breakfast, lunch, and snack in designated areas of the school. Healthy food choices are encouraged. Fast food may not be delivered or brought in for breakfast or lunch. Food or milk/drinks may not be taken out of the cafeteria or commons area. Students are permitted to carry water with them during the school day provided that it is in a closed clear container. No other beverages are permitted, including coffee, sodas, or energy drinks.

Delivery of Gifts or Food to Students

Due to the extreme disruption and safety concerns, secondary schools of the Columbus Municipal District will not accept delivery nor be responsible for students receiving flowers, balloons, food for parties or projects, or other favors. Such deliveries should be made to the student at home.

Fundraising

The principal must approve all activities designed to raise money using the school name. All monies are to be turned in to the office and receipted. Only approved fundraisers will be allowed. All students are prohibited from selling candy, food items, or drinks on campus for personal gain. Violators will receive disciplinary consequences. Only board approved fundraisers will be allowed.

CHS administrators and teachers believe that positive reinforcement promotes achievement, team spirit, and good behavior. Therefore, teachers are invited to form partnerships with a business or community partner to support these endeavors. Teachers are encouraged to reward achievement and good behavior in creative ways. Parents, business partners, or other community agencies may sponsor these endeavors. Business and community partners will be recognized in CHS publications for helping Columbus High School achieve its mission of providing a quality education and positive educational experience for every child.

Cheating

Cheating is a very serious offense. Students should not aid someone else to cheat or cheat themselves on their class work, tests, or assignments. Anyone involved in cheating will have his/her work taken up, a grade of zero will be given, and the teacher will notify the parent(s).

Grading System

CMSD School Board Policy JF, IHA

Nine Weeks, Semester and Yearly Averages

1. Nine Weeks Averages

- A. Daily grade average (comprised of daily test, homework, etc.), chapter, weekly, and unit tests make up four-fifths or 80% of the nine-week average.

- B. Nine Weeks test or End of Course Exam will count as one-fifth or 20% of the nine-week's average.
2. **End of Course Average** - To get an end of course average, the two nine-week averages are added and divided by two for the end of course average.
3. **Exemption Policy**– Students who are taking a half credit may be exempt from end of course exams by meeting the criteria below. Students in a full credit course may only be exempt from exams at the end of the course by meeting the following criteria:
- A. With Perfect Attendance:
- 1) All fees/fines must be paid.
 - 2) 90 average for the course
- B. Without Perfect Attendance:
- 1) All fees/fines must be paid.
 - 2) 95 average for the course

Dual Enrollment/Credit Program

CMUSD School Board Policy IDAG

Eligible students may participate in the Dual Enrollment program established by this district. A dual enrolled student is a high school student enrolled in a community or junior college or state institution of higher learning while enrolled in high school. A dual credit student is a student who is enrolled in a community or junior college or state institution of higher learning while enrolled in high school and who is receiving high school and college credit for postsecondary coursework.

Beginning with Fall of 2020, students will be required to have a high school GPA of 3.0. An application and registration paperwork must be completed by the announced deadline each semester.

Honor cord requirements for Dual Credit/Enrollment are as follows:

- Class of 2021 and beyond – 5 dual credit classes with a college GPA of 3.5

The CMUSD will pay for the following courses:

- First semester of participation – 1 class
- Second semester of participation – 2 classes
- Third semester of participation – 3 classes
- Fourth semester of participation – 4 classes

(Note: All courses paid by the CMUSD will be limited to courses listed in Appendix V of the Mississippi Department of Education Procedures Manual for Dual Enrollment. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with the IHL of choice to determine transfer ability of dual credit courses taken. One high school Carnegie unit will be awarded for successful completion of each dual credit course. The final grades from these courses will appear on the student's high school transcript, in addition to the college transcript. Students may take additional dual credit courses at his/her own expense. The final grades from self-pay courses may or may not appear on the high school transcript. This determination must be made, by the student, prior to classes beginning).

Also, dual credit students must maintain a 3.0 GPA each semester to continue in the program. Any student who withdraws from a dual credit course after classes begin, for any reason, will not be able to participate in the program the following semester.

Graduation Requirements

CMSD School Board Policy IHF and IFG

Complete information can be found in the current Academic Guide for Columbus High School. Students and parents share the primary responsibility for knowing the graduation requirements for the student and knowing how many Carnegie units the student must earn in order to meet local and state graduation requirements. Early graduation is an option for students who complete the number of Carnegie units and other existing standards required by both the Mississippi Department of Education and the District prior to completing eight semesters of high school. These students must meet with their counselor to petition to graduate early. Early graduates may participate in the regular spring commencement ceremony.

