MERIDIAN
PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT



2026–2027
Code of Conduct and Student Handbook

Meridian Public School District

Student Handbook and Code of Conduct

for Grades Pre-K-12

MERIDIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT
Meridian, Mississippi

MERIDIAN
PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

Explanation of Contents in Student Handbook

The contents of this student handbook are an abbreviated outline of the minimum expectations of the students with respect to attendance, discipline, and procedural policy. The Meridian Public School District Policy fully outlines the procedural policies for the entire district and may override any policy contained in this handbook, particularly in cases of a severe nature.

The administration of the Meridian Public School District reserves the right to make alterations and changes in policy when deemed necessary, pending adequate notice to parents and students regarding these policy adjustments. Any changes to the 2026-2027 Student Handbook/Code of Conduct can be found on our website at www.mpsdk12.net.

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Meridian Students, Staff, and Families,
Welcome to the 2026–2027 school year! It is my honor and privilege to welcome you back to Meridian Public School District, where every day is an opportunity to learn, grow, and lead. Whether you are joining us for the first time or returning for another exciting year, know that you are an important part of our Wildcat family.



At Meridian Public School District, we believe education is about more than earning grades—it is about preparing students for life. This year, we will continue expanding opportunities that help every student discover their strengths, explore career pathways, and develop the knowledge, skills, and character needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Our vision is that every graduate leaves Meridian prepared for one of the **Four E's**:
- **Enroll** in a college, university, or technical program,
- **Enlist** in military service,
- **Become Employed** in a meaningful career, or
- Pursue **Entrepreneurship** by creating opportunities for themselves and others.

Beginning in our earliest grades and continuing through graduation, we are committed to helping students connect classroom learning to real-world experiences. Through our career academies, workforce partnerships, dual credit opportunities, career and technical education, and leadership development, we are preparing learners not only for graduation—but for successful futures.

This Student Handbook and Code of Conduct serves as a guide for creating safe, respectful, and productive learning environments across our district. I encourage every student and family to read it carefully and become familiar with our expectations, policies, and procedures. When students, families, and schools share a common understanding of expectations, we create stronger partnerships that lead to greater success.

- **To our students:** Come to school every day ready to learn, prepared to work hard, and determined to grow. Challenge yourself academically, explore new opportunities, discover your passions, and begin thinking about your future today. Every class, every activity, and every relationship helps prepare you for the path you choose after graduation.
- **To our families:** Thank you for entrusting us with your children. Your encouragement, involvement, and partnership make a lasting difference. Together, we can help every student develop the confidence, responsibility, and resilience needed to reach their fullest potential.
- **To our outstanding faculty and staff:** Thank you for your unwavering commitment to our students and community. Your dedication, compassion, and professionalism inspire excellence every day. Together, we will continue creating classrooms where students are challenged, supported, and inspired to dream bigger than ever before.

As we begin this new school year, let us embrace every opportunity with optimism, purpose, and Wildcat pride. Together, we will build a culture of excellence where every student is prepared for college, career, military service, or entrepreneurship and where every learner is empowered to become a leader.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support of Meridian Public School District. I wish each of you a safe, successful, and rewarding 2026–2027 school year.
Together, we will continue building a brighter future - **Where Learners Become Leaders.**

Amy J. Carter

Dr. Amy J. Carter
Superintendent of Education

MERIDIAN
PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

ATTENDANCE POLICY CHANGES: *OLD vs. NEW*

PREVIOUS POLICY (OLD)	REVISED POLICY (NEW)
Parent/guardian could excuse up to **5 absences per year** with a note.	Student may receive up to **5 excused absences per semester** (includes parent notes and medical excuses).
No specific requirement regarding documentation was required for illness-related absences.	Absences due to illness or injury beyond the **3rd absence** require medical documentation.
Unlimited medical excuses were permitted with appropriate documentation.	Additional excused absences beyond the semester limit require **principal approval** for extenuating circumstances.
Student had to attend 63% of the school day to be counted present.	Student must attend **66%** of the school day to be counted present for the full day.
Student could participate in school-sponsored activities if absent for up to 37% of the day.	Student may not participate in school-sponsored activities if absent for **more than 33%** of the day.

ATTEND TODAY. ACHIEVE TOMORROW.

Every Day. Every Scholar. Every Opportunity.

MERIDIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

1019 25th Avenue
Meridian, MS 39301
Phone: 601-483-6271

SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Amy J. Carter

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS

Dr. Phatasis O'Harroll

Assistant Superintendent of Academic Support

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Director of Student Services ..... Dr. Jackie McFarland
Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment ..... Dr. Melanie Jackson
Chief Fiscal Officer..... Carolyn Davis
Director of Human Resources..... Kim Kendrick
Director of Public Relations..... Matt Davis
Director of Federal Programs..... Dr. Christine Beeker
Director of Special Education..... Fred Liddell
Director of the Arts ..... Dr. Antonio Altman
Director of Alternative Education..... Dr. Harrison Michael
Director of Technology..... Tim Boutwell
Director of Athletics ..... Dr. Cheyenne Trussell
Director of Transportation ..... Jayson Chisolm
Director of Operations ..... Clay Sims
Director of Food Services ..... Louise D. McPhee
Director of Security ..... Chief Cornelius Parks

2026-2027 Academic Calendar

MERIDIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

◆ Holidays | ◆ Students | ◆ Teachers
◆ Parent/Teacher Conference Day

BOARD APPROVED CALENDAR ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026.

August 2026

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

September 2026

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

October 2026

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

November 2026

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

December 2026

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

January 2027

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

February 2027

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

March 2027

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

April 2027

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

May 2027

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

◆ **Holidays:** All Schools and Offices Closed.
September 7: Labor Day
October 12-16: Fall Break
November 23-27: Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 21, 2026-Jan. 4, 2027: Winter Break
Jan. 18: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Mar. 15-19: Spring Break
Mar. 26 & 29: Easter Break
May 31: Memorial Day

◆ **Students**
First Day: August 7, 2026
60% Day: December 18, 2026
Start of 2nd Semester: January 5, 2027
Last Day (60% Day): May 27, 2027

◆ **Teachers**
Professional Development: August 3-6, 2026
Professional Development: January 4, 2027
Professional Development: May 28, 2027

◆ **Parent/Teacher Conferenceces**
October 7, 2026 and February 17, 2027.
Student are in school these days. Conferences will take place after early dismissal.

Nine Weeks
1st Nine Weeks: August 7-October 5, 2026
2nd Nine Weeks: October 4-December 18, 2026
3rd Nine Weeks: January-March 10, 2027

Further revisions to the school calendar will be decided in the best academic interests of students by the Superintendent/Board of Education. Please note: Testing dates are determined by the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) and will be published for students and parents once available. Calendar may be subject to change.

MERIDIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment
2026-2027 Assessment Calendar

MERIDIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

FALL SEMESTER*		
ASSESSMENT	**TESTING WINDOW**	**PARTICIPANTS**
Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (BOY)	August 7th - 21st	PreK-K
Star Reading Adolescent Literacy Screening (BOY)	August 7th - 21st	4th - 8th
Star Math Numeracy Screening (BOY)	August 7th - 21st	K - 5th
ELPA21 Dynamic Screener	August 7th - May 27th	K- 12 (EL)
iReady Diagnostic Reading & Math (BOY)	August 7th - 21st	K - 8th
PreK Brigance Screening	August 7th - September 4th	PreK
Gifted Screening	August 17th - August 20th	3rd
SAT	**August 22nd**	**9th - 12th**
ACT	**September 19th**	**9th - 12th**
District Benchmark 1 (Traditional/Semester)	Optional September 28-October 9, 2026	K - 12th/ Retesters
SAT	**September 12th**	**9th - 12th**
Dyslexia Screening	September 1st - October 16th	1st
Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT)	**October 17th**	**10th - 11th**
ACT	**October 17th**	**9th - 12th**
ACT WorkKeys - Fall (Online)	October 19th - December 6th	10th - 12th
ACT WorkKeys - Fall Paper	October 19th - November 13th	10th - 12th
ASVAB	October - November	12th
SAT	**October 3rd**	**9th - 12th**
Star Reading Adolescent Literacy Screening (MOY)	November 16th - December 18th	4th - 8th

Legend: National Assessments State Assessments District Assessments

*Progress Monitoring (STAR) and Growth Monitoring (iReady) should be given in months without a diagnostic/benchmark. *Dates are subject to change at national, state, and/or district discretion. [Revised July 2026]*

Star Math Numeracy Screening (MOY)	November 16th - December 18th	K - 5th
ASSESSMENT	**TESTING WINDOW**	**PARTICIPANTS**
MS Academic Assessment Program (MAAP)	November 30th - December 18th	9th - 12th/ Retesters
SAT	November 7th	9th - 12th
MS Academic Assessment Program (MAAP-A)	November 30th - December 18th	Retest/4x4Block
iReady Diagnostic Reading & Math (MOY)	December 2nd - December 18th	K - 8th
Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (MOY)	December 2nd - December 18th	PreK - K
District Benchmark 2 (Traditional)	December 7th - December 18th	K - 12th
SAT	December 5th	9th - 12th
ACT	December 12th	9th - 12th

SPRING SEMESTER*		
ASSESSMENT	**TESTING WINDOW**	**PARTICIPANTS**
National Assessment of Academic Progress (NAEP)	January 25th - March 19th	Selected 4th & 8th
Gifted Screening	January 26th -29th	1st
ACT	February 27th	9th - 12th
ASVAB	February - April	12th
ACT (Online/Accommodated Window 1)	February 23rd - March 5th	11th
District Benchmark 3 (Traditional/Semester)	March 1st - March 12th	3rd - 12th/ Retesters
English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT)	March 1st - April 16th	K-12th ELs
ACT Work Keys- Spring (Online)	March 1st - April 16th	10th - 12th

Legend: National Assessments | State Assessments | District Assessments

*Progress Monitoring (STAR) and Growth Monitoring (iReady) should be given in months without a diagnostic/benchmark. *Dates are subject to change at national, state, and/or district discretion. [Revised July 2026]*

MERIDIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment
2026-2027 Assessment Calendar

MERIDIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

ACT Work Keys- Spring (Paper)	March 1st- April 26th	10th - 12th
ASSESSMENT	**TESTING WINDOW**	**PARTICIPANTS**
MS Academic Assessment Program - Alternate (MAAP-A)	March 15th - May 07th	3rd - 12th SCD
SAT	March 6th	9th - 12th
ACT Online/ Accommodated Window 2	March 23rd -April 2nd	11th
MS Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) Early Window	April 5th - April 16th	G3 Reading/ Graduation Seniors/ Early Graduates
PreK Brigance Screening	April 1st - 23rd	PreK
District Benchmark 3 (Traditional)	April 5th - April 16th	K-2nd
MS Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) - LBPA Initial	April 05th – April 16th	3rd ELA
iReady Diagnostic Reading and Math (EOY)	April 12th - May 14th	K-8th
Dyslexia Screening	April 5th - 16th	K
Star Reading Adolescent Literacy Screening (EOY)	April 12th - May 14th	4th - 8th
Star Math Numeracy Screening (EOY)	April 12th - May 14th	K - 5th
ACT	April 10th	9th - 12th
Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (EOY)	April 12th - May 14th	PreK-K
ACT (Online/ Accommodated Window 3	April 20th - April 30th	11th
MS Academic Assessment Program (MAAP)	April 26th - May 21st	3rd - 11th/ Retesters
SAT	May 1st	9th - 12th
MS Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) -LBPA Retest 1	May 10th – May 14th	3rd ELA
Advanced Placement (AP) Exams	May	9th - 12th
SAT	June 5th	9th - 12th
ACT	July 10th	9th - 12th
ACT	June 12th	9th - 12th
MS Academic Assessment Program (MAAP)- LBPA Retest 2	June 21th – June 25th	3rd ElA

- Universal Screeners: To receive an SGP or CBM score for MOY, test after December 1 st

Legend: National Assessments State Assessments District Assessments

*Progress Monitoring (STAR) and Growth Monitoring (iReady) should be given in months without a diagnostic/benchmark. *Dates are subject to change at national, state, and/or district discretion. [Revised July 2026]*

- Parents must receive written notification of a substantial deficit in reading within ten (10) business days of administering the BOY, MOY, or EOY screener.
- Both Grade 3 ELA sessions must be administered during the initial Grade 3 testing window (April 5–16, 2027) to ensure scores are available for retest assignments.

2025-2026 Handbook & Code of Conduct Pre-K-12
TABLE OF CONTENTS
SECTION I: RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Student Rights 1
Rights and Responsibilities 1
- Student Rights 1
- Responsibilities of Students - Appropriate Social and Academic Behavior 1
- Responsibilities of Parents 1
- Responsibilities of Teachers 2
- Responsibilities of School Administrators 2
- Responsibilities of District Administrators 2

Rights and Responsibilities of Students Regarding Attendance 2
- Compulsory Attendance - Grades K-12 2
- Age Requirements 2
- Reporting 3

School Attendance Officer 3
- Elementary/Secondary K-12 3
- Make-Up Work 4
- Homebound Students 4

Rights and Responsibilities of Students Regarding Unlawful Absences/Valid Excuses 4
Rights and Responsibilities of Students Regarding Respect for Persons and Property 5
- Grades K-12 5
- Special Education Students (K-12) 5

Rights and Responsibilities of Students Regarding Knowledge and Observation of Rules of Conduct 5
- Prescribing Disciplinary Measures 6
- Make-Up Work During Suspension 6
- State Law - Interference With School Operation 7

Rights and Responsibilities of Students Regarding Free Speech and Student Publications 7
Rights and Responsibilities of Students Regarding Assembly and Participation in School Programs/Activities 7
Rights and Responsibilities of Students Regarding Privacy 8
Due Process 8
Appeals 10

SECTION II: ADMISSION/ATTENDANCE/ABSENCES

Admission 11
- Attendance in Zone of Residence 11
- Entrance Ages 11
- Previously Enrolled in Another State 11
- Birth Certificate 11

Immunizations 11
Records 11
Attendance 12
School Arrival and Dismissal Times 12
Wednesday Dismissal 12
Absences 12
66% Attendance Law 13
Leaving School Before Dismissal Time 13
Unlawful Absences/Valid Excuses 13
Absence Excuse Form 15

SECTION III: ACADEMICS K-8

Family Rights and Privacy Act 16
District Grading Practices 16
Progress Reports 16
Progress Report Dates 17
PowerSchool Parent Portal 17
Report Cards 17
Report Card Dates 17
Grading Scale 17
Promotion/Retention Policy 17
Grading Practices 17
Promotion/Retention Policy Grades K-8 17
Literacy Based Promotion 18
Intensive Reading Instruction and Intervention 18
Parent Notification of Reading Deficiency 19
Social Promotion Prohibited 20
Good Cause Promotion 20
Good Cause Request 21
Retaining Third Grade Students 21
Parent Notification of Third Grade Retention 21
Intensive Acceleration 21
Annual Report 22
Intervention Process 22

SECTION IV: ACADEMICS 9-12

Academic Dishonesty 24
Cheating 24
Plagiarism 24
Artificial Intelligence 24
Academic Letters 24
Academic Regulations 24

Grading--Numerical Range 24
Classification Requirements-24 Units 25
Class Standing 25
Valedictorian and Salutatorian 2012 and After 25
Grade Point Average/Quality Points 26
Exams 26
Exam and Grading Guidelines 26
Exemption Policy 27
Graduation 27
Graduation Ceremonies 27
Graduation Practice 28
Special Education Graduation Requirements 28
Mississippi Diploma Options 29
Scheduling 31
Registration Guidelines 31
Requirements for Early Work Release 31
Dual Credit 31
Dropping/Adding a Course 31
Testing 32
Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) 32
Advanced Placement Program 33
American College Test (ACT) 33
Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT) 34
Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) 34
Cursive Writing Assessment 34

SECTION V: PUBLIC INFORMATION

Food Services 35
Breakfast/Lunch 35
School Lunch 35
Offer Versus Serve 35
Special Dietary Needs 35
Medication Policy 35
Communicable Diseases 36
Head Lice Policy 37
Emergency Procedures 37
First Aid 37
Insurance 38
Parent Teacher Associations 38
Title I Parent Involvement Policy 38
Education for Homeless Children and Youth 39

Definitions 39
Services to be Provided 40
Limited English Proficiency Instruction 41
Identification 41
Requirements 41
Complaints-Title I 42
Gifted Program 42
Intellectually Gifted 42
Referral Process 43
Internet Acceptable Use Policy 48
Technologies Covered 48
Consequences of Policy Violation 49
Student Data Privacy and Protection 49
Monitoring and Privacy 49
Acceptable Uses of Technology 49
Email 50
Digital Citizenship 51
Artificial Intelligence 51
Cyber bullying 51
Social Media 51
District Issued Devices 51
Vandalism 51
Filtering 51
General Information 52
Homework 52
Textbooks 52
Field Trips 53
Library 53
Music (K-5) 53
Physical Education (K-5) 53
Physical Education (6-8) 53
Personal and Valuable Items 53
Money 53
School Pictures 53
Pets 53
Fund-raising 53
School parties (K-5) 54
Appearance of Buildings and Campus 54
Procedures for Visitors on Campus 54
Campus/Building Visitor Identification Badges 54
Procedures for School Visitation 54

SECTION VI: PROACTIVE APPROACHES TO DISCIPLINE

Introduction 55
Parents as Partners 55
Promoting Positive Student Behavior 55
Prevention and Intervention 555

SECTION VII: CODE OF CONDUCT

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) 57
Discipline Plan Grades Pre-K-12 57
Student Discipline 57
    Classroom Discipline 58
    Classification of Offenses 58
Level 1 Infractions (Staff Managed) 58
Level 2 Infractions (Teacher/Administrator Managed) 59
Level 3 Infractions (Administrator Managed) 59
Level 4 Infractions (Administrator Managed) 59
Level 5 Infractions (Administrator Managed) 59
Cell Phone/Electronic Devices 80
School Dress 80
Uniform Policy 80
    Additional Uniform Requirements 81
    Unacceptable Dress 81
Tardy & Truancy Code of Conduct 82
Elementary & Secondary Consequences 83
Non-Exclusionary Discipline 83
    Detention 84
    In-School Detention 84
    After-School Detention 84
Exclusionary Discipline 85
    Discipline and Make-Up Assignments 85
Suspension 85
    In-School Suspension 85
    Out-of-School Suspension 85
    Suspension of Special Education Students (Grades K-12) 86
Expulsion 86
Parental Assistance Program 87
Exclusion of Students Against Whom Court Charges Have Been Filed 87
Enrollment of Students Suspended or Expelled from Other School Systems 87
Attendance at School-Sponsored Events 87
School Searches 87
Drugs and Alcohol 88
Bus Transportation 88

Cafeteria Behavior 89
Bullying 89
Cyber Stalking/Cyber Bullying 90
Weapons 91
Firearms 91
Other Weapons – Use Of 91
Other Weapons – Possession Of 91
Sexual Harassment 92
Alternative School Placement Procedures 92
Entry Criteria for Placement 92
Guidelines for Length of Placement, Review of Student Behavior Progress, and Provisions for Transition Back to Home School 93
Guidelines for the Provision of Culturally Sensitive Tiered Behavioral Supports 93
Guidelines for Provision of Mental Health or Rehabilitation Services 94
Guidelines for Curriculum 94
Leaving the Alternative School Before Dismissal Time 94
Attendance at School-Sponsored Events 95
Definitions 95
Discipline Complaint Procedures and Form 97
Asbestos Notification 98

SECTION I: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

STUDENT RIGHTS

To ensure order and continuity in the educational program of the school district, it is essential that the rights and responsibilities of students be considered and protected.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Student Rights

1. Right To a Public Education: Each student has a right to a public education and the equal opportunities associated with this right, which includes school programs and activities.
2. Right To Freedom of Expression: Students have the right to express their opinions verbally or in writing as long as it does not disrupt the learning process or threaten harm to another person.
3. Right To Privacy: Each student has the right to expect that academic records are confidential and can only be inspected by eligible students, parents/ guardians, school officials, and other persons or organizations as permitted under law.
4. Right To Due Process: Each student has a right to due process and to disciplinary hearings as outlined by district policy.
5. Right To Be Free From Unreasonable Search and Seizure: Students have the right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures in accordance with district policy and federal and state law.

Responsibilities of Students – Appropriate Social and Academic Behavior

1. Attend all classes daily, and be punctual in attendance.
2. Come to class prepared, and have appropriate working materials.
3. Be respectful of all individuals and property.
4. Behave in a safe, respectful and responsible manner.
5. Abide by the rules and regulations of the school and each classroom teacher.
6. Dress appropriately and be neatly groomed.
7. Promptly report problems to the teacher, any other supervising adult and parent. If reported to parent, the parent should contact the principal immediately.

Responsibilities of Parents

1. Read the Code of Student Conduct
2. Support your child in following the Code of Student Conduct
3. Understand your child's rights and responsibilities
4. Teach your child to respect the rights of others
5. Teach your child to respect adults, school property and the property of others
6. Recognize that school personnel must enforce the Code of Student Conduct
7. Seek available resources to support your child within the school and the community
8. Make sure your child comes to school every day on time and ready to learn
9. Make sure your child attends school every day and does not exceed five absences per semester. Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law- MS Code §37-13-91

Responsibilities of Teachers

1. Use appropriate classroom management strategies to maintain a learning environment that supports academic success
2. Teach and positively reinforce the Code of Student Conduct
3. Provide corrective instruction to students who demonstrate challenging behavior
4. Address behaviors through a variety of interventions such as Positive Behavior Support and Restorative Practices.
5. Use professional judgment to prevent minor incidents from becoming major challenges
6. Request additional training or staff development as needed
7. Employees are expected to maintain regular, punctual attendance and minimize avoidable absences to ensure high-quality instruction and continuity of learning for all students.

Responsibilities of School Administrators

1. Distribute the Code of Student Conduct to students, parents and all school personnel
2. Implement the Code of Student Conduct in a fair and consistent manner
3. Review discipline referrals and determine appropriate intervention and/or consequence
4. Address behaviors through a variety of interventions such as Positive Behavior Support and restorative practices including alternatives to suspension and expulsion
5. Use professional judgment to prevent minor incidents from becoming major challenges
6. Identify appropriate training and resources as needed to implement Positive Behavior Support and restorative practices

Responsibilities of District Administrators

1. Provide appropriate training and resources as needed to implement Positive Behavior Support and restorative practices at each school site
2. Assist parents who are unable to resolve issues at the school-level
3. Review and revise (if needed) the Code of Student Conduct annually
4. Conduct long-term suspension or expulsion hearings
5. Review suspension or expulsion cases

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS REGARDING ATTENDANCE

Compulsory Attendance - Grades PK/K-12

The Meridian Public School District shall comply with the requirements of the "Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law" (§37-13-91). Appropriate data shall be provided to the Office of Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement within the State Department of Education, as may be required under Senate Bill 2459.

Age / Requirements

All children who have attained or will attain the age of 6 years and who have not attained the age of 17 years on or before September 1 of the school year are "compulsory-school-age children" and must be enrolled in school unless the child is:

1. Physically, mentally or emotionally incapable of attending school as determined by the appropriate school official based upon sufficient medical documentation;
2. Enrolled in and pursuing a course of special education, remedial education or education for handicapped or physically or mentally disadvantaged children; or
3. Being educated in a legitimate home instruction program. §37-13-91 (3)

Reporting
If a compulsory-school-age child has not been enrolled in school within fifteen (15) calendar days after the first day of the school year or if a child has accumulated ten (10) unexcused absences during the school year, the superintendent shall, within two (2) school days or within five (5) calendar days, whichever is less (within close of the next business day), report, on the form provided by the State Department of Education, the absences to the school attendance officer. The superintendent, or his/her designee, shall report any student suspensions or student expulsions to the school attendance officer when they occur. §37-13-91 (6)

Parents/guardians of a compulsory school-age child may face legal action under the Mississippi Compulsory Attendance Law if:

- The child is not enrolled in school within fifteen (15) calendar days after the first day of the school year for the public school they are eligible to attend, or
- The child accumulates ten (10) unexcused absences during the school year.

In these situations, parents/guardians may be charged with Educational Child Neglect. If found guilty, penalties may include a fine of up to $1,000, imprisonment for up to one (1) year, or both.

The Meridian Public School District shall maintain accurate records documenting enrollment and attendance in a manner that allows the State Department of Education to make an assessment of changes in enrollment and attendance, including dropout rates.

The State Department of Education shall compile annually a statewide report on school district effectiveness in reducing absentee problems, dropout rates, and other attendance-related problems during the previous school year, incorporate the information into the annual Mississippi Report Card required by Section 37-3-53, Mississippi Code of 1972, on school district performance, and offer technical assistance and coordination services to assist districts in improving performance.

School Attendance Officer
The superintendent and principals shall cooperate with the school attendance officer employed by the State Department of Education, pursuant to §37-13-85.

Elementary/Secondary PK/K-12
School attendance is considered an important responsibility of the student and parents.

In cases of unreported absences, the school personnel should attempt to contact the parent. Student absence caused by suspension, expulsion or other disciplinary actions shall not be excused.

Every student in grades PK/K-12 who is absent from school should present, upon his/her return to the school, a written excuse, signed by the parent or legal guardian. Parents will be notified of the fifth (5th) unexcused absence.

After a student has been absent from school for twenty (20) consecutive school days, the child may be dropped from the roll unless the school has been notified by the parent or legal guardian as to the cause of absence.

A student will not be allowed to participate in any school activity on a day when he/she has received an unexcused absence from school.

Make-Up Work

If an assignment is not completed at the due date, the student will receive a grade of zero (0). For excused/ unexcused/ suspended absences, students have **3 days following the student's return to school** to make up the work. If a student refuses to complete an assignment, a refusal to work form must be signed by the student and teacher. The teacher will make a note if the student refuses to sign the form. If an assignment is not completed by the established due date, the student will receive a grade of zero (0). For excused, unexcused, or suspension-related absences, students will have three (3) school days following their return to school to complete and submit missed assignments unless otherwise required by an approved accommodation, Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or district policy. If a student refuses to complete an assignment, the teacher will document the incident using a Refusal to Work Form, which should be signed by both the student and the teacher; if the student refuses to sign, the teacher will document the refusal on the form. The teacher will notify the parent/guardian and implement documented Tier I MTSS interventions, including classroom supports, progress monitoring, and parent communication. If the student continues to demonstrate a pattern of incomplete assignments, refusal to complete work, or insufficient academic progress despite documented Tier I interventions, the teacher will refer the student to the school's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) team for review and the development of additional interventions and supports.

Homebound Students PK/K-12

A student will be classified as partially hospitalized when he/she is admitted to a facility for counseling or psychological services during the school day. When it becomes apparent that a student will be absent from school for a day or portion of the day due to partial hospitalization, the student will be classified as homebound during that portion of the day and will not be counted absent for attendance reporting purposes. Students who are absent for an extended period five (5) or more consecutive days due to illness may be classified as HOMEBOUND and will not be counted absent for attendance reporting purposes. This classification may require a doctor’s statement, and/or court verification. The counselor must approve this and include a written plan for helping the student to stay current in his/her class work. This shall be recalculated after each three-week period. Homebound status does not excuse the student from making up class work missed. Failure to conform to the attendance policy may result in a failing grade in each class that exceeds the number of absent days allotted.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS REGARDING UNLAWFUL ABSENCES/VALID EXCUSES

An “unlawful absence” is an absence during a school day by a compulsory--school--age child, which absence is not due to a valid excuse for temporary nonattendance. Days missed from school due to disciplinary suspension shall be considered an “unexcused” absence under this section. Each of the following shall constitute a valid excuse for temporary nonattendance, provided satisfactory evidence of the excuse is provided to the superintendent or his/her designee:

1. Attendance at an authorized school activity with the prior approval of the superintendent or his/her designee. Teachers will be notified through email and students will be marked official in Powerschool by the data processor(s).
2. Illness or injury which prevents the student from being physically able to attend school.
3. When isolation is ordered by the county health officer, by the State Board of Health or appropriate school official.
4. Death or serious illness of a member of the immediate family, which includes children, spouse, grandparents, parents, brothers, sisters, stepbrothers and stepsisters.
5. A medical or dental appointment.

6. Attendance at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal if the student is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness.
7. Observance of a religious event, with the prior approval of the superintendent or his/her designee. (Approval should not be withheld unless, in the professional judgment of the superintendent or his/her designee, the extent of the absence would adversely affect the student's education.)
8. Participation in a valid educational opportunity, such as travel including vacations or other family travel, with the prior approval of the superintendent or his/her designee. (Approval shall be based on the professional judgment of the superintendent or his/her designee but shall not be withheld unless the extent of the absence would adversely affect the student's education.)
9. Other conditions sufficient to warrant nonattendance, with prior approval of the superintendent or his/her designee. However, no absences shall be excused when any student suspensions or expulsions circumvent the intent and spirit of the compulsory attendance law. §37-13-91 (4)

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS REGARDING RESPECT FOR PERSONS AND PROPERTY

(Grades PK/K-12)
Helping children to develop self-discipline and to conduct themselves in an acceptable manner is a major behavioral objective of the school as well as of the home.

Parents may assume that a student's behavior is satisfactory or better unless they are notified by telephone or by letter. In most cases it is believed that the call or letter will suffice — if not, the parents may be asked to come to the school for a conference in order to affect an acceptable solution to the problem. The school will expect and demand nothing less than good conduct on the part of students. It is believed that the above described procedure will be effective in achieving a desirable learning atmosphere and in guiding students toward assuming a greater degree of responsibility for their behavior.

It should be fully understood that any student whose conduct interferes with the learning process of others will be removed from the classroom and dealt with accordingly.

Special Education Students (Grades PK/K-12)
Special education students are responsible for adhering to the same rules of conduct as regular education students. However, a special education student may be suspended for a maximum of three (3) days, unless it can be shown that the reason for such suspension is not related to the handicapping condition. Multiple suspensions for the same incident or act are prohibited.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS REGARDING KNOWLEDGE AND OBSERVATION OF RULES OF CONDUCT

The Board of Trustees of the Meridian Public School District recognizes the need for an organized disciplinary system which supports teachers' efforts to teach and which addresses the growth of positive student activities and behaviors. The administration of the school district is charged with the development of a defined, systematic approach to school discipline to be recommended to the Board of Trustees. The basic objectives of discipline within the school may be described as threefold:

1. To establish conditions under which no student will be permitted to prevent any teacher from teaching or any student from learning.
2. To establish and maintain study conditions that are conducive to learning.

3. To develop, on the part of each student, the habits and skills that make him/her self-directive and to help him/her realize that he/she is responsible for his/her own conduct.
4. To develop skills that will help students to overcome barriers, refocus, and stay on track for graduation.

Teachers and administrators shall be responsible for creating and implementing programs favorable to the development of self-discipline and self-direction. School personnel shall plan carefully to ensure active interest in class work and the total school program, including the teaching of good behavior and accepted goals of the school. The use of all personnel provided by the school shall be maximized to assist in the development of personal value judgments, the teaching of school and civic responsibilities, and human relations.

Teachers and administrators are authorized to take just and reasonable measures to establish effective school discipline and to develop in students self-disciplined, emotionally mature behavior. The authority to control student conduct shall extend to all activities of the school, including all games and performances of athletic teams and other school groups.

Discipline should have the qualities of understanding, fairness, firmness, and consistency. Consideration should be given to the cause, nature, condition, and frequency of misconduct. Teachers should manage their own discipline problems if at all possible. Discipline should be used by each teacher as a means of improving the fundamentals of self-control, good work habits, and sound citizenship in the student and the group. Each infraction serious enough to be recognized one time should be recognized each time it occurs on the part of any student.

Prescribing Disciplinary Measures
When a teacher sends a student to the principal's office for disciplinary reasons, the decision regarding punishing the child shall rest solely with the administration. Teachers will not prescribe to the administration what is to be done concerning disciplinary measures after they have attempted to solve the problem. This does not mean that a teacher cannot make suggestions - but in no case shall the teacher tell the student that he/she is going to be suspended or disciplined in other ways. It shall be the administration's responsibility to determine appropriate disciplinary measures as outlined in the student code of conduct and in accordance with policies and procedures established by the Board of Trustees of the Meridian Public School District.

Make-Up Work During Suspension
If an assignment is not completed at the due date, the student will receive a grade of zero (0). For excused/ unexcused/ suspended absences, students have 3 days following the student's return to school to make up the work. If a student refuses to complete an assignment, a refusal to work form must be signed by the student and teacher. The teacher will make a note if the student refuses to sign the form.

Students have the right to make up all assignments, assessments, and other required work missed as a result of a suspension.

If a suspension occurs during the last ten (10) school days of a grading term or semester, the student will be allowed to complete final examinations and submit any required assignments necessary to earn credit for the course. All make-up work and assessments must be completed outside of the regular school day and within the timeline established by the school or teacher.

State Law – Interference with School Operation
State laws provide that if any parents, guardian, or other person willfully disturbs any school or insults any school official, that person shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a fine if convicted.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS REGARDING FREE SPEECH AND STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Because student publications in the Meridian Public School District are centered in the instructional program and are developed through classroom experiences, the professional staff member directing student publications shall exercise proper control over the content, development, and distribution of publications under his/her charge and shall be directly responsible to the building principal for the exercise of such control. It is the intent of the Board of Trustees to support the continuing development of student learning through publications of high quality, to encourage the growth of student writers, to develop respect for the responsibilities that accompany the opportunity to prepare school publications, and to assist students in the development of their appreciation of the rights of others. The Board of Trustees encourages students to exercise sound and reasonable judgment in the selection or creation of materials for publication and further recommends that articles, letters, etc., which appear to be objectionable be considered for revision to avoid problematic language, statements, or inferences without destroying the intent and point of view of the writer. Publication staff members shall be directly responsible to the publication advisor/sponsor; all materials prepared, selected, and edited by publication staff members must be submitted to the advisor/sponsor for approval or disapproval. Disagreements among publication staff members over matters of taste, propriety, or form will be resolved by the advisor/sponsor. Further disagreements must be submitted to the building principal for his/ her decision regarding publication.

The Board of Trustees specifically prohibits publication in school papers, magazines, yearbooks, and other school-sponsored publications of any item which may libel any person, materials which are considered by teacher advisor/ sponsors or by the principal to be obscene or in poor taste, materials which might result in any possibility of violence, or items which might damage or hurt any person.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS REGARDING ASSEMBLY AND PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

The primary task of the school is the creation of a stimulating learning climate which evokes the active involvement of students in their education and the development of the spirit of inquiry. This climate occurs only when students work together with school personnel in activities such as planning and evaluating school programs. The Board of Trustees, therefore, believes that students should:

1. Be encouraged to participate in establishing course goals and planning classroom activities and in improving courses of study.
2. Feel free to express, without any fear, their own opinions, recognizing that every privilege and right has a corresponding responsibility.
3. Be involved in the planning of assembly programs and school-sponsored forms of interest.
4. Be encouraged to participate in student government organizations that provide students with a voice in school affairs.
5. Be encouraged to participate in a variety of extra-curricular activities which broaden their educational experiences.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS REGARDING PRIVACY

The Board of Trustees recognizes that students have certain inalienable rights regarding privacy and discretion. These rights are addressed in multiple Board policies.

It is the responsibility of every employee of the district to encourage and promote high standards of student conduct. Members of the school staff have a responsibility for maintaining control of student behavior and a concurrent right to expect the support of the Board in the acceptance of these responsibilities. The Board desires to create a learning atmosphere in the schools which is free from disruption and disturbance. Parental support and assistance are necessary in the establishment of such an atmosphere. It is the intent of the Board to seek the active involvement of parents, guardians, and, when necessary, the courts in establishing an appropriate environment for learning.

In accord with these objectives, legally acceptable and defensible principles should be followed. The rights of individuals are to be protected at all times.

DUE PROCESS

The District shall provide students with due process before excluding them from their home school for any length of time, including through suspension, expulsion, or alternative placement. For purposes of this section, alternative placement does not include voluntary placement in the alternative school. The District shall provide students and their parents with a fair and impartial proceeding before imposing exclusionary discipline, with a right to appeal the exclusionary discipline consequence.

If an emergency requires immediate removal of the student from school, all required proceedings shall follow as soon after the student's removal as practicable. If such removal is necessary, the school shall immediately notify the parent to determine the best way to transfer custody of the student to him or her. If possible, the District shall provide the removed student with school work (*e.g.*, via email) during the pendency of the removal.

School Level Process:

Prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, recommending expulsion or alternative placement, the school shall provide students with an informal hearing with the school principal or a neutral decision maker designated by the principal, who may be an administrator not involved in the underlying incident. At the informal conference, the principal or his/her designee shall:

A. permit the student to call his or her parent and permit the parent to attend the conference if he or she is able to within a reasonable amount of time;

B. inform the student of the charges and evidence against him or her;

C. provide the student with an opportunity to respond to the charges, verbally or in writing, and present his or her version of events;

D. inform the student of his or her right not to submit a written statement, if a written statement is requested; and

E. provide the student with an opportunity to present evidence in his or her defense, including the right to have his or her witnesses interviewed by the principal or designee.

If after the informal conference the school principal decides to impose the suspension or recommend expulsion or alternative placement, the school must make a reasonable attempt to contact the parent(s) by phone if they were not present for the conference. The school shall also provide the student and parent(s) with a written notice stating that the student has received a particular consequence, and

providing the grounds for the consequence, the period or duration of the consequence, and an offer to schedule a time and place for the parent(s) to meet with the principal or designee to review the consequence prior to or concurrent with reinstatement. The notice shall also state that make-up work shall be provided during the period of the consequence, as appropriate, that the student has the right to appeal the consequence, and how the student may appeal, unless the student and parent affirmatively waive their right to a hearing.

District Level Process:
After a school level informal hearing, students who are suspended from school shall have the opportunity to appeal the suspension at a district hearing before a neutral hearing officer(s), who may be an administrator not involved in the underlying incident, designated by the Superintendent. The District shall schedule the hearing within a reasonable time from the date of the suspension. The student shall have the right to be represented at the hearing by anyone that the student or parent chooses, up to two (2) people.

The Office of Student Supports is here to assist families who request a due process hearing. Failure to attend a scheduled hearing, or to notify the office of Student Supports within 24 hours that a hearing needs to be rescheduled will result in forfeiting rights to a hearing.

The District must be notified prior to the hearing if legal counsel will be in attendance.

At the hearing, the hearing officer shall consider the following:

A. Whether the District complied with the procedural requirements regarding notice, and the student's opportunity to have a meaningful hearing;
B. Whether the evidence was fully and fairly considered;
C. Whether the District complied with the requirements in the Code of Conduct;
D. Whether the school tried non-exclusionary alternatives before imposing the consequence; when applicable;
E. Mitigating factors that should be considered; and
F. Additional facts that were not heard at the original hearing.

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall provide a written decision within three days of the hearing. If the Superintendent or his/her designee determines that no violation occurred, the District shall expunge all school records pertaining to the suspension from the student's file. If the Superintendent or his/her designee determines that the penalty was not appropriate to the violation, all school records shall be revised to reflect the Superintendent or his/her designee's determination.

Prior to imposing alternative placement or making a recommendation for expulsion, the District shall provide students and their parents with a written notice of the recommendation. The notice shall contain a statement of the reasons for the recommended action; a notice that the student will receive a due process hearing on the question of expulsion or alternative placement, unless the student and parent affirmatively waive their right to a hearing; the date, time, and location of the hearing; information regarding whom the student and/or his or her parent(s) should contact if they need to reschedule the hearing to a mutually agreeable date and time; and a statement that the student may be present at the due process hearing to hear the evidence against him or her, may present relevant evidence, may call student and adult witnesses to testify on his or her behalf, and may be accompanied by parents, counsel, and/or a representative of their choice.

Students who receive an alternative placement shall have the opportunity to appeal the discipline decision to the Superintendent. Students who are expelled shall have the opportunity to appeal the discipline decision to the School Board. The Superintendent and the the School Board shall consider such

factors as:

A. whether the District complied with the procedural requirements regarding notice, and the student's opportunity to have a meaningful hearing;
B. whether the evidence was fully and fairly considered;
C. whether the District complied with the requirements in the Code of Conduct;
D. whether the school tried non-exclusionary alternatives before imposing the consequence;
E. mitigating factors that should be considered; and
F. additional facts that were not heard at the original hearing.

The Superintendent or School Board shall provide a written decision within three days of the hearing. If the Superintendent or School Board determines that no violation occurred, the District shall expunge all school records pertaining to the expulsion from the student's file. If the Superintendent or School Board determines that the penalty was not appropriate to the violation, all school records shall be revised to reflect the Superintendent or School Board's determination. All decisions by the Superintendent or School Board shall be final.

The District shall provide the parents of every expelled student, information regarding educational alternatives that may be available during the period of expulsion.

Upon reinstatement from any exclusionary consequence, the school principal shall attempt to confer with the student's parents or guardians in person or by telephone to discuss the student's behavior and methods of appropriate intervention in an effort to prevent further disciplinary action. The failure of the parent to attend the conference shall not affect the ability of the student to return to classes.

APPEALS

If an appeal is made from the decision of the building administrator, a statement of the individual student's grievance shall be made in writing by the parent or student involved within two (2) school days after conferences with the teacher or the administrator regarding the specific grievance. Any notice of appeal shall be filed with the Director of Student Services and a copy delivered to the building administrator of the school in which the student is enrolled. The notice shall state the specific grounds for the appeal, together with the names of all witnesses and other matters, including evidence supporting the appeal.

The Director of Student Services shall review the notice of appeal and investigate the matter as he/she deems appropriate. After conducting the investigation, the Director of Student Services shall make a written decision.

If an appeal is made from the decision to the Meridian Public School District, the notice of appeal shall be filed with the Superintendent of the Meridian Public School District. The notice shall state the specific grounds for the appeal. The request for appeal must be filed at least ten (10) days prior to the next regular Board meeting. Once the school board has heard an appeal, the decision that the board makes on the student will be final.

SECTION II: ADMISSION/ATTENDANCE/ABSENCES

ADMISSIONS

Attendance in Zone of Residence
Students must attend the school located in the zone in which the parents or legal guardian resides. Two of the following documents are needed to establish residency:

- Filed Homestead Exemption Application form;
- Mortgage documents or property deed;
- Apartment or home lease;
- One current utility bill (cable/internet, water, gas, electric);
- Driver's license or state issued ID;

Entrance Ages
Mississippi law requires regular school attendance for every child who has attained the age of six (6) years on or before September 1. A child who is five (5) years of age on or before September 1 may enroll in kindergarten. The birth dates must be verified by a certified birth certificate.