New Diploma Options

The new diploma options will take effect for incoming ninth graders in the 2018-19 and beyond school year (see charts on following pages). Diploma options include a traditional diploma for all students and an alternate diploma option for students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (SCD). Students will also have the opportunity to earn additional requirements to qualify for a traditional diploma with a Career and Technical Education (CTE) endorsement, an academic endorsement or a distinguished academic endorsement. Students can earn more than one endorsement.

Mississippi Diploma Options

Begins with incoming freshmen of 2018-2019

Mississippi has two diploma options: The Traditional Diploma and the Alternate Diploma. The Traditional Diploma is for all students. The Alternate Diploma is an option for students with a Significant Cognitive Disability (SCD).

TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA OPTION

Curriculum Area	Carnegie Units	Required Subjects
English	4	- English I - English II
Mathematics	4	Algebra I
Science	3	Biology I
Social Studies	3½	1 World History 1 U.S. History ½ U.S. Government ½ Economics ½ Mississippi Studies
Physical Education	½	
Health	½	
Art	1	
College and Career Readiness	1	Must occur in the student's junior or senior year, or in the student completion of a 4-year sequence.
Technology or Computer Science	1	
Additional Electives	5 ½	
Total Units Required	24	

Requirements

- Student must identify an endorsement area prior to entering 9th grade. Endorsement requirements can only be changed with parental permission.
- For early release, students must have met College or Career Readiness Benchmarks (ACT sub scores 17 English and 19 Math or earned a Silver level on ACT WorkKeys or SAT equivalency sub scores). Alternately, a student must meet ALL of the following:
 - Have a 2.5 GPA
 - Passed or met all MAAP assessments requirements for graduation
 - On track to meet diploma requirements
 - Concurrently enrolled in Essentials for College Math or Essentials for College Literacy

Recommendations

- For early graduation, a student should successfully complete an area of endorsement.
- A student should take a math or math equivalent course the senior year.

ALTERNATE DIPLOMA OPTION

Curriculum Area	Carnegie Units	Required Subjects
English	4	Alternate English Elements I-IV
Mathematics	4	- Alternate Math Elements I-III - Alternate Algebra Elements
Science	2	- Alternate Biology Elements - Alternate Science Elements II
Social Studies	2	- Alternate History Elements (Strands: U.S. History and World History) - Alternate Social Studies Elements (Strands: Economics and U.S. Government)
Physical Education	½	
Health	½	Alternate Health Elements
Art	1	
Career Readiness	4	Career Readiness I-IV (Strands: Technology, Systems, Employability, and Social)
Life Skills Development	4	Life Skills Development I-IV (Strands: Technology, Systems, Personal Care, and Social)
Additional Electives	2	
Total Units Required	24	

Requirements

- The Alternate Diploma is not equivalent to a traditional high school diploma and is not recognized by postsecondary entities that require a traditional high school diploma.
- All students are required to participate in the Mississippi Assessment Program-Alternate Assessment (MAAP-A) with a score TBD.
- Students who have met the criteria on their IEP for having a Significant Cognitive Disability (SCD) may participate in a program of study to earn the Alternate Diploma.

October 2017



Traditional Diploma Endorsement Options

Students pursuing a Traditional Diploma must identify an endorsement prior to entering 9th grade. There are three endorsement options: Career and Technical, Academic, and Distinguished Academic Endorsement.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL ENDORSEMENT

Curriculum Area	Carnegie Units	Required Subjects
English	4	• English I • English II
Mathematics	4	• Algebra I
Science	3	• Biology I
Social Studies	3½	• 1 World History • ½ Economics • 1 U.S. History • ½ Mississippi Studies • ½ U.S. Government
Physical Education	½	
Health	½	
Art	1	
College and Career Readiness	1	• Must occur in the student's junior or senior year, or in the student completion of a 4-year sequence.
Technology or Computer Science	1	
CTE Electives	4	• Must complete a four-course sequential program of study
Additional Electives	3 ½	
Total Units Required	26	

Additional Requirements

- Earn an overall GPA of 2.5.
- Earn Silver level on ACT WorkKeys.
- Earn two additional Carnegie Units for a total of 26.
- Must successfully complete one of the following:
 - One CTE dual credit or earn articulated credit in the high school CTE course
 - Work-Based Learning experience or Career Pathway Experience
 - Earn a State Board of Education-approved national credential