Previously Enrolled in Another State
A student who has been previously enrolled in another state whose laws provide for enrollment before age six (6) (on or before September 1), may be enrolled IF the following requirements are met:

- Parent was a legal resident of the state from which the child is transferring;
- The out-of-state school is accredited;
- The student must have been legally enrolled for at least four (4) weeks in the previous state; and
- The local superintendent in a Mississippi district determines that the student was making satisfactory educational progress in the previous state.

Birth Certificate
When a child is enrolled for the first time in the Meridian Public School District, the parent or guardian is required to show the child's certified birth certificate. If transferring from another school district, the student will be enrolled on a 30-day temporary basis until such time that a certified birth certificate can be produced.

Immunizations
Immunizations listed by the State Department of Health are required. Proof must be furnished with a certificate from the examining physician or the County Health Department. This information must be provided before a child can attend class.

No child in grades Kindergarten through 12 shall be allowed to enroll in or attend any school without a valid immunization certificate. Valid certificates include:

- Form 121 -- Certificate of Compliance
- Form 122 – Certificate of Medical/ Religious Exemption

Records
The legal guardian or parent must complete a data card. If there is no phone in the home, a number must be given so that the adult responsible for the student can be contacted.

ATTENDANCE

The Meridian Public School District supports the philosophy that the instructional program is a vital part of formal education. Experience has shown that high quality work is impossible without regular attendance. Students are expected to attend school at all times when school is in session.

SCHOOL ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Elementary Schools

8:00 a.m.	School Begins
2:45 p.m.	School Dismisses (Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri)
1:50 p.m.	Wednesday Dismissal

Middle Schools

8:20 a.m.	School Begins
3:20 p.m.	School Dismisses (Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri)
2:20 p.m.	Wednesday Dismissal

High School

8:20 a.m.	School Begins
3:20 p.m.	School Dismisses (Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri)
2:20 p.m.	Wednesday Dismissal

- Campuses open 30 minutes prior to the start of school for carpool/bus drop-off.
- No student should remain on campus 30 minutes after dismissal unless involved in school-related activities.

ABSENCES

Absences from school may be excused or unexcused. Any student who is absent from school should present a written excuse, signed by the parent or legal guardian within two days of the absence. After a student has been absent for more than five (5) school days or a cumulative total of ten (10) school days per year, written verification from the physician regarding an illness or injury or a substantiating statement regarding a death or other reasons for absences is required. Additional verification may be required if it is deemed appropriate. State law requires an Official Notice of Unexcused Absence to be filed with the Attendance Officer after five (5) unexcused absences. If a student is not enrolled within 15 calendar days after the first day of school or if a student has 8 unexcused absences, the parents are subject to prosecution according to state law. A student who is absent from school 20 consecutive days may be dropped from the roll, unless the school is notified by the parent or guardian.

With an excused absence, class makeup work should be completed within 3 days upon the student returning to school. **If a student has an extended absence due to illness or extenuating circumstances, approval may be granted for an extension to complete makeup work. However, all makeup work should be completed before the end of the current grading period.**

If circumstances allow, the parent/guardian should apprise the school in advance of the absence. **Three parent notes (per semester) will be considered for excused absences. Any parent notes beyond three will require additional documentation (must have a medical excuse). After three**

parent notes, parents are required to attend an onsite conference with the school principal. Failure to attend the conference with the principal will result in an unexcused absence.

If a student does not meet the attendance requirements, he/she may not receive credit for the course.
Days Absent: 4 unexcused absences for quarter classes
7 unexcused absences for semester courses
15 unexcused absences for year long courses

66% ATTENDANCE LAW
For the purpose of determining and reporting attendance, a pupil must be present for at least sixty-three percent (66%) of his/her instructional day, as fixed by the local school board, and defined by the student's schedule, in order to be considered present for full-day attendance.

Leaving School Before Dismissal Time
When a student becomes ill or an emergency arises during the regular school day which may warrant early dismissal, the student must report to the principal's office. Before the student may be released from school, a parent, legal guardian, or person authorized by a parent (name listed on the student's locator card) must come to the school office and sign the student out. **If the school requests that a student checks out for illness or injury, the absence will be considered excused for the remainder of the school day.**

In cases of divorce, it shall be the responsibility of the parent who receives legal custody of the child involved to place on file in the school a copy of the custody order. The child shall be released only to the parent having legal custody or to the person having written authorization from the custodial parent. Written authorization must be filed with the school at the time of registration.

A student will be released for a doctor's appointment, dental appointment, or any other just reason when the parent, legal guardian, or person authorized by the parent comes to the school and signs the student out.

A student who leaves the school campus at any time must obtain permission from the principal and meet the requirements established under the check-out policy.

Unlawful Absences/Valid Excuses
An "unlawful absence" is an absence during a school day by a compulsory-school-age child, which absence is not due to a valid excuse for temporary nonattendance. Days missed from school due to disciplinary suspension shall be considered an "unexcused" absence under this section.
Each of the following shall constitute a valid excuse for temporary nonattendance, provided satisfactory evidence of the excuse is provided to the superintendent or his designee:

1. Attendance at an authorized school activity with the prior approval of the superintendent or his/her designee. A compulsory-school-age child participating in an authorized school activity with the prior approval of the superintendent of the school district, or his/her designee, is considered **PRESENT** for average daily attendance reporting purposes. The activities include, but are not limited to: official organized events sponsored by the 4-H; Future Farmers of America; Junior livestock shows; rodeo events; official employment as a page at the State Capital; subject-matter field trips; athletic contests; student conventions; music festivals or contests. A student's participation in an authorized school activity must be verified by one of the following: student schedule; class roster; or activity roster.
2. Illness or injury which prevents the student from being physically able to attend school.

3. When isolation is ordered by the county health officer, by the State Board of Health or appropriate school official.
4. Death or serious illness of a member of the immediate family, which includes children, spouse, grandparents, parents, brothers, sisters, stepbrothers and stepsisters.
5. A medical or dental appointment.
6. Attendance at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal if the student is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness.
7. Observance of a religious event, with the prior approval of the superintendent or his/her designee. (Approval should not be withheld unless, in the professional judgment of the superintendent or his/her designee, the extent of the absence would adversely affect the student's education.)
8. Participation in a valid educational opportunity, such as travel including vacations or other family travel, with the prior approval of the superintendent or his/her designee. (Approval shall be based on the professional judgment of the superintendent or his/her designee but shall not be withheld unless the extent of the absence would adversely affect the student's education.)
9. Other conditions sufficient to warrant nonattendance, with prior approval of the superintendent or his/her designee. However, no absences shall be excused when any student suspensions or expulsions circumvent the intent and spirit of the compulsory attendance law. §37-13-91 (4)

MERIDIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

ABSENCE EXCUSE FORM

1019 25th Avenue • Meridian, MS 39301

Dr. Amy Carter, Superintendent

Today's Date	_____
Student Name	_____
School	_____
Teacher	_____
Grade	_____
Date(s) of Absence	_____

Reason for Absence

☐ Illness (Specify): _____

☐ Medical Appointment (Must have a doctor's note)

☐ Family Emergency

☐ Funeral (Must provide the obituary)

☐ Court Appearance (Must provide court documentation)

☐ Religious Observances (Must provide documentation from your church)

☐ Other: _____

Explanation of Absence

_____

_____

Parent/Guardian Verification

Parent/Guardian Name	_____
Phone Number	_____
Signature	_____

District Attendance Notice

Parents/guardians should notify the school in advance whenever possible. **Three (3) parent notes** per semester may be accepted for excused absences. Any additional parent notes require supporting documentation (such as a physician's note). A written excuse signed by the parent or legal guardian must be submitted **within two (2) school days** of the student's return to school.

SECTION III: ACADEMICS (PK/K-8)

FAMILY RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects students' privacy by prohibiting disclosure of education records without adult consent. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level.

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions:
    - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
    - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
    - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
    - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
    - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
    - Accrediting organizations;
    - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
    - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
    - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

DISTRICT GRADING PRACTICES

It is the practice of MPSD to assess student learning through a variety of formative and summative assessments. Students' grades will be based on the two following categories and weights:

Summative 60% Formative 40%

PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress Reports for the first and third nine weeks will be shown to parents during the parent-teacher conference. Progress reports for the second and fourth nine weeks are sent to the parents of each student at the midpoint of each grading period. It is very important for parents to continue to maintain open lines of communication about their child's progress. Parents should follow-up, when necessary, by calling for a conference with their child's teacher.

Progress Report Dates:

September 10, 2026 November 12, 2026 February 11, 2027 April 22, 2027

POWERSCHOOL PARENT PORTAL

Parents may check on the performance of their child(ren) at any time during the school year through the PowerSchool Parent Portal. Parent log-in information will be available to parents during the first week of school. Requests for log-in information may be made through the school's data processor before or after this date.

REPORT CARDS

Students receive report cards at the end of each nine weeks. Parents are requested to examine the report card carefully, sign, and return it the following day. The fourth report card will be mailed at the end of the school year.

Report Card Dates:

October 7, 2026 January 7, 2027 March 29, 2027 May 28, 2027

Grading Scale

The academic grading scale is as follows:

A : 90-100 B : 80-89 C : 70-79 D : 60-69 F : 59 and Below

PROMOTION/RETENTION POLICY

Grading Practices

The district requires teachers to provide information to students pertaining to their grades and learning progress regularly. Teachers should examine their individual instructional strategies and grading practices in an effort to help all students succeed.

Promotion/Retention Policy - Grades PK/K--8

Promotion and retention shall be based upon the student's performance on the Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards and the district's instructional management plan. Student daily attendance is essential to mastery of grade level standards. Students who fail to meet promotion requirements will be retained.

a. Students in grades K-4 will be promoted by mastering 60% of the state English language arts and mathematics standards. Promotion, retention, or transfer decisions will be made at the end of the year by a committee of teachers, counselors, and administrators. Factors such as age and previous retention may be considered.
b. Students in grades 5-6 will be promoted by mastering 60% of the state standards in English language arts, mathematics and science. Promotion, retention, or transfer decisions will be made at the end of the year by a committee of teachers, counselors, and administrators. Factors such as age and previous retention may be considered.

c. Students in grades 7-8 will be promoted by mastering 60% of the state standards in English language arts, mathematics, social studies and science. Promotion, retention, or transfer decisions will be made at the end of the year by a committee of teachers, counselors, and administrators. Factors such as age and previous retention may be considered.

Promotion ceremonies for Pre-K, 5th grade, and 8th grade will be scheduled at the sole discretion of the school principal, including the date, time, and location. Student attendance will be considered for participation in promotional ceremonies.

A committee composed of the principal and appropriate teachers shall review the educational record of any student who has failed to meet any promotion requirement. Placement of the student for the next year will be determined by this committee.

The district follows an established board policy that defines criteria for the academic promotion/progress/retention of students from one grade level to the next. *Such criteria prohibit the retention of students for extracurricular purposes.

- A fee may be charged for students in grades 6-12 required to attend summer school.

LITERACY BASED PROMOTION

In compliance with the "Literacy Based Promotion Act," it is the intent of this school district to improve the reading skills of Kindergarten – Third Grade students so that every student completing the Third Grade is able to read at or above grade level. Each kindergarten through third grade student's progression is determined, in part, upon the:

- Student's proficiency in reading;
- The policies of local school boards that facilitate this proficiency; and
- Each student and the student's parent or legal guardian is informed of the student's academic progress.

Intensive Reading Instruction and Intervention
Each student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading at any time, as demonstrated through performance on a reading screener approved or developed by the State Department of Education or through locally determined assessments and teacher observations conducted in Kindergarten and Grades 1 through 3 or through statewide end-of-year assessments or approved alternate yearly assessments in grade 3, shall be given intensive reading instruction and intervention immediately following the identification of the reading deficiency.

Mississippi State Board Policy Rule 41.1, paragraph 7 states that all students in kindergarten through grade 3 shall be administered a state-approved screener within the first thirty (30) days of school and repeated mid-year and at the end of the school year to determine student progression in reading. If it is determined that the student continues to have a reading deficiency, the student shall be provided with continued intensive reading and intervention by the school district until the reading deficiency is remedied. A student exhibiting continued reading deficiency with continued intensive interventions should be considered for exceptional criteria evaluation.

A Kindergarten or First, Second or Third Grade student identified with a deficiency in reading shall be provided intensive interventions in reading to ameliorate the student's specific reading deficiency, as identified by a valid and reliable diagnostic assessment. The intensive intervention shall include effective instructional strategies, and appropriate teaching methodologies necessary to assist the

student in becoming a successful reader, able to read at or above grade level, and ready for promotion to the next grade. A Kindergarten, First, Second or Third Grade student identified with a reading deficiency or not promoted may be placed in a transition class.

Students in grades 4–8 who demonstrate significant academic deficiencies in reading or mathematics will receive targeted interventions through an Individual Reading Plan (IRP) for reading and an Individual Mathematics Plan (IMP), as applicable. These individualized intervention plans are designed to identify specific areas of need, establish measurable learning goals, and provide evidence-based instructional supports to accelerate student achievement. The plans will be developed in collaboration with school personnel and monitored regularly to assess student progress and adjust interventions as needed. Parents or guardians will be informed of the intervention plan and encouraged to partner with the school to support their child's academic success. The implementation of these plans aligns with Mississippi's 2026 requirements to provide timely, targeted interventions for students in grades 4–8 who are not meeting grade-level expectations in reading and mathematics.

Parent Notification of Reading Deficiency
Immediately upon the determination of a reading deficiency, and subsequently with each quarterly progress report until the deficiency is remediated, the parent or legal guardian of a Kindergarten or First, Second or Third Grade student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading shall be notified in writing by the student's teacher of the following:

1. That the student has been identified as having substantial deficiency in reading;
2. A description of the services that the school district currently is providing to the student;
3. A description of the proposed supplemental instructional services and supports that are designed to remediate the identified area of reading deficiency which the school district plans to provide the student;
4. That if the student's reading deficiency is not remediated before the end of the student's Third Grade year, the student will not be promoted to Fourth Grade unless a good cause exemption specified below is met;
5. Strategies for parents and guardians to use in helping the student to succeed in reading proficiency; and
6. That while the state annual accountability assessment for reading in Third Grade is the initial determinant, it is not the sole determiner of promotion and that approved alternative standardized assessments are available to assist the school district in knowing when a child is reading at or above grade level and ready for promotion to the next grade.

Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) Academic Initiatives
Beginning with the **2026–2027 school year**, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) is implementing significant statewide initiatives to strengthen student achievement in both **mathematics** and **adolescent literacy**. These initiatives are designed to ensure that every student receives the support necessary to become proficient in reading, writing, and mathematics while preparing them for college, career, and life success.

Adolescent Literacy Initiative (Grades 4–8)
The Adolescent Literacy Initiative expands Mississippi's successful early literacy efforts into grades 4–8. The initiative emphasizes:

- Evidence-based reading and writing instruction grounded in the Science of Reading.
- Universal literacy screening to identify students who need additional support.
- Individual Reading Plans (IRPs) for students identified with reading deficiencies.
- Targeted interventions, progress monitoring, and ongoing communication with parents.
- Literacy support across all content areas, including English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, and other subjects, recognizing that reading and writing are essential for success in

every classroom.

Mississippi Math Act (Moving Mathematics in Mississippi – M³)
The Mississippi Math Act establishes the **Moving Mathematics in Mississippi (M³)** program to improve mathematics achievement through:

- Universal mathematics screening for students in grades K–5.
- Early identification of students needing intervention.
- Targeted mathematics interventions based on student needs.
- Professional learning and instructional coaching for teachers.
- An Algebra Readiness Indicator beginning in Grade 5 to help ensure students are prepared for advanced mathematics coursework.

Social Promotion Prohibited
In compliance with the "Literacy-Based Promotion Act", social promotion is prohibited in this school district. A student may not be assigned a grade level based solely on the student's age or any other factors that constitute social promotion.

Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, if a student's reading deficiency is not remedied by the end of the student's Third Grade year, as demonstrated by the student scoring at the lowest achievement level in reading on the state annual accountability assessment or on an approved alternative standardized assessment for Third Grade, the student shall not be promoted to Fourth Grade.

Good Cause Promotion
A Third Grade student who does not meet the academic requirements for promotion to the Fourth Grade may be promoted by the school district only for good cause. Good cause exemptions for promotion are limited to the following students:

1. Limited English proficient students who have had less than two (2) years of instruction in an English Language Learner program;
2. Students with disabilities whose individual education plan (IEP) indicates that participation in the statewide accountability assessment program is not appropriate, as authorized under state law;
3. Student with a disability who participate in the state annual accountability assessment and who have an IEP or a Section 504 plan that reflects that the individual student has received intensive remediation in reading for more than two (2) years but still demonstrates a deficiency in reading **or** previously was retained in Kindergarten or First, Second or Third Grade;
4. Student who demonstrate an acceptable level of reading proficiency on an alternative standardized assessment approved by the State Board of Education; and
5. Students who have received intensive intervention in reading for two (2) or more years but still demonstrate a deficiency in reading and who previously were retained in Kindergarten or First, Second or Third Grade for a total of two (2) years and have not met exceptional education criteria. A student who is promoted to Fourth Grade with a good cause exemption shall be provided intensive reading instruction and intervention informed by specialized diagnostic information and delivered through specific reading strategies to meet the needs of each student so promoted. This school district shall assist schools and teachers in implementing reading strategies that research has shown to be successful in improving reading among students with persistent reading difficulties.

Good Cause Request
A request for good cause exemptions for a Third Grade student from the academic requirements established for promotion to Fourth Grade shall be made consistent with the following:

1. Documentation shall be submitted from the student's teacher to the school principal which indicates that the promotion of the student is appropriate and is based upon the student's record. The documentation shall consist of the good cause exemption being requested and shall clearly prove that the student is covered by one (1) of the good cause exemptions listed above.
2. The principal shall review and discuss the recommendation with the teacher and parents and make a determination as to whether or not the student should be promoted based on requirements set forth by law. If the principal determines that the student should be promoted, based on the documentation provided, the principal shall make the recommendation in writing to the school district superintendent, who, in writing, may accept or reject the principal's recommendation.

The parent of any student promoted may choose that the student be retained for one (1) year, even if the principal and the district superintendent determines otherwise.

Retained Third Grade Students
Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, this school district shall take the following actions for retained Third Grade students:

1. Provide Third Grade students who are not promoted with intensive instructional services, progress monitoring measures, and supports to remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency, including a minimum of ninety (90) minutes during regular school hours of daily, scientifically research-based reading instruction that includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, and other strategies prescribed by the school district, which may include, but are not limited to:
    A. Small group instruction;
    B. Reduced teacher - student ratios;
    C. Tutoring in evidence-based reading services in addition to the regular school day;
    D. The option of transition classes;
    E. Extended school day, week or year; and
    F. Summer reading camps.

2. Third Grade students who are retained shall be provided with a high-performing teacher, as determined by student performance data, particularly related to student growth in reading, above-satisfactory performance appraisals, and/or specific training relevant to literacy.

Parent Notification of Third Grade Retention
Written notification shall be provided to the parent or legal guardian of any Third Grade student who is retained that the student has not met the proficiency level required for promotion and the reasons the student is not eligible for a good cause exemption.
The notification shall include a description of proposed interventions and supports that will be provided to the child to remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency. This notification shall be provided to the parent or legal guardian in writing, in a format adopted by the State Board of Education in addition to report cards given by the teacher.
Parents and legal guardians of Third Grade students shall be provided with a "Read at Home" plan outlined in a parental contract, including participation in regular parent-guided home reading.

Intensive Acceleration
This district may provide, where applicable, an intensive acceleration class for any student retained in Grade 3 who was previously retained in Kindergarten or Grades 1 through 3. The focus of the

intensive acceleration class should be to increase a student's reading level by at least two (2) grade levels in one (1) school year. The intensive acceleration class will provide reading instruction and intervention for the majority of student contact each day and incorporate opportunities to master the Grade 4 state standards in other core academic areas.

Annual Report

Within thirty (30) days of final State Board of Education approval of state accountability results, the school board of this school district shall publish, in a newspaper having a general circulation within the school district, and report to the State Board of Education and the Mississippi Reading Panel the following information relating to the preceding school year:

1. Student progression and the school district's policies and procedures on student retention and promotion;
2. By grade, the number and percentage of all students performing at each level of competency on the reading and math portion of the annual state accountability system and the number and percentage of students given an approved alternative standardized reading assessment and the percentage of these students performing at each competency level on said alternative standardized assessment;
3. By grade, the number and percentage of all students retained in Kindergarten through Grade 8;
4. Information on the total number and percentage of students who were promoted for good cause, by each category of good cause described by lay; and
5. Any revision to the school board's policy on student retention and promotion from the prior school year.

INTERVENTION PROCESS

Meridian Public School District shall require the Multi-Tiered System of Supports instructional model designed to meet the needs of every student. The model shall consist of three tiers of instruction:

1. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the behavioral and academic needs of every student are met through an instructional model that is designed to address student learning with quality classroom instruction and opportunities for intervention. The Mississippi Department Education (MDE) shall require every school district to follow the instructional model, which consists of three (3) tiers of instruction:

A. Tier 1: Quality classroom instruction based on Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks
B. Tier 2: Focused supplemental instruction
C. Tier 3: Intensive interventions specifically designed to meet the individual needs of students

2. If strategies at Tier 1 and Tier 2 are unsuccessful, students must be referred to the Teacher Support Team (TST). The TST is the problem-solving unit responsible for interventions developed at Tier 3. Each school must have a Teacher Support Team (TST) implemented in accordance with the process developed by the MDE. The chairperson of the TST shall be the school principal as the school's instructional leader or the principal's designee. The designee may not be an individual whose primary responsibility is special education.