ACADEMIC ENDORSEMENT

Curriculum Area	Carnegie Units	Required Subjects
English	4	• English I • English II
Mathematics	4	• Algebra I + two (2) additional math courses above Algebra I
Science	3	• Biology I + two (2) additional science courses above Biology I
Social Studies	3½	• 1 World History • ½ Economics • 1 U.S. History • ½ Mississippi Studies • ½ U.S. Government
Physical Education	½	
Health	½	
Art	1	
College and Career Readiness	1	• Must occur in the student's junior or senior year, or in the student completion of a 4-year sequence.
Technology or Computer Science	1	
Additional Electives	7 ½	• Must meet CPC requirements for MS IHLs
Total Units Required	26	

Additional Requirements

- Earn an overall GPA of 2.5.
- Courses must meet MS IHL college preparatory curriculum (CPC) requirements.
- Earn Mississippi IHL and community college readiness benchmarks (ACT sub scores 17 English and 19 Math as approved by postsecondary for non-remediation at most community colleges and IHL college-ready courses in senior year, or the SAT equivalency subscore).
- Earn two additional Carnegie Units for a total of 26.
- Must successfully complete one of the following:
 - One AP course with a C or higher and take the appropriate AP exam
 - One Diploma Program-IB course with a C or higher and take the appropriate IB exams
 - One academic dual credit course with a C or higher in the course

DISTINGUISHED ACADEMIC ENDORSEMENT

Curriculum Area	Carnegie Units	Required Subjects
English	4	• English I • English II
Mathematics	4	• Algebra I + two (2) additional math courses above Algebra I
Science	4	• Biology I + two (2) additional science courses above Biology I
Social Studies	4	• 1 World History • ½ Economics • 1 U.S. History • ½ Mississippi Studies • ½ U.S. Government
Physical Education	½	
Health	½	
Art	1	
College and Career Readiness	1	• Must occur in the student's junior or senior year, or in the student completion of a 4-year sequence.
Technology or Computer Science	1	
Additional Electives	8	• Must meet CPC requirements for MS IHLs
Total Units Required	28	

Additional Requirements

- Earn an overall GPA of 3.0.
- Courses must meet Mississippi IHL CPC-recommended requirements.
- Earn national college readiness benchmarks on each subtest established by ACT of 18 in English and 22 in Math or SAT equivalency subscore.
- Earn four additional Carnegie Units for a total of 28.
- Must successfully complete one of the following:
 - One AP course with a B or higher and take the appropriate AP exam
 - One Diploma Program-IB course with a B or higher and take the appropriate IB exams
 - One academic dual credit course with a B or higher in the course

October 2017

Honor Roll

CMSD School Board Policies JF

The honor roll designations at CHS are composed of the Superintendent's List and Principal's List. Those students with a 90-100 (A) in every subject will be on the Superintendent's List; those students with a minimum of 80-89 (B) in every subject will be on the Principal's List. Honor Roll will be determined at the end of each nine weeks.

Honor Clubs/Societies

Beta Club Membership – Beta Club is an honorary society for students in the 9th through 12th grades who maintain a QPA of 3.0 and pass a teacher evaluation of their demonstration of character, responsibility, and leadership. Students become eligible for membership after their first semester at Columbus High School. Beta Club is associated with the National Beta Club and shares in its goal of leading by serving both the school and community.

Any student whose QPA falls below the minimum 3.0 will be placed on probation for one semester. A probationary letter of notification will be given to the student(s). After one semester, a review will be conducted to re-evaluate the student's eligibility.

Senior Beta members are required to maintain active membership during their senior year and participate in 100 service hours (9th-12th) to receive honor cords.

National Honor Society Membership – Membership in the National Honor Society is recognized nationally as one of the highest honors bestowed upon high school students. A high-grade point average is not the only requirement for membership, although students must maintain a QPA of 3.25 in their major academic subjects to belong. Members of the CHS faculty and staff select students for their leadership qualities, service activities, and character as well as their academic achievement.

Students must not have any discipline referrals and have good attendance. Students are automatically removed from the organization if they are assigned ISD or OSS. Grades are reviewed regularly, and students may not have more than one C to maintain membership. Students are placed on probation if they do not complete the required number of service hours.

Seniors receive the National Honor Society Lead by Example cord or stole. Stoles are bestowed upon students graduating with a 4.0 QPA or higher.

National Technical Honor Society (NTHS) – The NTHS is a non-profit, honorary organization that honors excellence in workforce programs. The goal of the society is to see that deserving career and technical students are recognized and that people of the community become aware of the talents and abilities of the young people who chose technical pathways to a successful future. To qualify for NTHS, a student must be a current completer at McKellar (enrolled in the advanced class), have an overall high school GPA of 3.0, have a 4.0 in his/her McKellar class, and have no discipline infractions at McKellar.

Senior members of the NTHS are eligible to purchase an honor cord to wear at graduation. Purchase of an honor cord is optional and members are noted on the graduation program regardless of cord purchase. NTHS Induction Ceremony is held each year in May for current completers at the annual McKellar Honors Night.

National Spanish Honor Society Membership – The National Spanish Honor Society is a nationally recognized organization sponsored by the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese. Students become eligible for induction after successfully completing three semesters of Spanish with an A

average. Typically, students are inducted in the spring of the Spanish 2 year, although it is possible to be inducted in during the Spanish 3 year.

Library Information

Library hours are 7:45 AM to 3:50 PM. Library books that are not on reserve may be checked out for two weeks. A fine of 5¢ per day is charged for each day a book is kept overdue. Reserved books for specific assignments (such as term papers) are housed behind the circulation desk and may be checked out for use overnight. If checked out for overnight, books must be checked out when the student leaves school and returned before 1st period the next day. A fine of 50¢ per day is charged for each day a reserved book is kept overdue.

Reference books marked "Ref" on the spine may be used only in the library. Computers are available for student reference use. Students must have an assignment to use the computers. Printers are available.

A student must pay for lost or damaged books. The current publisher's price will be charged for reference, fiction, and non-fiction books. Any barcode missing when a book is returned will result in a fine of \$5. Stealing and/or defacing library materials deprives other students of the use of those materials and will result in strong disciplinary action by an administrator. No book bags or cases will be allowed in the library reference area.

Rank in Class

CMSD School Board Policies IHC

Rank in class for seniors will be determined using a weighted Quality Point Average (QPA). However, Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be determined by using a weighted numeric average. The Valedictorian will be ranked as the number one student and the Salutatorian will be ranked as the number two student regardless of their QPA.

The Following procedure will be used in determining the Valedictorian and the Salutatorian:

1. The senior counselor will receive a ranked list of all seniors based on a weighted Quality Point Average.
2. The numeric average for those students with a 4.0 QPA or higher will be computed.
3. Before the numeric average is computed, the Senior Counselor will weigh the honors, accelerated, advanced placement, and dual credit courses by adding 3 points to the final numeric average of all accelerated or honors courses; and 5 points to the final numeric average of all advanced placement, and dual credit courses. The student with the highest numeric average will be Valedictorian and the student with the second highest will be the Salutatorian provided they have completed the college prep curriculum.

If two or more students have an identical average, co-winners will be named (identical means having the same score carried to the hundredths place). In order to be considered for Valedictorian or Salutatorian the following criteria must be met:

1. Student must be enrolled at CHS by September 1 of the 9th grade year and remain consecutively enrolled until graduation.
2. Student must be classified as a Senior on August 1 of the school year he/she plans to graduate.

Preliminary ranking will be computed at the end of the junior year (6 semesters) with yearly averages counted twice and semester averages counted once. Final rank in class will be determined at the end of the fourth nine weeks of the senior year with yearly averages counted twice and semester averages counted once. The averages are ranked in descending order.

All major courses are used in determining the quality point and numeric averages. Minor courses (P.E., Band, Art, Driver's Education and Music) are not computed. All major courses attempted in high school beginning with the ninth grade are included. Major courses taken in eighth grade in which the student earned high school credit will also be included in the numeric average and the quality point average. To determine the QPA, the total number of quality points are added together and divided by the number of semesters attempted.

Reports to Parents

CMSD School Board Policy IHA

At the 4-5 week mark of each nine weeks, a progress report will be sent to the parents. These reports are to be signed by the parents and returned to the teacher. At the end of each nine-week grading period, a report card is sent home to parents. Reporting periods are specifically noted on the district calendar found in the *Calendars and Schedule* section of this handbook. Parents are cordially invited to visit the school and confer with the administration or counselors about the progress of their child. The counselors will be glad to arrange a conference with your child's teachers.