Interventions will be:

A. designed to address the deficit areas;
B. evidence based;
C. implemented as designed by the TST;
D. supported by data regarding the effectiveness of interventions.

3. Teachers should use progress monitoring information to:
    A. determine if students are making adequate progress,
    B. identify students as soon as they begin to fall behind, and
    C. modify instruction early enough to ensure each student gains essential skills.

Monitoring of student progress is an ongoing process that may be measured through informal classroom assessment, benchmark assessment instruments, and large-scale assessments.

4. After a referral is made, the TST must develop and begin implementation of an intervention(s) within two weeks. No later than eight weeks after implementation of the intervention(s) the TST must conduct a documented review of the interventions to determine success of the intervention(s). No later than 16 weeks after implementation of the intervention(s), a second review must be conducted to determine whether the intervention(s) is successful. If the intervention(s) is determined to be unsuccessful, then the student will be referred for a comprehensive assessment.

SECTION IV: ACADEMICS 9-12

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Cheating
Whether you give or receive information during an examination or on a specific assignment, the offense is the same. Students will receive a zero for the work involved. Parents will be notified by the teacher and may be asked to come to the school for a conference.

Plagiarism
To plagiarize is to take and use as one's own the ideas or writings of another (Webster, 1984). Students should be careful to always reference their borrowed information including statements by authorities, researched information, quotations from a text, etc. Be it paraphrased, summarized, or directly quoted material, all borrowed information must be documented. Students will receive a zero for work when plagiarism is involved.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use
The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Magic School, Copilot, or similar technologies) must be authorized by the teacher and used only in accordance with the expectations for the assignment. Submitting AI-generated content, in whole or in part, as one's own work without teacher permission or proper acknowledgment is considered a form of academic dishonesty and may be treated as cheating or plagiarism. Students are expected to produce original work and to use AI responsibly, ethically, and in compliance with district and classroom guidelines. Violations may result in a zero on the assignment, parent notification, and additional disciplinary consequences as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

ACADEMIC LETTERS

To be eligible for an academic letter at Meridian High School, a student earning a traditional diploma must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.75 or better.

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

Grading - Numerical Range

Grade	Regular	Quality (Regular)	Quality (Honors)	Quality (AP/Dual)
A	90-100	4.0	4.5	5.0
B	80-89	3.0	3.5	4.0
C	70-79	2.0	2.5	3.0
D	60-69	1.0	1.5	2.0
F	59 and Below	0	0	0

Parents are encouraged to use the Parent Portal to monitor their child's academic progress. Contact your child's school for login assistance.

Classification Requirements

- Sophomore - 6 units required including one unit of English and one of Math
- Junior -13 units, including two units of English and two units of Math
- Senior - 20 units, including three units of English and three units of Math

All students must be enrolled in a minimum of:

- Seniors: 8 credit hours (unless participating in early work release or dual enrollment)
- Juniors: 8 credit hours
- Sophomores: 8 credit hours
- Freshman: 8 credit hours

CLASS STANDING

Class standing is determined by GPA. The GPA is calculated using final grades only. The numerical grade is converted to a letter grade as per the grading numerical range chart. The cumulative GPA is determined by adding the total number of quality points earned for each course and dividing this total by the number of courses taken.

If a student does not meet the attendance requirements, he/she may not receive credit for the course.

Days Absent: 4 unexcused absences for quarter classes
7 unexcused absences for semester courses
15 unexcused absences for year long courses

Senior class rankings will be computed at the end of the second semester of the senior year to determine students graduating with highest honors and honors. The GPA is cumulative and includes grades eight through twelve for all classes in which students earn a Carnegie unit. All graduates receiving a traditional diploma will be eligible for honors and highest honors recognition according to the following criteria:

Highest Honors	High Honors	Honors
4.0 and above	3.75 - 3.9499	3.25-3.7499

VALEDICTORIAN AND SALUTATORIAN 2012 AND AFTER

The valedictorian & salutatorian will meet the following requirements: Students must have 30 or more credits to qualify. Valedictorian & salutatorian will be determined based on final grades. The valedictorian is the member of the senior class with the highest G.P.A. The salutatorian is the member of the senior class with the second highest G.P.A.

The criteria for selection of the valedictorian and salutatorian will be based on all credit courses taken towards graduation. The student having the highest and second highest grade point average during his/her school period shall be recognized as Valedictorian and Salutatorian, respectively. A student must have attended Meridian High school for four years, which is inclusive of their senior year (not including summer school), and must be completing a 4-year course of study, to be considered for valedictorian or salutatorian. To be eligible for the valedictorian or salutatorian, the student should have started ninth grade during the same cohort year as the graduating class.

In case of a tie, the following criteria will be used to determine these positions:

1. The number of AP and/or dual credit courses taken.
2. The highest average for all courses taken.
3. The total number of credits taken.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE/QUALITY POINTS

The highest possible GPA a student can achieve is based on the most advanced course selections at each grade level:

Classes with 4.5 quality points:

English I	Honors	1 CU (Carnegie unit)
English II	Honors	1 CU
English III	Honors	1 CU
English IV	Honors	1 CU
Geometry	Honors	1 CU

Classes with 5.0 quality points:

Literature	AP	1 CU
Calculus	AP	1 CU
Biology	AP	1 CU
Studio Art	AP	1 CU
Dual Credit Courses *(Paid/District Approved)		1 CU

*Only dual credit courses for which tuition has been paid by the student, the district, or an approved funding source, and that meet district eligibility requirements, are eligible to receive the 5.0 quality point weighting. To receive the 5.0 quality point weighting, students must also complete all course requirements and take the required college or end-of-course assessment, if applicable. Dual credit courses that are not paid for or funded through an approved source, or for which the required assessment is not taken, will be weighted according to the district's standard grading scale.

Note: AP and Dual Credit course offerings may vary each school year based on student demand, staffing, funding, and program availability.

EXAMS

Exam and Grading Guidelines

The following guidelines have been approved:

1. Teachers must include the grading scale in their course syllabi for both students and parents to read.
2. Teachers must include a combination of both formative and summative assessments. There should be a minimum of 2 summative assessments (tests, projects, research papers, etc.) and 8 formative assessments per nine-week grading period. This will constitute the minimum standards, but teachers can, and should go beyond these requirements.
3. All assignments and extra credit work should directly relate to the class subject and/or academics. Students should not receive extra credit for attending an activity, etc.

If a student does not meet the attendance requirements, he/she may not receive credit for the course.

Days Absent: 4 unexcused absences for quarter classes
7 unexcused absences for semester courses
15 unexcused absences for year long courses

EXEMPTION POLICY

Students meeting the following conditions will be eligible for exemption from final examinations:

For all students grades 9-12, exemption from the cumulative exam administered at the end of a course is an earned privilege. A student will only be considered for exemption if the student has no office or disciplinary referrals in a teacher's class, or referral from an administrator, and meets the following requirements regarding absences and grades:

Semester-long Courses:

Attendance	Semester Average
0 unexcused absences	80 and above

Year-long Courses:

Attendance	Year-long Average
0 unexcused absences	80 and above

Students who are eligible for exemption will have the option to take an exam if they feel it will improve their grade.

All absences will be counted except those that are school related such as athletic, band, choir contests or school-based club trips. It is the student's responsibility to provide documentation of any school related absence. Students who receive an out-of-school suspension at any time during the year will NOT be exempt from any exam.

Students with missing work are ineligible for exemption from taking exams.

Students shall not be informed of their exemption status until the day prior to the exam schedule beginning. Students are expected to attend class on review days. **SEE POLICY IHAE**

GRADUATION

Graduation Ceremonies
The traditional graduation ceremony will be held at the end of each school year. Non-traditional graduation ceremonies may be held in the summer and/or December.
In accordance with Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, a student who fails to meet the graduation and/or exit requirements or fails to meet the passing score or approved alternate measure on any one of the four state exit examinations WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GRADUATION CEREMONY. (MS Accountability Standards 14.1, 14.2 & 14.5)

Seniors who accumulate 7 unexcused absences in a semester credit class or 15 or more unexcused absences in a full credit class, that senior will not be able to participate in graduation ceremony. The student will receive their diploma on the following school day.

Any senior who receives a major discipline referral during the **fourth nine-weeks** grading period will not be permitted to participate in the graduation ceremony. The student will receive their diploma on the following school day.

Once it has been determined that a senior has failed to meet the minimum requirements for graduation, the student's counselor and/or the grade level administrator will notify the student and parent/guardian. An official notification will be forwarded to the parent/guardian by mail.

Seniors and their parents will be notified at the beginning of the 1st and 2nd semester if they are failing to meet the requirements for graduation. Counselors and administrators are available to answer any questions that you may have.

Graduation Practice
In order to take part in graduation ceremonies, a student must attend the graduation practices as set up by the principal or class sponsors. The school district schedules preparation for graduation ceremonies in such a manner that graduating seniors are absent from classes for no more than three days prior to the end of the school year (177 days). MS Public School Accountability Standard 13.4

Special Education Graduation Requirements
For information regarding requirements for special education students or an Alternate Diploma please contact the Office of Exceptional Childhood Education.

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	
Arts	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 should 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
Arts	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 Academic Assessment Program-Alternate (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.

August 2018

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Ensuring a bright future for every child

Traditional Diploma Endorsement Options

Students pursuing a Traditional Diploma should identify an endorsement prior to entering ninth 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	
Arts	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	
Arts	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 2 advanced electives of the CPC requirements for MS IHLs
Total Units Required	**26**	

Additional Requirements

- Earn an overall GPA of 2.5.
- Courses must meet Mississippi IHL college preparatory curriculum (CPC).
- 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	
Arts	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 2 advanced electives of the CPC requirements for MS IHLs
Total Units Required	**28**	

Additional Requirements

- Earn an overall GPA of 3.0.
- Courses must meet Mississippi IHL college preparatory curriculum (CPC).
- 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

August 2018

SCHEDULING

Registration Guidelines

Senior students are allowed to take only one work period or office/library assistant period (by invitation only). Seniors are required to take multiple dual credit courses if possible. Students should be enrolled in either academic or elective courses unless one of the above has been approved by the student's grade level counselor and an administrator. Seniors wishing to enroll in college courses receive prior approval from the principal of Meridian High and from the participating IHL or CC. A copy of the registration form must be provided after enrolling. Freshmen, sophomores and juniors must enroll in eight (8) credits during the school year. No exceptions, regardless of course offerings. Student requests for schedule changes will only be granted in allowing for individual needs based on graduation requirements.

Requirements for Early Work Release

Must have **EITHER** 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). MS Accountability Manual 2021-Appendix A-6

OR, 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 or SREB Math Ready or SREB Literacy Ready.

Dual Credit

Dual credit is available for specific courses offered for high school students. Information concerning courses offered is made available to students on a semester basis. Students should see their counselor or administrator for information. MS State Code 37-13-91 mandates that a student who has an absence that is more than thirty-four percent (34%) of the instructional day must be considered absent the entire school day. Therefore, students participating in dual credit or dual enrollment courses must be able to demonstrate they are in classes at least 66% of the school day. Dual Credit courses will be included in a student's Grade Point Average and will be weighted the same as Advanced Placement courses.

Dual Credit courses offered by the district may vary from year to year based on student enrollment, instructor qualifications, funding, partnerships with postsecondary institutions, and district needs. If taken in lieu of a required course, the dual credit course must be passed in order for the student to graduate. Students must pay all associated course fees for Dual Credit courses.

Dropping/Adding a Course

1. Dropping, adding or changing a class will follow the community college/university requirements Changes will not be in effect until the teacher has signed off, textbook(s) have been returned and change has been made in the office. The attendance policy will be followed from the community college/university and the grade will become an "F" if the policy is not followed by the student.
2. The grade earned will become a part of the high school and college transcript.
3. Students will complete assignments as prescribed by the community college/university.
4. It is the responsibility of the student to complete missed work in added classes.
5. Students failing to pick up their schedule during the designated time or during late registration

will have their schedule dropped unless prior arrangements were made through the administration.

6. Students whose schedules are dropped will be placed in available classes on a first come, first served basis with no regard given to the initial course selection but to course availability.

TESTING

Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP)

The MAAP will assess students in grades 3-8 in English Language Arts and Mathematics, grades 5 and 8 for science, and end-of-course (EOC) for Algebra I, Biology and English II.

State Board Policy 3804 provides approved options for students to meet these high school end of course subject area requirements for graduation through approved alternate measures. State Board Policy 3804 applies to past, current, and future graduates and allows a student to meet the graduation requirements once he or she has failed to pass any required end-of-course Subject Area Test one (1) time. Specifically, students may meet the graduation requirement outlined in State Board Policy 3803 by attaining any one of the measures outlined below for each of the subject area tests listed.

1. Algebra I
    a. Obtain a score of **17** or higher on the Math subject subscore of the ACT.
    b. Earn a C or higher in an entry level, credit-bearing dual enrollment/dual credit /college credit course with a MAT prefix.
    c. Obtain an ASVAB AFQT score of 36 **plus one** of the following:
        1) Earn a *CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.
        2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathways Assessment Blueprint and outlined in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards.
    d. Obtain the Silver Level on the ACT WorkKeys **plus one** of the following:
        1) Earn a *CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.
        2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathways Assessment Blueprint and in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards.

*(Beginning in the school year 2022-23, the MS-CPAS will no longer be administered.)

2. Biology I
    a. Obtain a score of **17** or higher on the Science subject subscore of the ACT.
    b. Earn a C or higher in an entry level, credit-bearing dual enrollment / dual credit / college credit course with a BIO prefix and corresponding lab.
    c. Obtain an ASVAB AFQT score of 36 **plus one** of the following:
        1) Earn a *CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.
        2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathways Assessment Blueprint and in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards.
    d. Obtain the Silver Level on the ACT WorkKeys **plus one** of the following:
        1) Earn a *CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.

2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathways Assessment Blueprint and in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards.

*(Beginning in the school year 2022-23, the MS-CPAS will no longer be administered.)

3. English II

a. Obtain a score of **17** or higher on the English subject subscore of the ACT.

b. Earn a C or higher in an entry level, credit-bearing dual enrollment / dual credit / college credit course with an ENG prefix.

c. Obtain an ASVAB AFQT score of 36 **plus one** of the following:

1) Earn a *CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.

2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathways Assessment Blueprint and in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards.

d. Obtain the Silver Level on the ACT WorkKeys **plus one** of the following:

1) Earn a *CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.

2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathways Assessment Blueprint and in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards.

*(Beginning in the school year 2022-23, the MS-CPAS will no longer be administered.)

SBE Policy 3803(b)(c), now Rule 36.3, affords students numerous options to meet the requirements for graduating from high school with a standard diploma. These options are

- passing the end of course tests in Algebra I, English II, Biology I
- using a concordance table by combining grades and scale score values; or

Advanced Placement Program

AP exams will be given in the Spring. There is a fee to take AP exams. The current fee is $99.00 but is subject to change. The AP test is required for all students enrolled in AP classes. If the AP test is not taken, students will not receive weighted credit for the AP course. For more information about AP, see www.student.collegeboard.org.

American College Test (ACT)

The ACT is required of every student who plans to attend any one of the majority of Mississippi colleges and universities. All college-bound students are encouraged to participate in this testing program. Students must register for the ACT online at www.actstudent.org. During the 2025-26 school year, school day administrations of the ACT will be offered online in the fall and spring. National Saturday administration dates at Meridian High School for 2026-2027 will be September 19, October 17, December 12, February 27, April 10, June 12, and July 10.

ACT WorkKeys

WorkKeys is a system of assessments and curriculum that build and measure essential workplace skills that can affect job performance and increase opportunities for career entry and advancement. By completing WorkKeys, students can also earn the National Career Readiness Certificate.

During the 2026-2027 school year, ACT WorkKeys will be administered online at Meridian High School and Ross Collins Career and Technical Center during the fall and spring windows.

Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT)
The PSAT/NMSQT is a multiple-choice test that measures developed verbal and mathematical reasoning abilities important for academic performance in college. The test takes one hour and 40 minutes, divided evenly between verbal and mathematical sections. All questions test the ability to reason with facts and concepts rather than recall and recite them. Types of questions are thoroughly explained and a full-length sample test is given in the PSAT/NMSQT Student Bulletin distributed to students before the test administration.

The PSAT will be administered at Meridian High School on October 11, 2026. Juniors and Sophomores are eligible to take the test. Students desiring to take the PSAT/NMSQT must register in the counselor's office in September. The registration fee for this test is currently $18 but is subject to change. See www.collegeboard.com for more information.

The PSAT/NMSQT can serve students in the following ways:

- To find out...what the SAT is like. That's the College Board test you'll probably take when you apply for admission to college. The PSAT/NMSQT is very similar to the SAT.
- To forecast ...your own SAT scores from your PSAT/NMSQT scores.
- To compare...your forecasted SAT scores with those of applicants at hundreds of colleges. They're published in the College Handbook.
- To estimate...your chances of getting into the college of your choice.
- To participate... (If you want) in the Student Search Service and have your name sent to colleges that are looking for students like you.
- To enter...the competition for scholarships awarded by National Merit Scholarship Corporation, this co-sponsors the PSAT/NMSQT.

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)
Many colleges outside Mississippi require scores from SAT for college admission. Registration forms and information can be obtained in the counselor's office. The SAT is a multiple---choice test made up of verbal and mathematical questions and divided into five 30-minute sections. The verbal questions measure the student's ability to understand what he/she has read and the extent of his/her vocabulary. The mathematical questions measure quantitative abilities closely related to college work. SAT testing information is available at www.sat.collegeboard.org/registration.

Cursive Writing Assessment
Students will demonstrate their proficiency in cursive writing by completing an assessment at the end of 4th grade.

SECTION V: PUBLIC INFORMATION

FOOD SERVICES

Breakfast/Lunch

The Meridian Public School District has qualified for the Community Eligibility Program (CEP); therefore, all MPSD students are eligible to eat breakfast and lunch at no cost to them.

Adult and guest meals are available for purchase at the following rate:

Breakfast	$2.50
Lunch	$5.00

School Lunch

Federal Regulations and State Board Policy restrict food sales in competition with the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. On February 22, 1985, the Mississippi State Board of Education passed the following pertaining to the National Food Service Program:

1. No food is to be sold on the school campus for one hour before the start of any meal service.
2. The school food service staff shall serve only those foods which are components of the approved federal meal patterns and such additional foods as necessary to meet the caloric requirements of the age group being served.
3. With the exception of milk products, a student may purchase individual components of the meal only if the full meal unit has been selected for consumption. A dessert is not a component and cannot be sold extra.
4. Students who bring lunch from home may purchase only milk and ice cream.

Offer Versus Serve

All age students enjoy exercising their "choice". The regulation which allows students to choose less than all of the food items with the lunch patterns is known as "Offer Versus Serve". However, the food service staff monitors each food item in order to serve the students acceptable menu items. School-age children often do not like and thus do not eat many vegetables and fruits. We realize this can lead to a deficiency in many nutrients, especially Vitamin A & C. For this reason, we serve fruits and vegetables rich in these two vitamins every day. A variety of such food items are served so children will be more likely to find one they will eat.

Special Dietary Needs

The School Food Service will make food substitutions for or accommodations for students with disabilities based on a prescription written by a licensed physician. Accommodations may also be made for other students with special dietary needs based on a medical statement by a medical authority or health professional recognized by the state.

For further information or questions regarding the school lunch program, contact the Director of Food Services at 601-484-4929.

MEDICATION POLICY

Prescription Medication shall be administered to students with chronic conditions provided the following policies and procedures are followed at all times. The procedures outlined in this policy should be followed when administering prescription medications.

1. The principal or his/her designees must participate in the annual Mississippi Department of Education training module, "Assisted Self-Administration Curriculum". This module is provided annually by the school district's registered nurses.
2. An Authorization for Medication Administration form must be completed by the parent and the health care provider for all prescription medication. The form shall contain: name and purpose of medication, dosage, time of regular administration, length of time medication is prescribed, and any special administration directives from the physician.
3. Prescription medication should be delivered by a parent to school in the original prescription bottle that is labeled with the child's name, date, and name of medication. Upon receipt of medication, school personnel must count medication and document on the medication log.
4. The parent is responsible for providing any supplies necessary for medication administration.
5. All prescription medication must be kept under lock and key at all times in an area designated by the principal.
6. A medication log shall be kept of all medication given to the student, by whom, the amount given and the date.
7. When medication is discontinued or returned to the parent, it must be documented with signatures of both the parent and the school principal or designee. At the end of the school year, medication not taken home by the parent will be disposed of by the school nurse and verified by a witness.
8. School Nurse Standing Orders are recommended to be utilized by unlicensed personnel as a standard of care.
9. Under no circumstances shall any staff member prescribe any medication to a student or employee of the Meridian Public School District.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

As required by state law, children with communicable diseases are not permitted to attend school.

1. A student with a chronic infectious disease shall be removed from the classroom temporarily and until the district's medical advisor in consultation with the student's physician determines whether the student's presence in the school poses a risk of transmission of such chronic infectious disease to others.
2. Should it be determined by the school's medical advisor that attendance poses no threat, the student shall be allowed to resume attendance at school subject to whatever restrictions or limitations, if any, that the school's medical advisor shall recommend. The student's school attendance shall be reviewed by the school's medical advisor in consultation with the student's physician at least once every month to determine if continued school attendance poses any risk of transmission of such chronic infectious disease to others.
3. Should it be determined by the school's medical advisor that attendance at school poses a risk of transmission of such chronic infectious disease to others, an appropriate alternative education program shall be established for that student which shall continue until the district's medical advisor determines that the risk of transmission to others has abated and normal school attendance can resume.
4. In order to prevent the spread of illness, a student is not allowed to remain at school if he/she has a fever and/or is vomiting.

HEAD LICE POLICY

School Screening, Individual Cases, Examination of Infested Student, Return to School
During the school year, students may be screened for head lice. Screening will be done by appropriate school staff. Throughout the year, any student suspected of having head lice is examined by an appropriate staff member. Care is taken not to embarrass the student and to assure that no stigma is attached to him/her. If only the lice eggs (nits) are found, the student may remain in class for the remainder of the day. Parents will be notified per phone or letter regarding appropriate treatment. If a live louse is found, the parent or guardian will be called to take the student home for treatment. The student may return to school after appropriate treatment has been given and there is satisfactory evidence that the student is free from nits.

According to House Bill 154, passed in the 1997 Legislative Session:
"If a student in any public elementary or secondary school has had head lice on three (3) consecutive occasions during one (1) school year while attending school, or if the parent of the student has been notified by the school officials that the student has had head lice on three (3) consecutive occasions in one (1) school year, as determined by the school nurse, public health nurse, or physician, the principal/administrator shall notify the county health department of the recurring problem of head lice with that student."

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Schools are sometimes faced with emergencies which require the total cooperation of staff members and students. The Meridian Public School District has made detailed plans for operating the schools in emergency conditions such as fire, tornado, flood, severe weather, explosions, and other disasters.

Fire drills and other disaster preparedness measures are a regular part of each school's program. Students are expected to learn the procedures to be followed under emergency conditions and to cooperate fully with the supervision of teachers. Parents should listen to the local radio or television stations for announcements from the Superintendent of Schools.

Meridian Public School District utilizes an emergency notification system to inform parents in the event of a school closing or emergency. Be sure your child's school has your current phone and e-mail information.

FIRST AID

The school attempts to provide an environment in which the student will be safe from accidents. If a minor accident occurs, first aid will be administered. All reasonable efforts will be made to notify the parents.

No care beyond first aid will be given. In case of the student's illness at school, a parent will be notified by phone to come and pick up the student. We have asked for your doctor's phone number in case of an emergency.

Trained faculty and staff first aid specialists are available in each school. Detailed instructions for emergency operations will be outlined to all students at their respective schools.

INSURANCE

Health insurance is the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATIONS

Close cooperation between home and school is fostered by the parent-teacher organizations which are encouraged in every school. Parents are encouraged to join an organization and to attend meetings. Notification of meeting dates will be sent home by students and given to local media.

PTA/PTO Groups must meet the guidelines set forth by MPSD. The PTA/PTO President should speak to the school principal about the required guidelines in order to establish the school's organization.

TITLE I PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The Meridian Public School District Board of Education endorses the parent involvement goals of Title I and encourages the regular participation by parents of Title I eligible children in all aspects of the program. The education of children is viewed as a cooperative effort among the parents, school, and community. In this policy, the word "parent" also includes guardians and other family members involved in supervising the child's education.

Pursuant of federal law, this district will develop jointly with, agree on with, and distribute to parents of children participating in the Title I program a written parent involvement policy. A meeting of the parents of participating Title I students will be held annually to explain the goals and purposes of the Title I program.

Parents will be given the opportunity to participate in the design, development, operation, and evaluation of the program for the next school year and to participate in planning activities, to offer suggestions, and to ask questions regarding policies and programs. Parents will be encouraged to attend the meeting and to become involved.

In addition to the required annual meeting, at least three (3) additional parent meetings shall be held, at various times of the day and/or evenings, for the parents of children participating in the Title I program. Parents and interested persons will be notified of the meetings through various methods, including, but not limited to notices, marquee messages, school newsletters, phone messages, and school websites. These meetings shall be used to provide parents with:

1. Information about programs provided under Title I;
2. A description and explanation of the curriculum in use, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet;
3. Opportunities to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children; and
4. The opportunity to bring parent comments, if they are dissatisfied with the school's Title I program, to the district level.

Title I funding, if sufficient, may be used to facilitate parent attendance at meetings through payment of transportation and childcare costs.

The parents of children identified to participate in Title I programs shall receive from the school principal and Title I staff an explanation of the reasons supporting each child's selection for the program, a set of objectives to be addressed, and a description of the services to be provided. Parents

will be advised of their children's progress on a regular basis. Opportunities will be provided for the parents to meet with the classroom and Title I teachers to discuss their children's progress. Parents will also receive information and training that will assist them in helping their children at home and at school.

Each school in the district receiving Title I funds shall jointly develop with parents of children served in the program a "School-Parent Compact" outlining the manner in which parents, school staff and students share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement in meeting state standards. The School- Parent Compact shall:

1. Describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment enabling children in the Title I program to meet the state's academic achievement standards;
2. Indicate the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children's learning, such as monitoring attendance, homework completion, monitoring television watching, volunteering in the classroom, and participating, as appropriate, in decisions related to their child's education and positive use of extracurricular time; and
3. Address the importance of parent-teacher communication on an on-going basis, with at a minimum, parent-teacher conference, frequent reports to parents, and reasonable access to staff.

NOTE: Districts with more than one school participating in a Title I program may wish to consider the establishment of a district-wide parent advisory council.

EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Homeless students in the district will have access to the education and other services needed to ensure that an opportunity is available to meet the same academic achievement standards to which all students are held. A liaison for students in homeless situations will be designated by the district to carry out duties as required by law.

The district will ensure that homeless students are not stigmatized nor segregated on the basis of their status as homeless. A homeless student will be admitted to the district school in the attendance area in which the student is actually living or to the student's school of origin as requested by the parent and in accordance with the student's best interest. Transportation will be provided to and from the student's school of origin at the request of the parent, or in the case of an unaccompanied student, the district's liaison for homeless students.

The superintendent or designee will produce written guidelines for distribution to each school that explains the rights of homeless students and the responsibilities of the schools to meet their needs and eliminate barriers to school attendance. This information shall also be disseminated in writing and by other means designed to raise awareness of these rights and responsibilities to staff, homeless families and students, the public, and homeless service providers

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, children are deemed to be homeless under the following conditions:

1. A child who is lacking a fixed regular and adequate nighttime residence and who has a primary nighttime residence that is a publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations, a temporary residence prior to being placed in an

institution, or a place not designed or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
2. A child who is placed in a transitional or emergency shelter before placement in a foster home or home for neglected children.
3. A child who is living in doubled-up accommodations due to loss of housing or other similar situation.
4. A migratory child who is staying in accommodations not fit for human habitation.
5. A child who has run away from home and lives in a runaway shelter, abandoned building, the street, or other inadequate accommodations.
6. A child whose parents or guardian will not permit him/her to live at home and who lives on the street, or other inadequate accommodations.

Services To Be Provided

1. Pursuant to and in compliance with the requirements of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1990, 42USC11431, it shall be the policy of this school district, to the extent practicable under requirements relating to education established by state law, that each eligible child of a homeless individual and each eligible homeless youth will have access to a free appropriate education comparable to the education provided the children of district residents who are non-homeless, without isolation or stigma.
2. The placement of an eligible homeless child or youth will be made according to Policy JBCCA - Assignment of Pupils, and will take into consideration the best interests of the homeless child or youth and placement requests made by a parent.
3. The choice of placement in either the "school of origin" or the school serving the "place of abode" will take place regardless of whether the child or youth is living with the homeless parent(s) or has been temporarily placed elsewhere by the parent(s).
4. Provided the homeless child or youth meets eligibility criteria, he/she will be provided transportation services; compensatory education programs for the disadvantaged; educational programs for the handicapped and for students with limited English proficiency; programs in vocational education; programs for the gifted and talented; and school meals programs.
5. Any and all records ordinarily kept by this school district, including immunization records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, evaluations for special services and programs shall be kept on homeless children and youth and shall be forwarded in a timely fashion should a child or youth enter a new school or school district; and in a manner consistent with S1232g of Title 20.
6. Should this school district receive assistance in S11432 of the Act, it shall coordinate with local social service agencies and other agencies or programs providing services to such children or youth and their families.
7. Should this school district receive assistance under S11432 of the Act, it shall designate a homelessness liaison to insure that homeless children and youth enroll in and succeed in the schools of their district; and, homeless families, children and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services.
8. The homelessness liaison shall inform school personnel, service providers and advocates working with homeless families of the duties of the liaison.
9. This school district has and will continue to review and revise, to the extent practicable under the requirements relating to education established by state law, any policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youth in schools selected in accordance with paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 above.
10. In reviewing and revising such policies, to the extent practicable under the requirements relating to education established by state law, consideration shall be given to issues concerning

transportation, requirements of immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records, or other documentation and guardianship.

11. Disputes which may arise regarding the assignment of a homeless child or youth will be promptly resolved according to the provisions of Policy JBCCA - Assignment of Pupils. Other issues or disputes will be directed to the attention of the school official responsible for that particular matter for prompt resolution. If this dispute cannot be resolved locally, any aggrieved party may make written request for a review of the matter to:

Coordinator of the Homeless Program
Mississippi Department of Education
P. O. Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY INSTRUCTION

The Meridian Public School District Board of Education will provide a program of language instruction to students who have limited English proficiency. Student participation in any language instruction program or instruction in English as a second language is voluntary.

Identification
Students who meet any one or more of the following criteria shall be identified as being limited in English proficiency. A student who:

1. was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; or
2. is a Native American or Alaskan Native or who is a native resident of the outlying areas and comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the student's level of English language proficiency; or
3. is migratory and whose native language is other than English and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and
4. who has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and whose difficulties may deny such individuals the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English or to participate fully in our society.

Requirements
If this district receives federal funding for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Programs, the following will be provided:

1. Parents will be notified of their student's placement in a language program and their options associated with that placement. Notification will include the reasons for identifying the child as LEP and the reasons for placing the child in the specified program.
2. Students will participate in regular assessments in a manner that will yield an accurate assessment. Test waivers may be granted on a case-by-case basis for LEP students who demonstrate unusual and unique circumstances; however, students who have been educated in the United States for three years are required to participate in reading/language arts assessment in English.
3. Certification that teachers in the program are fluent in English as well as other languages used in instruction (if the district receives sub-grants).
4. Evaluation of the program and the academic success and language achievement of the students in the program. Parents will be notified of:
   A. Their child's level of English proficiency and how such a level was assessed

B. The status of their child's academic achievement
C. The method of instruction used in the program in which the child is placed, and the methods of instruction used in other available programs
D. Information as to how the program will meet their child's educational strengths, assist him/her to learn English, and meet age-appropriate academic achievement standards
E. Exit requirements for the program
F. If the child has a disability, a statement as to how the LEP will meet the objectives of the child's IEP.

Consequences of inadequate yearly progress include notification of parents, development of improvement plans, and restructuring of programs or the district will lose federal funds. For non-English speaking parents, the district will arrange to provide translations of this information in their native language.

COMPLAINTS – TITLE I

TITLE I, ECIA PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINT RESOLUTION

The following procedures will be followed if a complaint concerning TITLE I, ECIA is received by the school district:

1. Record initiated - Within five (5) days of receipt of a written complaint, or an appeal from a person or persons against the operation of TITLE I, ECIA at the local level, the local TITLE I, ECIA office will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing. All written complaints must include the signature and address of the complainant.
2. Within ten (10) working days of the acknowledgment of the complaint, the complainant will be afforded an opportunity for an informal hearing with representatives of the Local TITLE I, ECIA office at which time oral and written testimony may be taken.
3. Failure to resolve the complaint in an informal sitting will necessitate a formal hearing on the matter. The complainant will be advised on the right to request in writing a formal hearing. The complainant will have fifteen (15) days from the date of the informal hearing to make a written request for formal hearing. Upon receipt of the request for a formal hearing the LEA shall make, when necessary, an on-site investigation of the complaint.
4. The formal hearing will be conducted by the local superintendent and school board. The local hearing panel will provide opportunity for the complainant or the complainant's representative, or both, and the local educational agency involved to submit evidence, including the opportunity to question parties to the dispute and any of their witnesses.
5. The entire procedure, from receipt of the complaint to a satisfactory resolution, shall be completed within a period of not more than sixty (60) days.
6. The complainant has the right to appeal the final resolution of the Local Educational Agency to the Commissioner of Education within thirty (30) days after receipt of the written decision.

GIFTED PROGRAM

Programming
The Meridian Public School District provides a program of enrichment for intellectually gifted students in grades two through six. This program complies with the Mississippi Department of

Education gifted regulations and state mandate requiring that a group of all intellectually gifted students is provided services by a properly endorsed teacher in a self-contained room for a required minimum of 240 minutes per week. It is recommended that gifted students receive a minimum of 270 instructional minutes. The recommended time for gifted instruction is 330 minutes (including planning time) per week.

The activities in the gifted class shall develop and enhance the process skills in the outcomes document, the teaching strategies notebook, and the required components of the gifted program standards document. Some of the activities shall be short-term exploratory activities that introduce students to ideas and concepts not normally covered in the regular education program. The activities shall enhance the integration of advanced content and individual student interests by utilizing higher-level thinking skills, creative problem-solving, critical thinking skills, research skills, personal growth, human relations exercises, leadership skills, and creative expression. Activities shall also create an appreciation for the multicultural composition of the school and community.

The Mississippi Gifted Education Act of 1989 requires teachers of the gifted to provide a gifted program that meets the individual needs of the gifted students being served. The recommended class size of each class in grades 2-6 is 8-12 students. While local districts have flexibility in the operation of programs, general education class size as mandated in the accreditation standards is inappropriate for gifted classes. The integrity of the program shall be maintained. Districts scheduling gifted classes with more than 15 students will be required to submit justification to the MDE. Districts shall electronically submit schedules of all gifted education program teachers to the MDE by February 1 and September 1 each year.

Referral to Placement Procedure

Referral for the gifted education program is based on consideration of performance in the general classroom, potential ability, test performance, maturity, creativity, and leadership potential. While grades and/or achievement test scores might be an indicator of giftedness, by the MDE regulations, neither classroom behavior, grades, or achievement test scores may not be used to eliminate a student from the identification process. A student may be referred by the parent, teacher, counselor, administrator, peer, self, or anyone else having reason to believe that the student might be intellectually gifted. The person initiating the referral shall sign the referral form and date it. Once the referral has been initiated, signed and dated, only the Gifted Local Survey Committee or parent can stop the identification process.

Stage 1 - Referral

Referral Type One - Mass Screening Referral Process addresses those students who are mass screened for gifted eligibility. This process requires all Mississippi districts to screen all students in at least one grade level each year. The MPSD screens all students at the end of first grade and the beginning of third grade. Districts should use a normed group measure of intelligence in the Mass Screening Referral Process. This process should assist in identifying students in underrepresented populations. Students who obtain a full-scale score at or above the 90th percentile on the normed group measure of intelligence shall move forward in the referral process. Students who scored at or above the 85th percentile but lower than the 90th percentile on the normed group measure of intelligence shall be subjected to a *Special Considerations for Gifted Identification Checklist* (formerly *Emerging Potential Checklist)*. If these students meet the criteria on the checklist, they shall move forward in the referral process.

The next step in the process will consist of the collection of substantiated student data obtained through the use of other objective and subjective measures.

A student shall satisfy two of the following additional criteria before moving forward to the Local Survey Committee (LSC) Review of Referral Data Stage:

1. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published characteristics of giftedness checklist,
2. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published measure of creativity,
3. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published measure of leadership,
4. a score at or above the 90th percentile on total language, total math, total reading, total science, total social studies, or the composite on a normed achievement test,
5. a score at or above the 90th percentile on a normed measure of cognitive ability,
6. a score at or above the 90th percentile on an existing measure of individual intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months, and/or
7. other measures that are documented in the research on identification of intellectually gifted students.

Referral Type Two - Individual Referral Process addresses those students who are individually referred for gifted eligibility. The Individual Referral Process is used to identify students in grades 2-6.

Students participating in the Individual Referral Process shall satisfy three of the following criteria before moving forward to the LSC Review of Referral Data Stage:

1. a score at or above the 90th percentile on a group measure of intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months,
2. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published characteristics of giftedness checklist,
3. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published measure of creativity,
4. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published measure of leadership,
5. a score at or above the 90th percentile on total language, total math, total reading, total science, total social studies, or the composite on a normed achievement test,
6. a score at or above the 90th percentile on a normed measure of cognitive ability,
7. a score at or above the 90th percentile on an existing measure of individual intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months, and/or
8. other measures that are documented in the research on identification of intellectually gifted students.

For the purposes of the assessment timeline, referrals shall begin on the day that a signed and dated student referral is submitted by anyone believing that the student may be intellectually gifted. The student should be assessed within 90 days of the receipt of the signed referral form.

Parents may choose to have their child independently assessed by a licensed psychometrist or examiner. The student shall satisfy the minimally acceptable criteria on the measures used. In addition, the child must satisfy at least three of the criteria noted above before moving forward to the LSC Review of Referral Data Stage.

Special Considerations for Gifted Identification

The *Special Considerations for Gifted Identification Checklist* (Appendix B), formerly the *Emerging Potential Checklist*, makes provisions for certain factors that may require special considerations when inappropriate instruments are used during the assessment process. All students should be considered when using the Special Considerations for Gifted Identification Checklist. These students shall be given special consideration(s) during the gifted identification process.

The LSC shall make the decision as to the possibility that the student could be eligible for special consideration for gifted assessment. Students who have satisfied criteria on the *Special Considerations for Gifted Identification Checklist* (formerly *Emerging Potential Checklist*) who did not satisfy minimal acceptable criteria on an individual test of intelligence, but did score at least at the 84th percentile or have a scale score that falls within the range of the 90th percentile confidence interval of the state minimum scale/ percentile score, may be administered one of the following additional measures to determine eligibility:

1. A test of cognitive abilities with a minimal score at the 90th percentile,
2. A group intelligence measure with a minimal score at the 90th percentile, or
3. A district-developed matrix approved by the MDE

Identification criteria, as approved by the MDE on the local district's Gifted Education Program Proposal, must be satisfied for a student to be ruled eligible by the LSC for the intellectually gifted education program.

Stage 2 - School Site LSC Review

Once the referral data have been collected, the LSC shall review all data and make one of the following recommendations:

1. the student has satisfied minimal criteria on at least three measures and should move forward to the assessment stage, or
2. the student has not satisfied minimal criteria on at least three measures, however, the LSC feels strongly that additional data should be collected and the student reconsidered at that time, or
3. the student has not satisfied minimal criteria on at least three measures and the identification process should stop.

Stage 3 - Parental Permission for Testing

At this time, district personnel shall obtain written parental permission for testing. District personnel shall also notify parents in writing about their rights under FERPA.

Stage 4 - Individual Intelligence Assessment

The assessment stage is the individual test of intelligence, which shall be administered by a licensed examiner. Parents may choose to have their child independently assessed by a licensed psychometrist or examiner. The student shall satisfy the minimally acceptable criteria on the measures used. In no case will the examiner be related to the student being tested. The examiner shall review all available data on the student, whether or not it satisfies minimal identification criteria, and use that information to select the most appropriate test of intelligence. Standard operating procedures should be followed during the selection and administration of all assessments as reflected in the examiner's manuals. The examiner shall provide a signed and dated report of the test administration to include testing conditions, scores on all subtests or sub scales, and the strengths and weaknesses of the student. A student must score at or above the 91st percentile composite/full scale or the 91st percentile on approved sub tests (as per publisher) in order to satisfy eligibility criteria.

Stage 5 - Assessment Report Completed

District personnel shall write an Assessment Report, which must contain the following components:

1. Student's name
2. Name of at least three measures from Stage 1: Referral that were used to determine the need to administer an individual test of intelligence
3. Results of each measure,
4. Name of individual who administered or completed each measure and the date administered or completed,

5. Test behaviors for any individually administered test(s),
6. Interpretation of the results of each individually administered test(s),
7. Name of the person who administered the individual test of intelligence and date test was administered,
8. Qualifications of the individual who administered the individual test of intelligence,
9. Results of the individual test of intelligence to include scores on all subtests and, identified strengths and weaknesses,
10. Name of the person responsible for writing the Assessment Report, his/her signature, and position, and
11. Date of the Assessment Report

Stage 6 - District Level LSC Eligibility Determination
Once the Assessment Report is finalized, the LSC shall meet to review all data and determine if eligibility criteria have or have not been satisfied. The LSC shall rule that the student is or is not eligible for the intellectually gifted program. For gifted funding purposes, students shall be marked eligible and assigned to a gifted education program in MSIS by December 1.

District personnel shall notify in writing the parents of each student tested for the intellectually gifted program about the assessment results. District personnel shall offer to explain any of the results about which the parents have questions. District personnel shall also notify parents in writing about their rights under FERPA.

After a student has been ruled eligible for one of the gifted programs, written parental permission for placement shall be obtained before the student is placed in the program.

Potentially Twice-Exceptional Students
Students who already have an eligibility ruling under IDEA and are being assessed for an intellectually gifted eligibility, and who did not satisfy all of the required minimal acceptable intellectually gifted eligibility, and who did not satisfy all of the required minimal acceptable referral criteria but did meet at least one referral criterion shall have their results reviewed by the LSC and a licensed examiner. If the student scores at or above 91st percentile on the individual test of intelligence (composite score or approved subtest score) or in the opinion of the reviewing committee, would benefit from participation in the intellectually gifted program for a period of one year. At the end of that year, the student's teacher of the gifted shall meet with the review committee to discuss the student's performance in the program. If the student has demonstrated success in the program, the LSC shall change the eligibility status from provisional to regular eligibility. If the student has not been successful in the program, the provisional eligibility shall be revoked.