Students who need to see a counselor must see them during a free period with a pass from their teacher or see them before or after school.

Schedule Changes

Students are given ample time in the spring to select the courses they will take the following fall. If a course is failed or some unforeseen conflict arises, there is an adjustment period during the summer months. During the first week of school, only administrator approved schedule changes will be made. Priority will be given to seniors that may not be meeting graduation requirements due to the chosen schedule. Also, obvious scheduling errors created through the scheduling process will be given priority. ALL class changes must be accompanied by written permission from the parent, counselor, and principal. A counselor will communicate with both teachers about the changes and the grades. The principal must clear all class changes.

Students will be given their schedules of classes at the beginning of the year. These schedules will not be changed unless there is a scheduling conflict, an error, or it can be determined by the principal, parent, counselor, teacher, and student that the change will be beneficial. Changes will not be made for reasons such as dislike of teacher or desire to be in a different section.

Telephone Use by Students

Students will not use the office phone except in extreme emergencies or for school business and ONLY then with staff permission. To use the phone, students must have a pass from their teacher. Incoming calls to students will not be accepted unless of an emergency nature. Use of the phone is not an excuse for tardiness. Phones are located in each administrator's office and in the attendance office.

Testing

Pop tests, vocabulary tests, daily quizzes, and similar quizzes are not considered as weekly tests and may be given at the teacher's discretion.

Nine Weeks Tests will be administered in all subjects. Tests administered at Columbus High School will simulate state assessments. The testing environments will allow for comfortable seating, good lighting, quiet setting, and adequate working space. It is imperative that students be tested under optimal physical conditions. During testing, teachers will maintain a natural classroom atmosphere which will encourage students to do their best.

If a student voluntarily walks out of a classroom during testing, the test will be invalidated, the student will receive a grade of zero (0) for the test, and the test cannot be made up.

Tutoring

Columbus High provides an opportunity for students to receive extra help, work on assignments, and take/retake missed tests. On a regular basis, teachers stay after school from 3:45 – 5:00 to provide individual tutoring. Each teacher will indicate his/her schedule for tutoring on the class syllabus. Students are encouraged to join tutoring sessions. They're free!

Vehicle Regulations

CMSD School Board Policy JGFF

Since there are occasions when the driver of an automobile must be identified, students who bring cars on campus must purchase a parking permit from the office so that a record can be kept.

Driving a vehicle to CHS is a privilege. Since there are occasions when the driver of an automobile must be identified, students who bring cars on campus must purchase a parking permit from the office so that a record can be kept. Students may be suspended from driving a vehicle if school rules are not followed or if any action in the parking lot endangers the safety of CHS students. The following rules are for the safety and protection of CHS students:

1. All cars must have a CHS parking decal and current tag. In order to purchase a CHS parking decal the driver must show proof of in-force insurance and a valid driver's license. Tickets will be issued to vehicles without the proper CHS decal. Cars without the proper sticker are subject to being towed at the owner's expense.
2. Once the student comes on campus, his/her car must be parked, and all occupants must exit the vehicle and come into the building. No loitering in the parking lot before or after school.
3. Students shall be responsible for locking their vehicles upon arrival since the school district shall assume no responsibility for any loss.
4. Students must park in the student parking lot and nowhere else. (No parking in the teacher parking lot, McKellar Technology Center or north parking area).
5. Any unsafe vehicle is prohibited from campus.
6. Seatbelts are to be worn by all vehicle occupants on the CHS campus. That is state law.
7. No riding on the outside of any vehicle on the CHS campus. (Example: back of a truck, on the hood, top, or trunk of a car).
8. Student pick-up after school by anyone must occur in the loop by the front school entrance or in the first row of parking nearest the building.
9. No waiting for or picking up of students will be allowed in the parking lot except on the first row nearest the building.
10. Students from other schools, friends, visitors or relatives are not allowed in the student parking lot without permission from an administrator. People in violation are trespassing!
11. Students who leave school before the final bell each day should leave campus immediately and not re-enter the campus until the other students have exited. Exceptions are students making up work or have required after school or 4th block activities. Those students should park and exit their vehicle immediately and enter the building.
12. Students are not allowed to "hangout" in the school parking lot at the end of their school day. Students should exit the parking lot immediately.
13. Students are not allowed to go to their vehicle at any time during school hours unless permitted by an administrator.
14. The district shall not assume any responsibility for damage to vehicles.

Visitors on Campus

Parents and guardians are cordially invited to visit their child's school. In order to maintain a safe climate and to protect instructional time, all visitors must check in through the front desk of the office and present ID. Only individuals who are issued a VISITOR'S BADGE may go to designated areas. An escort may be provided.

1. Classroom visits and/or observations during instructional time must be arranged by appointment through an administrator.
2. Impromptu conferences or conversations by a parent with a teacher during times when children are in the classroom for instruction cannot be permitted as it violates the students' right to learn.
3. Parent conferences with a teacher must be scheduled before or after school or during the teacher's planning time.
4. Due to security concerns and the value of undisturbed academic time, no student visitors are allowed on campus. This rule also applies to visiting students during non-class time (lunch, class changes, etc.).
5. Visitors are requested to wear attire that meets dress code standards and to refrain from using cell phones while in the building.
6. Visitors are asked to wear the visitor badge while in the building and to sign out at the office at the conclusion of the visit.
7. Picture taking or video recording is permitted at special events only.
8. Visitors on school premises are not allowed to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol and are subject to arrest in conformity with state law.

Trespassing

Unauthorized presence on school property will constitute trespassing. Such persons may be requested to leave the premise by school personnel or by a law enforcement officer. Failing to comply with any of the above regulations shall be considered trespassing and in violation of the rules and regulations of the school district and shall be liable for prosecution in conformity with state law.

Web Page

We welcome parents and community members to visit our school's web page designed by students. The web address is www.columbuscityschools.org/chs.

1:1 Laptop Initiative Usage Rules

- All students are issued a laptop to be used in the classroom for learning purposes.
- Because every student is issued an electronic device, cell phones will not be allowed during the instructional day (7:45 AM – 3:45 PM). Refer to Cell Phone/Electronic Device Guidelines above.
- Students must bring their electronic device to school every day.
- The electronic device must be fully charged each day.
- Teachers will decide when the electronic devices will be used within the lesson.
- Students are to use the electronic device for instructional purposes only. Students are not to watch movies, You-Tube videos, etc. unless these items are related to the subject area.
- Electronic devices, headphones, earbuds, etc. cannot be used in the hallways.
- The electronic device may not be used to record, transmit, post or take photos or videos of any student or staff member.
- When using the electronic device in a classroom setting, students will login and access the dedicated internet site for CHS.
- Students must follow all guidelines found within the district acceptable use policy.
- Students are SOLELY responsible for the electronic device assigned to them.

- Students are not to loan out their electronic device.
- Students are not to share their passwords with other students.
- The use of a school issued electronic device is a privilege, not a right; therefore, students not adhering to the rules will receive discipline consequences up to and including an office referral.

Student Purchase of District Issued Technology

The Columbus Municipal School Board of Trustees authorizes the sale of district issued computers, peripheral equipment and adaptive devices to students enrolled in Grade 12 that have satisfied all the requirements for graduation, to whom such devices and equipment have been issued during the course of the current academic school year.

Cost

Students meeting the criteria who verify to the school of enrollment before graduation an official document of acceptance to any Mississippi two-year or four-year college or university, whether public or private, shall be required to pay One Dollar (\$1.00) for the cost of the district-issued computer device or peripheral equipment or adaptive device. (A copy of the College acceptance letter must be provided to the school.)

Students meeting the requirements of this section who cannot sufficiently verify acceptance to a Mississippi two-year or four-year college or university shall be required to pay Seventy-five Dollars (\$75.00) for the cost of the district-issued computer device or peripheral equipment. Verification of college acceptance must be submitted before the deadline for finalizing graduation eligibility.

Prior to Completing Sale

Students' devices must have all district software, policies, and any other district related items deleted from the machine before the completion of the sale. Students must deliver the device to the designated district employee to handle the deletion process. If students have any personal data they would like to save, the district suggests that they make a backup of it prior to returning it to the district. The district will not be liable for any missing personal data. Once the process is complete, the device is returned to the student and the sale may be completed.

Sales and Proceeds

All sales shall be final and without warranty of merchantability, given the prior and extended use of the computer, equipment or adaptive device by the purchasing student. All proceeds received from the sale of district issued computers, peripheral equipment and adaptive device to students shall be deposited into the school maintenance fund as by the Mississippi Code of 1972 Section 37-3-457.

The superintendent or designee shall establish procedures for the implementation of this policy.