In-State Gifted Student Transfers
Students who have a valid Mississippi gifted eligibility ruling do not have to be re-evaluated. A Mississippi eligibility determination in any of the four areas shall be accepted by all school districts within the state provided the district has a program in the area for which the student has eligibility. Before serving a transfer student in the local gifted education program, districts shall collect a copy of the student's Gifted Eligibility Form, assessment reports, and parental permission to serve.

Out-of-State Gifted Eligibilities
As each state has a unique set of eligibility criteria for placement in a gifted program, a student moving to Mississippi with a gifted eligibility from another state must satisfy Mississippi eligibility before being considered for placement in the gifted program. The eligibility ruling from another state may be used to initiate the referral process in Mississippi. There is no temporary placement in the gifted program while the student goes through the eligibility process within the district.

The exception to this policy concerns the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3) rules. MIC3 is an agreement between all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and all U.S. territories and has the force and effect of state statute. MIC3 addresses key educational transitional issues encountered by military families. Students enrolled in a Meridian Public-School District from a military family that have been identified as Gifted in a previous district will be automatically enrolled into the Gifted Education Program at that school provisionally for one year after receiving assessment records from the previous district. At the end of the school year, the Local Survey Committee will meet to evaluate reassessment, which should include a plan for the student to satisfy Mississippi eligibility requirements for permanent placement.

Annual Reassessment for Continued Placement in the Gifted Program

A reassessment committee shall meet at least annually to reassess each gifted student's continuation in the gifted program. The committee must include at least the student's teacher of the gifted and the Gifted School Site Local Survey Committee. In the event a student fails to make progress or exhibits unsatisfactory participation in the gifted program, a meeting of the reassessment committee will be held to consider the student's performance. If the committee determines that the student is failing to make progress in the program, the student will be placed on probation in the gifted program for the next 9-week term. The parents will be notified and given an opportunity to meet with the committee to discuss the decision and develop an intensive plan of action. During this time, the student will continue to participate in the gifted program. The action plan will be reviewed by the reassessment committee and parents every 2 – 3 weeks. If at the end of the period of probation, the student's performance improves to a satisfactory level, the student will be removed from probation and recommended for continued placement. If at the end of the 9-weeks term the student has failed to improve his/her performance to a satisfactory level, the reassessment committee can recommend the student be removed from the program. Documentation of all reassessment committee meetings must be maintained and approved by the district level gifted coordinator prior to the student's removal from the program.

If the committee determines that the student should exit gifted education due to lack of progress and/or unsatisfactory participation in the program, the student's parents will be notified and given the opportunity to discuss the decision with the committee before the student is removed. Should the parents not agree to the removal of the student from the program, the district shall grant the parents a hearing.

Hearing Process

If the parents are not satisfied with the action taken by the reassessment committee, the parents shall, within five (5) school days after the meeting with the LSC, put their concerns in writing and present them to the District Gifted Director. The District Gifted Director will meet with the parent and render a written decision based on information shared during the meeting.

Reinstatement Procedures

Students will be considered for reinstatement in the gifted program at the request of the parents and with the recommendation of the classroom teacher. Consideration and arrangements for reinstatement in the program will be made through the Local Gifted Survey Committee and documented in the minutes. Written notification of the student's eligibility for reinstatement will be forwarded to the parents and teachers of the students. Written parental permission must be obtained before the student is placed back in the program.

GEP Contact Person

Each local district superintendent shall appoint a GEP Contact Person. This person is the link between the district and Office of Gifted Education Programs at the Mississippi Department of Education. This

is not intended to be an additional administrative position at the district level. It is their responsibility to keep the Superintendent and Director of Special Services informed about the local gifted education program and all communications from the Mississippi Department of Education regarding the gifted education program.

Maintenance and Destruction of Gifted Student Files

Student gifted files containing assessment data and other confidential information is maintained at the district gifted office during a student's matriculation through the gifted program and for five (5) years after the end of services. Requests for active records can be made at any time after a student's eligibility status has been determined by contacting the Director of Gifted Education or his/her designee. In compliance with the *Individuals with Disabilities Act, 1997* and the MS Code Annotated, files containing personally identifiable information collected, maintained, and/or used in regard to students who were evaluated for the Meridian Public School Gifted Education Program must be destroyed after the fifth year of inactivity. An annual notice of this act will be published in the local newspaper to provide parents/students time to request records before their destruction.

Other Considerations

1. State and District Assessments: Each district is responsible for ensuring that students are being serviced during the administration of state and district assessments. A modified or alternate schedule is permitted and made available to the MDE upon request.
2. Gifted Students in Alternative School Settings: Each district is responsible for ensuring that services continue for students who are placed in an alternative school setting. The amount of time and the way services are provided shall be determined by the school district.

For more information visit our website to review the gifted handbook or contact Gifted Education at 601-482-8246.

INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Meridian Public School District
Acceptable Use Policy for PreK-12 Students

The operation of the Meridian Public School District (MPSD) network is guided by policies set forth by the MPSD Board of Trustees, district administration, the Mississippi Department of Education, and all applicable local, state, and Federal laws. This Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) establishes guidelines for responsible technology use while protecting students, staff, and district resources. The goals of the Acceptable Use Policy include:

- Ensuring safe and appropriate technology use for educational purposes
- Protecting student privacy
- Maintaining network security and integrity
- Fostering responsible digital citizens who prepare for the 21st century

This Acceptable Use Policy does not list every policy or law, but sets forth some specific policies particular to the Meridian Public School District.

Technologies Covered:

MPSD provides technology to students, which may include but is not limited to internet access and wireless networks, desktop and mobile computers, assistive technology devices, Chromebooks, online collaboration platforms, email and communication tools, educational software and applications, and cloud storage services.

The Acceptable Use Policy applies to district-owned technology equipment, MPSD network and internet connection, personal devices accessing MPSD networks, district-owned devices used off-campus, any technology used during school functions or events, and all current and future technologies adopted by the district.

Consequences of Policy Violation(s):
Any student who violates any policy, regulation, or law regarding use of the district network will be identified, and corrective and/or punitive actions will be taken.

All users of the district network are required to report violations or misconduct. Users who fail to report violations may be subject to the same disciplinary actions as those who violate the policy.

Violations of these procedures may result in, but are not limited to, a loss of access privileges, disciplinary action by the school and/or district, suspension, and/or contact of law enforcement agencies.

Student Data Privacy and Protection:
Student data is collected for educational purposes only. Third-party applications must comply with FERPA and COPPA. Educational records are retained per district policy. The district does maintain an incident response team, and annual security audits are conducted.

Students 13 or Younger:
For students under the age of 13, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) requires parental permission for educational software tools. Parents wishing to deny their child access to these educational tools must do so in writing to the building administrator, indicating that their child should be denied access to these tools. Examples of these tools are Google Apps for Education and similar educational programs. Denying use of educational tools does not include state or district assessments. Google does not serve ads in the Core Services of Google Workspace or use personal information collected in the Core Services for advertising purposes. To view the Google Workspace for Education Privacy Notice, visit the following website: https://workspace.google.com/terms/education_privacy/

Monitoring and Privacy:
MPSD monitors student internet browsing and search history, email communications, application usage, and network traffic patterns while using a district-issued device and/or district-provided email address. Monitoring is focused on student safety and policy compliance. This data access is limited to authorized personnel only. Regular privacy training for those authorized personnel is conducted. If a serious policy violation occurs, parents will be notified.

Third Party Supplied Information:
Students and parents of students with access to the MPSD network should be aware that use of the network may provide access to other electronic communication systems in the global electronic network that may contain inaccurate and/or objectionable material.

While the district takes steps to protect users from inappropriate material, makes every attempt to intercept unlawful and malicious actions from affecting users, and makes every effort to safeguard users, no system is perfect.

Acceptable Uses of Technology (not all inclusive):
A responsible user of the technology will:
Educational Activities

- use technology for school-related and educational purposes

- participate appropriately in online learning environments
- access approved educational resources and databases

Digital Citizenship

- follow the same behavioral expectations online as offline
- treat others with respect in digital communication
- protect personal and others' privacy and safety
- report inappropriate content or behavior immediately

Resource Stewardship

- handle equipment carefully and report problems promptly
- use network resources efficiently and appropriately

Communications and Collaboration

- engage in positive, constructive online discussions
- use appropriate language in all digital communications
- collaborate effectively on approved platforms

Unacceptable Uses of Technology (not all inclusive):

- Illegal Activities
- violating any local, state, or federal laws
- accessing, downloading, or distributing illegal content
- hacking, cracking, or unauthorized system access
- copyright infringement or software piracy

Inappropriate Content

- Accessing sexually explicit, obscene, or offensive material
- Creating, sharing, or accessing violent or disturbing content
- Downloading or streaming entertainment on district-issued devices

Harmful Behavior

- Cyberbullying, harassment, or intimidation
- Creating or spreading false information
- Impersonating others online
- Threatening or harmful communications

Security Violations

- Sharing passwords or login credentials
- Attempting to bypass network security or filters
- Installing unauthorized software or applications
- Connecting unauthorized devices to the network

Academic Integrity

- Using AI tools inappropriately for assignments
- Plagiarizing or copying others' work
- Submitting work generated entirely by AI without disclosure
- Cheating on online assessments or assignments

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Students should use their own good judgment when using MPSD technology.

Email:

MPSD provides students in grades PK-12 with the privilege of email accounts. These accounts are to be used exclusively for school-related communication. Availability and use may be restricted based on school policies.

Email accounts are monitored and archived for safety and compliance. Accounts remain active through graduation or if the student transfers out of MPSD. Students should use a professional and

respectful tone. Students should never share personal information via email. Suspicious links or attachments must be reported.

Digital Citizenship:
MPSD uses the Digital Citizenship Curriculum provided by Common Sense Media. This curriculum covers topics such as smart searching, cyberbullying, and protecting one's identity online.

Artificial Intelligence:
Students are expected to use artificial intelligence tools responsibly and ethically. The misuse of artificial intelligence tools for academic purposes can result in disciplinary action, including denial of access to technology, detention, suspension, expulsion, or other remedies applicable under the school disciplinary policy and state or federal law.

Cyberbullying:
Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to, harassing messages or posts, spreading rumors or false information online, excluding others from online groups or activities, impersonating others to cause harm, sharing embarrassing photos or information, or repeated unwanted contact or communication. Students should report cyberbullying immediately to a teacher, counselor, or administrator. Students can also report an issue to the Sandy Hook Promise Say Something - Anonymous Reporting System (grades 5th-12th).

Social Media:
The school district, schools, and select organizations have Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter) accounts that are monitored and maintained by the Director of Communications, Information Systems Department, and school/department administrators/designees. These social media outlets are meant to be a place for current students, parents, alumni, staff, and other district stakeholders to interact, ask questions, and discuss topics relevant to MPSD.

Fraternization via social media between MPSD employees and current MPSD K-12 students is prohibited. Student access to social media, like Snapchat and TikTok, on any MPSD campus is prohibited.

District Issued Devices:
MPSD assigns a Chromebook or iPad to each student in grades K-12 for educational use. Devices should remain damage-free while in students' care, both at school and at home. Stickers and/or decals are not permitted on the Chromebook. Removal of the case and district tag is not permitted. Report any damages or issues immediately to your teacher or librarian. Report theft immediately to your teacher or librarian.

Vandalism:
Any malicious attempt to harm or destroy MPSD equipment (e.g. chromebooks and/or iPads), materials or data is prohibited. Students committing vandalism, as described above, may be required to provide restitution for the costs of system restoration and may be subject to other appropriate consequences. A fee will be charged for intentional damage to a device.

Filtering:
MPSD uses advanced Content and SPAM Filters. MPSD complies with the regulations of CIPA, the Children's Internet Protection Act, to provide internet content filtering services for students. Filtering services are a means of protection from objectionable sites but cannot provide 100% protection. Therefore, MPSD provides no guarantees but will attempt to protect students from accessing such

objectionable internet sites. In the event the inappropriate material is accessible, MPSD will not be held liable.
All inappropriate hits are flagged and logged along with the date/time and the IP address of the workstation making the request. Content and web searches flagged by the filter are documented, and the school administration is notified to determine whether further investigation is necessary.
Attempts to bypass the school Internet filters are in violation of this acceptable use policy and will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include denial of access to technology, detention, suspension, expulsion, or other remedies applicable under the school disciplinary policy and state or federal law.

Guideline / Procedure Changes:
MPSD reserves the right to change these guidelines/procedures at any time.

If you have any questions about any part of the AUP, including consequences for failure to comply with the AUP, please address them via email to Tim Boutwell, Director of Technology, at tboutwell@mpsdconnect.org.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Homework

Homework is a very important part of each student's school program of experiences. The work assigned will supplement class activities and will require a period of home study. It is necessary for parents to realize that students cannot achieve to the best of their ability unless a quiet study time for work at home is provided which should include time spent with reading. This helps to develop good study habits and assures that students keep up with assigned work. The amount of time spent on homework varies with the individual student.

Textbooks

Parents and legal guardians are responsible for the cost of textbooks which are not returned to the proper school(s). If a textbook is lost or not returned by a student, the parent or legal guardian shall be required to compensate the district for the cost of the textbook. At the end of the semester or school year, the principal will provide forms for each teacher to record fines and lost books. The fine for each book will be recorded and turned in to the principal.

Some standards for charges need to be established so that all teachers are consistent in making charges. Consequently, the policy stated below will be followed:

Writing/drawing/scribbling in book	$1.00 per page (up to the cost of the book)
Excess wear/damage, but still usable	10% of the cost of book
Cover of book damaged	25% of the cost of book
Spine damaged	25% of the cost of book
Water damage, but still usable	25% of the cost of book
Water damage, not usable	Cost of the book
Pages missing, not usable	Cost of the book
Obscene writing or drawing on or in book	Cost of the book
CD eBook, not usable	Cost of eBook
Non-returned book/eBook	Cost of the book/eBook

Field Trips
As an important part of the educational service of the school, students may be taken on field trips. A field trip is defined as any planned activity involving students away from the school but under the jurisdiction and supervision of the school. Such trips are made only with the permission of the parent or guardian. When such events are being planned, permission slips will be sent home and signed by the parents or guardian. All field trips are supervised by regular classroom teachers and/or professional staff members employed by the school district as well as parent volunteers.

Library
Students may check out books as needed. They are encouraged to take books home for pleasure reading. Parents however, will be expected to replace books that are not returned. We need your help to avoid losses.

Computer Science (K-5)
Beginning in the 23-24 school year, all elementary schools will provide 1 hour of computer science instruction per week.

Computer Science (6-8)
All middle schools provide instruction in computer science.

Music (K-5)
Students regularly participate in a music program.

Physical Education (K-5)
Students will be expected to take part in physical education classes unless the principal has a statement from the family doctor stating the student is physically unable to participate. Physical education is regarded as a required subject.

Physical Education (6-8)
Students enrolled in physical education classes will be required to dress out in the specified uniform.

Personal and valuable items
Students are not to bring personal or valuable items to school without prior approval of the teacher.

Money
Students should never bring extra money to school. They should bring exactly what is needed for lunch, extra milk, ice cream, juice, or to buy supplies.

School pictures
School pictures will be made available to students during each school year.

Pets
Pets may only be brought to school with prior approval. If your child has a dog, please help to keep the dog at home.

Fund-raising
Money raising activities of pupils and teachers for student activities may be limited during the school year. Prior approval of the Principal and the Superintendent (or designee) will be required for such activities.

School parties (K-5)
Students may have two (2) parties during the school year (Christmas and Valentine's Day). Students do not exchange gifts with one another at Christmas. Students may not give out invitations to private parties at school. No gifts for another child may be brought to school. Students may exchange Valentine cards under the teacher's supervision. No deliveries of gifts, balloons, flowers, etc. shall be permitted on any occasion.

Appearance of building and campus
A priority goal of the district is to ensure all learning environments are safe, healthy, and attractive to support student success. Much of the spirit and reputation of a school is reflected by its appearance. All staff and students need to do his/her part in keeping the building and campus safe and attractive. Respect for school property is expected at all times. Vandalism of school property by students will be paid for by their parents/guardians.

PROCEDURES FOR VISITORS ON CAMPUS

Procedures for Campus/School Visitation
Parents and other persons who wish to visit schools in the Meridian Public School District must first report to the school office for clearance. In the office, visitors are required to sign in. They will be issued a visitor identification badge to be worn during the visit. Upon leaving the building or campus, visitors must report to the office to turn in the visitor identification badge and sign out.

Parents wishing to conference with a teacher, or visit a classroom, should notify the principal in at least 24 hours in advance. The principal shall have the right to deny visitation rights to any individual, if in the judgment of the principal; the visit might negatively affect the classroom procedures.

Unauthorized persons shall not be permitted in school buildings or on school grounds. School principals are authorized to take appropriate action to prevent such persons from entering buildings or from loitering on school grounds. **Such persons will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.**

SECTION VI: PROACTIVE APPROACHES TO DISCIPLINE

Introduction
The Board of Trustees of the Meridian Public School District is committed to ensuring that all schools provide a safe and orderly learning environment. Appropriate behavior is necessary for the district to provide a quality education for all students.

School personnel serve as role models for students and help instill positive characteristics. Students are expected to exhibit positive behavior and be respectful to school personnel and classmates. All stakeholders, including parents, are responsible for encouraging appropriate behavior.

The MPSD Code of Conduct has been established to ensure that all students have access to a positive educational setting at all schools. Expectations for acceptable behavior have been developed after careful consideration by a committee of school and district administrators, teachers, security personnel, support staff, students, parents, and community members.

To ensure a safe and orderly environment for all district schools, the MPSD Code of Conduct includes the rights and responsibilities of students, parents, and school personnel. In addition, consequences for unacceptable and inappropriate behavior are included. The Board of Trustees has adopted the Code of Conduct contained herein.

Parents as Partners
The Meridian Public School District is committed to providing a safe and orderly environment in which teaching and learning takes place each day at every school.

All stakeholders have the responsibility to cooperate with one another to create an environment conducive to learning. Communication between the home and school helps to ensure that students have the support necessary to obtain a successful education. Both parents and school personnel must serve as role models for students. Parents are encouraged to become involved partners by promoting a safe and supportive environment for their child's school. It is important that parents are familiar with the MPSD Code of Conduct and contact the school when appropriate to discuss strategies that may positively impact their child's behavior. Educators should maintain communication with parents about their child's behavior and seek help from parents to address behavior concerns. School personnel are responsible for encouraging positive behavior and providing behavioral supports and interventions.

Promoting Positive Student Behavior
All schools in the Meridian Public School District are expected to create an environment that promotes a positive school climate. Students are encouraged to establish positive relationships and make responsible decisions. Such skills help prevent the disciplinary consequences that often result from challenging situations. Schools provide multiple opportunities for students to participate in pro-social activities, such as school-wide positive behavior programs and periodic recognition of student achievement. Corrective strategies, including positive behavioral interventions and supports, encourage pro-social behavior and help provide the skills necessary for students to thrive.

Prevention and Intervention
Educators in collaboration with parents are responsible for managing behaviors that disrupt the learning environment. School personnel are expected to engage students and develop strategies to encourage positive behavior through prevention and intervention. Parents should be contacted by school personnel to address behavior concerns and discuss strategies to improve behavior. Intervention and prevention may include support and services that encourage pro-social behavior, such as

restorative justice, conflict resolution, anger management, behavior intervention plans, functional behavior assessments, and alternative placement. Students suspected of having disabilities may require additional special education services.

SECTION VII: CODE OF CONDUCT

POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORT (PBIS)

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a proven, research and evidence-based framework that supports discipline programs that emphasizes school-wide systems which include strategies for defining, teaching, modeling and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments. PBIS emphasizes teaching students to behave in ways that contribute to academic achievement and school success and that support a school environment where students and school staff are responsible and respectful.

PBIS also emphasizes the need for school staff to promote appropriate behaviors by teaching, modeling, reinforcing and monitoring appropriate behaviors and by treating much minor misbehavior as "teaching moments" rather than punishment opportunities. PBIS recognizes that effective school discipline is anchored to meaningful corrective instruction and guidance that offers students an opportunity to learn from their mistakes and contribute to the school community. PBIS also involves ongoing monitoring of discipline data to ensure equitable school-based discipline practices are implemented in a fair and nondiscriminatory manner.

Meridian Public School District will continue to implement the PBIS program across the entire district. The Code of Student Conduct compliments and supports the district-wide implementation of PBIS to foster student academic and behavioral success.

DISCIPLINE PLAN GRADES PK/K – 12

Student Discipline
Discipline is that set of policies, rules, and laws as well as the necessary enforcement by which order is maintained for the benefit of all. Discipline should have the qualities of understanding, fairness, firmness, consistency, and friendliness. It is the responsibility of school personnel, the student body, the home, and the community to provide for a school atmosphere that promotes a climate conducive to learning.

A student may be assigned detention, in-school or out-of-school suspension, placed in an alternative setting or expelled.

- A parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child enrolled in the school district shall be responsible financially for his/her minor child's destructive acts against school property or persons.
- A parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child enrolled in the school district may be requested to appear at school by the school attendance officer or an appropriate school official for a conference regarding acts of their child, or for any other discipline conference regarding the acts of the child.
- Any parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child enrolled in a school district who refuses or willfully fails to attend such discipline conference as specified in the above paragraph may be summoned by proper notification by the Superintendent or the school attendance officer and be required to attend such discipline conference.

- A parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child enrolled in a public school district shall be responsible for any criminal fines brought against such student for unlawful activity occurring on school grounds or buses.

Any parent, guardian or custodian or compulsory-school-age child who (a) fails to attend a discipline conference to which such parent, guardian or custodian has been summoned under the provisions of this section, or (b) refuses or willfully fails to perform any other duties imposed upon his/her under the law shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be fined not to exceed an amount as provided by law. (**Mississippi Code § 37-11-53)**

This district shall be entitled to recover damages in an amount not to exceed an amount as provided by law, plus necessary court costs, from the parents of any minor (7-17) who maliciously and willfully damages or destroys property belonging to this school district. However, this section shall not apply to parents whose parental control of such child has been removed by court order or decree.

The discipline plan may provide that as an alternative to suspension, a student may remain in school by having the parent, guardian or custodian, with the consent of the student's teacher or teachers, attend class with the student for a period of time specifically agreed upon by the reporting teacher and school principal. If the parent, guardian or custodian does not agree to attend class with the student or fails to attend class with the student, the student shall be suspended in accordance with the code of student conduct and discipline policies of the school district.

Classroom Discipline
Every teacher has an approved discipline plan which is in accordance with board policy and posted in his/her classroom. The plan has the following format:

1. Classroom rules are posted and explained.
2. A set of consequences for breaking the rules is posted and explained.
3. Rewards for positive behavior are made known.

The Code of Conduct determines which student behaviors should be addressed in the classroom vs sending students to the office. A student refusing to comply with teacher directives for these offenses will warrant the student receiving corrective strategies. Each teacher must document a series of corrective strategies for offenses. Minor infraction forms will be provided to the principal when students are referred to the office. For repeated infractions and behavior with established patterns, the school administrative team will refer the student to the school behavior counselor to evaluate the need for behavior supports.

Classification of Offenses
Violations of the Code of Conduct are grouped into five levels. Before determining a classification at the administrative level, the principal or designee will conference with the involved students and school personnel. Once the classification of the violation is determined, the principal or designee will implement the disciplinary procedure according to the written policy.

Each teacher will deal with general classroom disruption through effective classroom management and involvement of parents, guardians, and/or school counselors. Only when the action taken by the teacher is ineffective, or the disruption is severe, should the student be referred to the principal or his/her designee.

Level 1 Infractions:

- Misbehaviors that are low in intensity, passive, and/or non-threatening in nature shall be classified as Level 1 infractions. Teachers shall manage Level 1 infractions by using a range of corrective strategies. Students shall not receive exclusionary discipline for Level 1 infractions.

Level 2 Infractions:

- Misbehaviors that are moderate in intensity and non-threatening in nature shall be classified as Level 2 infractions. Teachers, in collaboration with the school discipline administrative team as appropriate, shall manage Level 2 infractions by using a range of corrective strategies. Students shall not receive exclusionary discipline for Level 2 infractions.

Level 3 Infractions:

- Misbehaviors that are more serious in intensity but non-threatening in nature shall be classified as Level 3 infractions. The school discipline administrative team shall manage Level 3 infractions by using a range of intensive in-school corrective strategies. The principal or administrative team may assign in-school suspension (ISS) for a Level 3 infraction, but may not assign an out-of-school suspension (OSS).

Level 4 Infractions:

- Misbehaviors that significantly interfere with others' safety and learning and/or are threatening or harmful in nature shall be classified as Level 4 infractions. The District may, but is not required to, assign an out-of-school suspension for a Level 4 infraction. The school discipline administrative team shall utilize other corrective strategies as appropriate, except in emergency situations involving serious and immediate threats to safety. The school discipline administrative team shall ensure that a behavior plan is developed for students after a Level 4 infraction, if appropriate.

Level 5 Infractions:

- The most serious misbehaviors that require immediate response from the school discipline administrative team and/or Central Office shall be classified as Level 5 infractions. The District may, but is not required to, assign an expulsion for a Level 5 infraction. The school discipline administrative team shall ensure that a behavior plan is developed for students after a Level 5 infraction, if appropriate.

District-Wide Behavioral Expectations	Examples of Expected Behaviors	**Level 1 Infractions Staff-Managed** **Level 1 Infractions: Misbehaviors that are low in intensity, passive, and/or non-threatening in nature shall be classified as Level 1 infractions. Teachers shall manage Level 1 infractions by using a range of corrective strategies. Students shall not receive exclusionary discipline for Level 1 infractions**	**Possible Corrective Strategies:** **Multiple strategies may be used depending on individual student's needs.** **Numbered items in this column are sequential & must happen before the bulleted items are selected as a corrective strategy**
Be Safe	Walk in hallways; Stay to the right and keep moving Stay in your assigned seat Keep all objects to yourself	**No Hall Pass** Student is observed by an adult and/or administrator being out of class and/or assigned area during instructional time without an approved hall pass. **Throwing objects** Tossing item(s) without intent to harm (i.e., throwing paper, spitballs, etc. in the classroom, during transitions, and/or in commons areas on campus).	**The following procedures, at a minimum, must be documented by teaching and school staff to proactively address Level 1 behavior infractions:** **First Infraction:** 1. Redirect the student using effective instructions, choice provisions (provide the student with more than one option to comply with classroom rules), or appropriate warning statements **Repeated Infractions:** 2. Hold a student conference privately to address the specific problem behavior and direct them to engage in the expected behaviors 3. Make a parent contact (e.g., phone call, email) to inform the parent of the performance of problem behavior, describe strategies that have been used to address the problem behavior, and request assistance in addressing the problem behavior 4. Require the student to complete a written assignment related to the
Be Responsible	Use computers responsibly Keep cell phones stowed away during school day Dress appropriately Arrive to class on time Participate in class	**Computer Abuse/Non AUP Violations (Off Task)** Student engages in inappropriate use of computer that does not violate AUP. Example: Accessing sites not assigned by instructor. **Electronic Telecommunication Device – Prohibited Use** Student uses an electronic device (e.g. cell phone, IPOD, MP3 player, etc.) on campus in areas where use is prohibited. **Forged Note** Student signs another person's name on a note and/or other written document without the other person's permission or knowledge.	

Be Responsible (cont.)		**Dress Code Violation** Student wears clothing and/or dresses in a manner that is not consistent with the policy practiced by the school district. **Tardiness to Class (Secondary Students)** Failure to be present at the beginning of the class period prior to sounding of the tardy bell.	problem behavior (e.g., reflective writing activity, problem solving activity, letter of apology, etc.) with documented direct teacher feedback. 5. Hold a Teacher-led or Grade-Level After-School Detention (ASD) up to 30 minutes where the student completes an appropriate written assignment related to the problem behavior (e.g., reflective writing activity, problem solving activity, letter of apology, behavior packet, etc.) with documented direct teacher feedback. **Other teacher-based strategies:** • Change student's seat or placement in room • Refer student to school counselor • Other research-based classroom management strategies, such as behavior contracts, behavior support plans, conflict resolution & de-escalation strategies, and reflective activities. **ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL ONLY:** • Request a schedule change • Re-teach school-wide rules and expectations (e.g. using direct instruction, modeling, and corrective feedback) • Temporary removal from classroom (e.g. de-escalation not to exceed 20 minutes)
Be Respectful	Promptly and politely follow adult requests Follow the teacher's directions and use positive language with peers Always use appropriate language Use appropriate voice Use good manners Keep hands to self; respect personal space of others Keep cell phones stowed away during school day	**Noncompliance** Student fails to follow explicit adult directions and/or requests. (e.g., student engages in passive/noncompliance or refuses to participate in a non-confrontational manner). **Disrespect for Authority (Non-Verbal)** After being redirected by an adult, student continues to engage in minor (nonverbal) disrespectful behavior such as "eye-rolling", sighing, etc. **Disrespect for Authority-(Verbal)**: After being redirected by an adult, student engages in verbal disrespectful behavior (e.g. talking back in protest, making non-threatening comments to staff, etc.). **Profanity (Not directed at)** Language used in conversation but is not used as a form of intentional disrespect toward peers. (e.g. student inadvertently uses profanity with another student) **Inappropriate Communication** Put downs, making fun of, or negatively talking about a person or their family.	

Be Respectful (cont.)		**<u>Inappropriate Physical Contact</u>** Student engages in mild physical contact that does not result in serious bodily harm. (e.g., horseplay, pushing, shoving, tripping, etc.) **<u>Mutual Display of Affection (PDA):</u>** Students engage in inappropriate actions on the school campus (e.g., kissing, inappropriate hugging, etc.) **ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL ONLY:** ** As an additional safety precaution at the alternative school, all electronic telecommunication devices will be collected and returned at the end of the day	

District-Wide Behavioral Expectations	Examples of Expected Behaviors	Level 2 Infractions Teacher/Administrator-Managed **Level 2 Infractions: Misbehaviors that are moderate in intensity and non-threatening in nature shall be classified as Level 2 infractions. Teachers, in collaboration with the school discipline administrative team as appropriate, shall manage Level 2 infractions by using a range of corrective strategies. Students shall not receive exclusionary discipline for Level 2 infractions.**	**Possible Corrective Strategies:** **Multiple teacher and/or administrative strategies may be used depending on individual student's needs.**
Be Safe	Obey all school rules Solve problems peacefully Make healthy choices	**Tardiness to Class (Secondary Students) – Second Offense** Failure to be present at the beginning of the class period prior to sounding of the tardy bell. **Campus Disturbance** Student performs a deliberate and inappropriate behavior that disturbs or interrupts the daily routine(s) of school operations (e.g., loud noises in the halls or other settings). **Initiating or Instigating a Fight** Student prompting, encouraging or attempting to bring about a fight **(but fight does not occur)**. **Possession of Tobacco/Lighter** Student possesses tobacco products on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, and/or when using school district transportation.	**The following strategies must be documented by the school administrative team to proactively address Level 2 Infractions:** 1. **MANDATORY** Student Conference 2. **MANDATORY** Parental Contact 3. **MANDATORY** Provide a meaningful reflective writing activity (e.g., letter of apology) or problem solving activity (e.g., plan to address referral concern) **If the school administrative team determines that disciplinary action(s) and/or behavioral support is warranted:** • In-School Detention (ISD) with assignment of related problem solving activity and/or behavioral instruction/behavior

Be Responsible	Take care of school property Ask before borrowing other people's property Attend all classes on time Attend school daily Use respectful language with adults and peers	**Computer Abuse (Account/Access Issues)** Student engages in inappropriate use of computer that violates AUP. (e.g., User accounts and downloading issues) **Defacing Property/Vandalism** Student participates in a deliberate, willful, and substantial destruction of school and/or personal property on school grounds and/or at school sponsored events that involves $25.00 or less in damages. Administration should require restitution activity and participation in remediation or behavioral instruction/counseling for vandalizing. **Stealing** Student is found to be in possession of, having passed along stolen property, and/or to be responsible for removing someone else's property that is valued of $25.00 or less without the property owner's permission. Administration should require restitution activity and participation in remediation or behavioral instruction/counseling for stealing. **Cutting Class** Student fails to attend regular scheduled class without an excuse on days when present at school. **Excessive Tardiness (Secondary Students)**. Habitual failure to be present at the beginning of the class period prior to sounding of the tardy bell as evidenced by being tardy for any class greater than **3** occasions during a grading period. **Leaving Class without Permission** Student leaves the classroom without permission from the instructor and it is not deemed an emergency. **Leaving Campus without Permission** Student leaves the school campus on a regular school day without permission from an administrator. **Skipping School/Truancy** Student fails to attend school on regular school day(s) without a valid excuse per	packet (note: ISD cannot be assigned during core instructional periods but can be assigned across multiple days) • After-School Detention (ASD) with assignment of related problem solving activity and/or behavioral instruction/behavior packet (note: ASD can be assigned across multiple days). **Other potential strategies:** • Schedule adjustment or class change • Referral to school or behavior counselor • Referral to appropriate school personnel to address attendance concerns **ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL ONLY:** • Restorative Justice continuum of practices (e.g. affective statements, affective questions, impromptu restorative conferences, etc.) • Review/Revise Individual Instructional Plan and/or Behavior Intervention Plan • Re-teach school-wide rules and expectations (e.g. using direct instruction, modeling, and corrective feedback) • Refer to wraparound services (e.g. Weems, etc.) • Temporary removal from classroom (e.g., de-escalation not to exceed 20 minutes)

Be Respectful	Politely follow adult requests Keep hands to self; respect personal space of others	district's attendance policy or written permission from administration. **Repeated Profane/Obscene Communication (Not directed at)** Student continues to use inappropriate language in conversation with peers that has been proactively addressed using and documenting PBIS strategies by teaching staff at Level 1. The profane/obscene communication is not used as a form of intentional disrespect toward peers. **Profane/Obscene Communication (Directed At)** Student uses inappropriate language as a form of intentional disrespect toward peers. **Repeated Disrespect for Authority-(Verbal)**: After being redirected by an adult, student continues to engage in verbal disrespectful behavior (e.g. talking back in protest, making non-threatening disrespectful comments to staff, etc.) that has been proactively addressed using and documenting PBIS strategies by teaching staff at Level 1. **Defiance/Continued Noncompliance** Student fails to follow explicit adult requests or directives that have been proactively addressed using PBIS strategies by teaching staff at Level 1. (e.g., refusing to follow directions) **Indecent behavior** Student displays, writes, and/or draws pictures/images that are considered indecent, offensive, disgusting and/or disturbing according to universally appropriate social norms. (e.g., note with profanity, pornography, gang related drawings - illustration, signs or symbols in personal notebooks/items, etc.) **Continued Inappropriate Physical Contact** Student continues to engage in mild physical contact that does not result in serious bodily harm (e.g., horseplay, pushing, shoving, tripping,	

Be Respectful (cont.)		etc.) and has been proactively addressed using and documenting PBIS strategies by teaching staff at Level 1. **<u>Threatening Peers</u>** Student delivers disrespectful messages to peers (e.g., becoming angry and threatening to hurt him/ her) with no intent of follow-through as determined by an investigation by administrator. **<u>Harassing or Intimidating Communications</u>** Repeated use of words, gestures, photographs, drawings or any other form of communication to intimidate or harass another student (e.g., repeated verbal or written put downs). **<u>Continued Mutual Display of Affection (PDA)</u>** Students continue to engage in inappropriate actions on the school campus (e.g., kissing, inappropriate hugging, etc.) that have been addressed by teaching staff using and documenting proactive PBIS strategies. **<u>Missing Assigned Discipline</u>** Student fails to report to assigned discipline (e.g., ISD, After-School Detention) without reasonable explanation (e.g., family emergency) or written permission from administration.	

District-Wide Behavioral Expectations	Examples of Expected Behaviors	**Level 3 Infractions Administrator-Managed** **Level 3 Infractions: Misbehaviors that are more serious in intensity but non-threatening in nature shall be classified as Level 3 infractions. The school discipline administrative team shall manage Level 3 infractions by using a range of intensive in-school corrective strategies. The principal or administrative team may assign in-school suspension (ISS) for a Level 3 infraction, but may not assign an out-of-school suspension (OSS).**	**Possible Corrective Strategies:** Multiple strategies may be used depending on individual student's needs.
Be Safe **Be**	Stay tobacco free Make healthy choices Solve problems peacefully Obey all school rules	**<u>Possessing or Using Nonprescription or Non-Controlled Substance</u>** Student is in possession of or is using an unauthorized substance (e.g., over-the-counter diet pills or pain medication), per the District's Drug Policy. **Tardiness to Class (Secondary Students) – THIRD Offense** Failure to be present at the beginning of the class period prior to sounding of the tardy bell. **<u>Campus Disturbance</u>** Student performs any deliberate and inappropriate behavior that disturbs or interrupts the daily routine(s) of school operations (e.g., actions that draw a crowd) after the behavior has been addressed by school faculty member(s) using and documenting proactive PBIS strategies. **<u>Initiating or Instigating a Fight (ELEMENTARY STUDENTS)</u>** Student prompts, encourages or attempts to bring about a fight **(but fight does not occur)** after the behavior has been addressed by school faculty member(s) using and	**<u>The following strategies must be documented by the school administrative team to proactively address Level 3 Infractions:</u>** 1. **MANDATORY** Student Conference 2. **MANDATORY** Parent Contact **If the school administrative team determines that discipline action and/or behavioral support is warranted:** • For repeated infractions and behaviors with established patterns (e.g., first ODR for Level 3 Defiance/Continued Noncompliance; Disrespect for Authority-Verbal), the school administrative team will refer the student to school behavior counselor to evaluate the need for behavioral supports. • In-School Detention (ISD) with assignment of related problem solving activity and/or behavioral instruction/behavior packet (note: ISD cannot be assigned during core instructional periods but can be assigned across multiple days)

Safe (cont.)		documenting proactive PBIS strategies. **<u>Gambling</u>** Student engages in such activity (i.e., playing a game of chance involving money – wagering or betting) on a school campus or at a school sponsored event.	• After-School Detention (ASD) with assignment of related problem solving activity and/or behavioral instruction/behavior packet (note: ASD can be assigned across multiple days) • In-School Suspension (ISS) with assignment of related problem solving activity and/or behavioral instruction/behavior packet • (**Note: ISS cannot be assigned for more than 3 school days for 1 offense. ISS cannot be assigned for more than 5 school days in one 9-week school quarter**). **<u>Response to Intervention (RTI) Procedures:</u>** 1. Upon the 2nd ODR for other Level 3 offenses within a 9 week period, the school administrative team will validate that Tier I strategies have been documented within the behavior RTI process and evaluate need for behavioral supports. 2. Upon the 4th ODR for other Level 3 offenses within a semester, the school administrative team will refer the student to the school behavior counselor to evaluate the need for tiered behavioral supports (e.g. Tier 2). 3. Upon the 7th ODR for other Level 3 offenses within a school year, the school administrative team will refer the student to the Teacher Support Team (TST). For IEP students the IEP committee will meet to determine the need for behavior supports. 1. Placement at the alternative site based on student failure to respond to interventions implemented within the
Be Responsible	Use computers responsibly Ask before borrowing other people's property Take care of school property	**<u>Computer Abuse (Illegal Accessing Activity)</u>** Student engages in inappropriate use of computer that violates AUP. (e.g. Inappropriate sites, materials, pornography, etc.) **<u>Stealing</u>** Student is found to be in possession of, having passed along stolen property, and/or to be responsible for removing someone else's property valued between $25.01- $100.00 without the property owner's permission. Administration should require restitution activity and participation in remediation for stealing. If student refuses then administrator may take additional actions as appropriate. **<u>Vandalism</u>** Student participates in a deliberate, willful, and substantial destruction of school and/or personal property on school grounds and/or at school sponsored events that involve between $25.01- $100.00 in damages. Administration should require restitution activity and participation in remediation for vandalizing.	

Be Respectful	Consider other people's feelings and respect personal space of others Politely follow adult requests Keep your hands, feet and objects to yourself at all times	**Excessive Inappropriate Physical Contact** Student engages in physical contact. (e.g., slapping, punching, spitting, and scratching). The physical contact does not result in an altercation. **Harassment (other than sexual)/Inappropriate Communication to Peers** Student repeatedly delivers disrespectful message (verbal or gestural) to another person. Disrespectful messages may include comments based on race, religion, age, gender, personal appearance, and/or national origin; sustained or intense verbal attacks based on ethnic origin, disabilities, or other personal/family matters. **Verbal Altercation** An intense argument between two or more students that actively disrupts the learning environment. No physical contact is made; however, the verbal altercation continues after the behavior has been addressed by school faculty member(s) using and documenting proactive PBIS strategies. **Defiance/Continued Noncompliance** Student willfully and deliberately fails to follow explicit adult requests or directives that have been addressed using and documenting PBIS strategies by teaching staff at Level 1 and administrative staff at Level 2 using and documenting proactive PBIS strategies (e.g. fails to attend ISD (In School Detention) or ASD (After School Detention). **Disrespect for Authority-(Verbal)**: After being redirected by an adult, student continues to engage in verbal disrespectful behavior (e.g. inappropriately arguing) that have been addressed by school faculty member(s) at Level 1 and administrative staff at Level 2 using proactive PBIS strategies.	district RTI process is described within the alternative site policies and procedures. **ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL ONLY:** • Administrative Team will determine next steps in RTI process. (e.g. Wraparound services) • Restorative Justice continuum of practices (e.g. structured conference with all primary stakeholders, groups and circles, etc.) • Review/Revise Individual Instructional Plan and/or Behavior Intervention Plan • Temporary removal from classroom (e.g., de-escalation not to exceed 20 minutes)

District-Wide Behavioral Expectations	Examples of Expected Behaviors	**Level 4 Infractions Administrator-Managed** **Level 4 Infractions: Misbehaviors that significantly interfere with others' safety and learning and/or are threatening or harmful in nature shall be classified as Level 4 infractions. The District may, but is not required to, assign an out-of-school suspension for a Level 4 infraction. The school discipline administrative team shall utilize other corrective strategies as appropriate, except in emergency situations involving serious and immediate threats to safety. The school discipline administrative team shall ensure that a behavior plan is developed for students after a Level 4 infraction, if appropriate.**	**Possible Corrective Strategies:** Multiple PBIS strategies may be used depending on individual student's needs.
Be Safe	Obey all school rules Refrain from accepting alcohol; report alcohol to appropriate staff or administrator.	**Bus Disturbance** Student performs a deliberate and inappropriate behavior that compromises the safety of others (e.g., throwing objects that hit bus driver) or any behavior that affects the driver's ability to maintain control and could require the bus driver to stop bus.). **Tardiness to Class (Secondary Students) – FOURTH Offense** Failure to be present at the beginning of the class period prior to sounding of the tardy bell. **Serious Campus Disturbance** Student performs a deliberate and inappropriate behavior that compromises the safety of others and disturbs or interrupts the daily routine(s) of school operations (e.g., unauthorized activation of the fire alarm or any major disruption that could result in physical injury). **Uses, Distributes, or Sells Tobacco Products/ Lighter / Electronic Cigarettes/Vapes**	**The following strategies must be documented by the school administrative team to proactively address Level 4 Infractions:** **1. MANDATORY** investigation by school administrative team 2. **MANDATORY** parent contact to inform parent of accusation and status of investigation. Parent will be encouraged to attend the student conference after investigation is complete 3. **MANDATORY** student conference **If the school administrative team determines that discipline action and/or behavioral support is warranted:** • **MANDATORY** conference with student, parent, and school administrative team • **MANDATORY** referral to the school's Teacher Support Team (TST) to determine whether formal behavioral supports are necessary within the district RTI process. For IEP students, the IEP Committee will meet to determine the need for behavioral supports. • In-School Detention (ISD) with assignment of related

		Student uses, distributes, or sells tobacco products on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, and/or when using school district transportation. This includes cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, etc. **<u>Alcohol Possession</u>** The possession, sale, or purchase of alcoholic beverages. Possession should be reported only if the person is caught in possession of alcohol.	problem solving activity and/or behavioral instruction/behavior packet (note: ISD cannot be assigned during core instructional periods but can be assigned across multiple days) • After-School Detention (ASD) with assignment of related problem solving activity and/or behavioral instruction/behavior packet (note: ASD can be assigned across multiple days)
Be Responsible	Respect the property of others; Ask permission before using the property of others Respect school property	**<u>Stealing</u>** Student is found to be in possession of, having passed on, and/or to be responsible for removing someone else's property valued greater than $100.00 without the property owner's permission. Administration should require restitution activity and participation in remediation for stealing. If student refuses to provide restitution or participate in remediation, then administrator may take additional actions, if appropriate. **<u>Coercion/Extortion</u>** Taking money or property from someone with consent, where the consent was obtained by force or fear. **<u>Vandalism</u>** Student participates in a deliberate, willful, and substantial destruction of school and/or personal property on school grounds and/or at school sponsored events that involve greater than $100.00 in damages. Administration should require restitution activity and participation in remediation for vandalizing. If student or parent refuses then administrator may take additional actions.	• In-School Suspension (ISS) with assignment of related problem solving activity and/or behavioral instruction/behavior packet (**note: ISS cannot be assigned for more than 3 school days for 1 offense. ISS cannot be assigned for more than 5 school days in one 9-week school quarter**). • Students assigned ISD/ISS for Tobacco / Vapes / Electronic Cigarettes/etc will be required to complete tobacco/drug curriculum assignment(s) • Out-of-School Suspension (note: OSS cannot be assigned for more than 3 school days for 1 offense. OSS cannot be assigned for more than 10 school days in one 9-week school quarter or more than 15 school days cumulatively per school year. OSS <u>shall not be used</u> for students under the age of 10 except for Level 5 infractions or in emergency situations involving a serious and immediate threat to student, teacher or public safety. OSS <u>shall not be used</u> for misconduct that

Be Respectful **Be Respectful (cont.)**	Consider other people's feelings Keep your hands, feet and objects to yourself at all times Respect the personal space of others Use respectful language with adults and peers	**<u>Cyber Bullying</u>** The use of information and communication technologies, such as email, cell phones, pagers, text messages, instant messages, personal websites or blogs, personal polling sites or a combination of these technologies, to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behavior by an individual or group with the intention of physically or psychologically intimidating others. **<u>Bullying</u>** Includes behavior such as a pattern of deliberate, negative, hurtful, or aggressive acts that are committed to intimidate another student and/or intentionally cause another student emotional suffering, physical injury, or damage to personal property. **<u>Harassment</u>** Unwelcome conduct that is based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, or disability. Harassing conduct may take different forms, including but not limited to verbal acts and name-calling, as well as nonverbal behavior that is physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating. Harassment includes the use of derogatory language and intimidation; unwanted physical contact or physical violence; and the use of derogatory language and images related to a person's membership in a protected class. **Initiating or Instigating a Fight (Secondary Students)** Student prompts, encourages or attempts to bring about a fight **(and fight does occur)** after the behavior has been addressed by school faculty member(s) using and documenting proactive PBIS strategies. **<u>Fighting/Inflicting Bodily Injury</u>**	occurs off school property or outside the school day unless the infraction occurs at a school-sponsored event or on a school bus, or the conduct substantially disrupts, or will substantially disrupt, the school environment, or seriously endangers the welfare or safety of other students or school personnel.). • Placement at the alternative site based on student failure to respond to interventions implemented within the district RTI process is described within the alternative site policies and procedures. **<u>Other potential strategies:</u>** • Bus Probation or Suspension (note: the progression includes warning, parent contact, 5 days of suspension, or 10 days of suspension). Bus Probation or Suspension are only for bus-based infractions. **<u>ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL ONLY:</u>** • May be recommended for expulsion OR • May be recommended to other educational options. **NOTE: Referrals for fighting will be individually evaluated by the School Discipline Administrative Team for potential consequences of up to five days OSS. If the School Discipline Administrative**

Be Respectful (cont.)		Involvement in any form of physical aggression that <u>results</u> in bodily harm or injury to another person(s). This is a serious physical altercation that requires adult intervention to end. **<u>Sexual Harassment</u>** Student engages in unwanted or unwelcomed verbal, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature that results in the creation of a hostile educational environment that impedes the ability of another student or students to participate in or benefit from the educational program. Example: spreading sexual rumors, repeatedly pressuring others for unwanted sexual activity, repeated teasing of a sexual nature, repeated unwanted sexual remarks or jokes, and/or repeated unwelcomed touching or grabbing. **<u>Threatening/Intimidation</u>** Student delivers disrespectful and/or intimidating messages (verbal, gestural, or written) that convey an explicit or implied threat and/or harm directed toward another student and/or adult, and which convey the intent to carry out such or threat or harm as well as the knowledge and capacity to do so. **<u>Profanity in Communication / Directed toward Staff</u>** Student uses profanity in communication with or directed at staff . **<u>Harassment (other than sexual)/Intimidation or Inappropriate Communication to an Adult</u>** Student <u>repeatedly</u> delivers disrespectful message (words, gestures, photographs, drawings or any other form of communication) to adult. Disrespectful messages may include but are not limited to comments based on race, religion, age, gender, personal appearance, and/or national origin; sustained or intense verbal attacks based on ethnic origin, disabilities, or other personal/family matters or messages	**Team recommends a consequence of more than three days OSS, the team shall document the recommendation in writing, including the reasons for the recommendation and the interventions that were attempted prior to the recommendation, and shall send the recommendation to the Superintendent or his/her designee for approval.**

		intended to harass or intimidate an adult. **<u>Deliberately False Charge Against Authority</u>** Student accuses any staff member of any act that is unlawful and/or a violation of school policy and, after a thorough investigation, it Is determined that the student deliberately accused the staff member falsely. **<u>Trespassing</u>** Being on school property without permission, including breaking and entering, when such trespassing significantly interferes with others' safety & learning and/or is of threatening or harmful nature.	

District- wide Behavioral Expectations	Examples of Expected Behaviors	**Level 5 Infractions Administrator-Managed** **Level 5 Infractions: The most serious misbehaviors that require immediate response from the school discipline administrative team and/or Central Office shall be classified as Level 5 infractions. The District may, but is not required to, assign an expulsion for a Level 5 infraction. The school discipline administrative team shall ensure that a behavior plan is developed for students after a Level 5 infraction, if appropriate.**	**Possible Corrective Strategies: Multiple strategies will be used depending on individual student's needs.**
Be Safe **Be Safe (cont.)**	Ask for help if you are not safe. Refrain from accepting alcohol and drugs; report alcohol or drugs to appropriate staff or administrator. Report gang-related activity to appropriate staff or administrator.	**<u>Alcohol Sale, Purchase, Possession or Use</u>** The sale, purchase, possession, or use of alcoholic beverages. Use should be reported only if the person is caught in the act of using or is discovered to have used in the course of the investigation (e.g., Possession at this level impacts school order & safety) **<u>Drugs (Use, possession and/or distribution)</u>** Student is found to be under the influence or possess, use, cultivate, manufacture, distribute, or purchase any illegal drug, narcotic, controlled substance, or substance represented to be an illegal drug, narcotic, or controlled substance. See district drug/alcohol policy to address this behavior. **<u>Group Fights</u>** A physical altercation on school grounds involving three or more students which: (1) significantly disturbs or interrupts the daily	**<u>The following strategies must be documented by the school administrative team to proactively address Level 5 Infractions:</u>** **1. MANDATORY** investigation by school administrative team. 2. **MANDATORY** parent contact to inform parent of accusation and status of investigation. Parent will be given the option to attend the student conference after investigation is complete. 3. **MANDATORY** student conference. **If the school administrative team determines that discipline action and/or behavioral support is warranted:** • **MANDATORY** *school level conference* with student, parent, school administrative team. • **MANDATORY** referral to the school's Teacher Support Team (TST) to determine whether formal behavioral supports are

		routine of school operations & meaningfully interferes with other safety and learning, or (2) results in serious bodily injury. **<u>Participation in Gang-Related Activity</u>** Students participate in activities related to gangs on school campus or a school sponsored activities "Gang-related activity" includes gang recruitment, gang initiation, fights between rival gangs, or other similar behaviors. "Gang-related activity" does not include non-threatening behavior such as handshakes, signs, or wearing of particular colors.	necessary within the district RTI process. For IEP students, the IEP Committee will meet to determine the need for behavioral supports. • **MANDATORY** referral to law enforcement for weapons, explosives, illegal drugs, serious bodily injury, and Level 5 battery. **Implement other appropriate corrective strategies:** • Arrange linkage with a counseling services or other appropriate agency. • Out-of-School suspension (note: OSS <u>shall not be assigned</u> for more than 3 school days for 1 offense. OSS <u>shall not be assigned</u> for more than 10 school days in one 9-week school quarter or more than 15 school days cumulatively per school year. OSS <u>shall not be used</u> for students under the age of 10 except for Level 5 infractions or in emergency situations involving a serious and immediate threat to student, teacher or public safety. <u>OSS shall not be used</u> for misconduct that occurs off school property or outside the school day unless the infraction occurs at a school-sponsored event or on a school bus, or the conduct substantially disrupts, or will substantially disrupt, the school environment, or seriously endangers the welfare or safety of other students or school personnel.).
Be Responsible **Be Responsible** (cont.)	Be cooperative in the event of an emergency. Follow school safety plan. Never bring weapons to school.	**<u>Explosives/Incendiary Device</u>** Student is in possession of substances/objects that are readily capable of causing bodily harm or injury (firecrackers, gasoline, lighter fluid, homemade explosive device, etc.) **<u>Possessing a Weapon Prohibited by Federal and State Law</u>** Any firearm, ammunition, explosive device, knife, or other object as defined by federal or state law that can place a person in reasonable fear or apprehension of serious harm that is on the student's person and/or in the student's belongings, locker, and/or any other personal storage space. **<u>Stealing</u>** Student is found to be in possession of, having passed on, and/or to be responsible for removing someone else's property valued greater than $500.00 without the property owner's permission. Administration should require restitution activity and participation in remediation for stealing. If student refuses to provide restitution or participate in remediation, then administrator may take additional actions, if appropriate.	

		Vandalism Student participates in a deliberate, willful, and substantial destruction of school and/or personal property on school grounds and/or at school sponsored events that involve greater than $500.00 in damages. Administration should require restitution activity and participation in remediation for vandalizing. If student or parent refuses then administrator may take additional actions, if appropriate.	• Recommendation for alternative school placement at the discretion of the principal taking into consideration the results of the school-level investigation and any other unique circumstances (Note: Placement at the alternative school is determined by District PBIS Office and approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee. Student progress is reviewed every 30 days by administrators of the alternative school and home school, district PBIS office, referred student, the student's parent, and one representative of the student's choice). • Recommendation for expulsion at the discretion of the principal taking into consideration the results of the school-level investigation and any other unique circumstances (Note: Expulsions are approved by the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and MPSD Board of Education after an informal due process hearing and a formal due process hearing, if requested). **Other potential strategies:** • Bus Probation or Suspension (note: the progression includes warning, parent contact, 5 days of suspension, or 10 days of suspension). Bus Probation or Suspension are only for bus-based infractions. **ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL ONLY:**
Be Respectful **Be Respectful (cont.)**	Attempt to solve problems in a non-confrontational manner. Be cooperative in the event of an emergency	**Serious Bodily Injury** Student commits physical assault that results in an injury or illness that involves: 1) a substantial risk of death; 2) extreme physical pain; 3) protracted and obvious disfigurement; or 4) protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty. **Engaging in Serious Retaliation Against School Employee** Student engages in act(s) of retaliation against any school employee on or off campus (e.g., slashing the tires of a school employee, or keying a school employee's car). **Battery of a Staff or Faculty Member** A severe and unprovoked act of physical aggression against a faculty/staff member with a reasonable intent to harm (e.g., punching a teacher). **Assault of a Staff or Faculty Member** An unprovoked attempt to commit on a school teacher a	

Be Respectful (cont.)		battery or the intentional placing of a school teacher on reasonable apprehension of receiving a battery**.** **<u>Repeated harassment (other than sexual)/Intimidation or Inappropriate Communication to an Adult</u>** Student <u>repeatedly</u> delivers disrespectful message (words, gestures, photographs, drawings or any other form of communication) to an adult. Disrespectful messages may include but not limited to comments based on race, religion, age, gender, personal appearance and/or national origin; sustained or intense verbal attacks based on ethnic origin, disabilities, or other personal/family matters or message used to harass or intimidate an adult. **<u>Public Indecency, Lewdness, or Exposure</u>** Student engages or attempts to engage in actions that include but are not limited to exposing of body parts in public view with the intent to shock or intimidate others, etc that results in the creation of a hostile educational environment that impedes the ability of others to participate in or benefit from the educational program. **<u>Repeated Sexual Harassment</u>** Student engages in repeated unwanted or unwelcomed verbal, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature that results in the creation of a hostile educational environment that impedes the ability of another student or students to participate in or benefit from the educational program (e.g., continuing to spread sexual rumors, unwanted sexual activity, repeated teasing of a sexual nature, repeated unwanted sexual remarks or jokes, and/or repeated unwelcomed touching or grabbing).	• K – 5: may be recommended for expulsion or other educational options. (Wraparound services) • 6 – 12: recommend expulsion

		Sexual Acts Student engages or attempts to engage in sexual acts on campus or at school-sponsored or related events including district transportation. **Continuous Sexual Harassment** Student continues, even after previous attempts to stop the behavior, to engage in unwanted or unwelcomed verbal, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature that results in the creation of a hostile educational environment that impedes the ability of another student or students to participate in or benefit from the educational program. **Severe Campus Disturbance** Student engages in serious and deliberate act(s) that significantly threaten the physical safety of others (e.g., arson, bomb threat, willful noncompliance that could result in bodily injury), and that are not otherwise specifically enumerated herein. **Other Level 5 Infractions** Bomb Threat, Extortion, Kidnapping, Poisoning, Robbery, Homicide, Mayhem, Rape, Sexual Battery, Weapons Threat	

CELL PHONES/ELECTRONIC DEVICES (LEVEL I VIOLATIONS)

Level I electronic telecommunication prohibits the use of cell phones or electronic devices including headphones, earbuds, smart watches, smart glasses, Ipads, personal laptops, etc… Teachers shall manage Level 1 infractions by using a range of corrective strategies. Students shall not receive exclusionary discipline for Level 1 infractions.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to students regarding the use of cell phones/electronic devices on school campus. No pupil in the Meridian Public School District shall be permitted to use a cell phone/electronic devices on campus. The consequences for failing to follow this policy are as follows:

First Offense: The principal keeps the phone/device for five (5) school days. At the end of five (5) days, the student may pick up the phone/device at the school office.

Second Offense: The principal keeps the phone/device for ten (10) school days. The parent must pick up the phone/device at the school office, and the student will receive In-School Suspension for one day.

Third Offense: The principal keeps the phone/device for one full semester. The parent must pick up the phone/device at the school office, and the student will receive In-School Suspension for one day.

If a cellular phone/electronic device seized by the school is lost or stolen while in the school's possession, the Meridian Public School District will assume no liability for such item(s).

SCHOOL DRESS

In cooperation with parents, school officials, and students, the following rules and regulations are adopted in regard to school dress and personal appearance. All teachers, principals, and administrators are expected to enforce the policy.

Students are required to adhere to the school uniform policy and dress accordingly. Should a student violate the dress code due to financial hardship or family circumstances, schools will demonstrate assistance by providing the student with extra clothes. Parents may also be requested to bring clothes to school. Students who violate the dress code policy in a way that significantly disrupts the educational process (i.e. students wearing a t-shirt with a racially derogatory term) will receive a range of corrective strategies, which may include positive behavioral interventions and counseling, as well as in-school detention and after-school detention for continued non-compliance with the dress code. There will be no exclusionary discipline for Level 1 dress code violations.

UNIFORM POLICY

District Colors

Tops: Royal "Wildcat" Blue and/or White
Bottoms: Khaki or Black

Tops

Royal "Wildcat" Blue and/or White

- Polo style shirt: 2 or 3 buttons only

- Must be tucked in at all times for all students (including before and after school while on campus)
- Students may only wear school-approved jackets or sweatshirts in blue, black, white or gray.

Bottoms

Khaki or Black

- Belts must be worn
- Shorts, skirts, and Capri pants are acceptable – minimum length is 2 inches above the knee
- Sagging and oversized clothing is not allowed

Head Cover

- **NO HOODS, HOODIES, HEAD COVERINGS, HATS, etc are allowed to be worn, or attached to clothing in any manner.**
- **During winter months, skull caps/beanies can be used OUTSIDE of the buildings to cover heads. They MUST be removed upon entering a building.**
- No head cover of any kind, to include hats, du-rags, scarves, bonnets, wraps, or bandanas, is allowed to be worn in the school building unless worn for sincerely held religious beliefs

Shoes

- Required at all times and must be worn as designed
- Should be appropriate for safe participation in all school activities
- No slides, house shoes, flip-flops/shower shoes; Crocs must be worn in sport mode (the strap must be on the back.)

Additional Requirements

- Organizational shirts, etc. (i.e. basketball team, band shirts, etc.) will be permitted during approved occasions and not part of the daily dress choices (possible Spirit Day, if pre-approved by administration)
- Sunglasses shall not be worn inside a school facility unless there is a documented medical reason
- Any clothing that significantly disrupts the educational process is unacceptable
- NO Stanley cups or other water bottles allowed. Water must be in an original bottle.
- NO outside food unless it is in a lunchbox or bag.
- Food should not be in hallways or classrooms

Unacceptable Dress

- Stretch pants (including tights with or without belt loops)
- Sagging clothing, unbuckled belts or straps.
- Sweats or warm-up suits
- Brand logos larger than 2 inches
- NO lettering or graphics on jackets or coats. If a logo is on a coat or jacket, it cannot be larger than 2 inches.
- Additional clarification of "unacceptable dress" includes no clothing that exposes the mid to lower torso area when the wearer is stretching, bending, and/or stooping

.

Compliant

shirt neatly tucked

pants fitted and

belted at waist





Non-Compliant

shirt hanging out

pants baggy and worn

too low at waist

Nothing in this policy shall be constituted to preempt the authority of the Superintendent or principal to take action consistent with this Code to address infractions not specifically mentioned.

TARDY and TRUANCY

A student is considered late for class when the tardy bell rings. Schools will take into account reasonable explanation (i.e. detained by teacher) of why the student was late. Requests for excused absences will be considered on a case by case basis. Only students who have extenuating circumstances (such as being in a car accident) will be excused from a tardy. A student may be assigned in-school or after-school detention with reflective problem solving activities after documented tardy interventions. A meeting with PBIS Director or the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services may be required for extreme, habitual tardies or truancy that has not been responsive to previous corrective measures (parent contact, student conference, etc.). A referral to the Department of Human Services or other community agencies may be necessary. The corrective strategies for tardies and truancies start over at the beginning of each semester.

Truancy is defined as an absence from school without the knowledge of parent or guardian, leaving school without notification and consent of proper authorities and/or absent without permission from any class or school-related activity for which a student is scheduled during the school day. The school will take into account extenuating and uncontrollable circumstances as why the child is late (i.e. verified car accident).

It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent of Education or his/her designee to investigate all unauthorized absences and work with all agencies that have jurisdiction over children within the Meridian Public School District and to assure that all students attend school.

Students are expected to be in the proper place at the proper time during the school day. A student is truant (skipping) if he/she:

1. Is absent from school without the prior knowledge and permission of his/her parents. An absence is unexcused if the parents knew and approved but the reason was inexcusable. (i.e. sleeping late)

2. Is absent from class without permission of the teacher or an administrator.

3. Leaves school at any time during the school day without an approved sign-out slip at the Student Personnel Desk.

4. Obtains permission to go a certain place and does not go directly there or fails to return directly to class.

5. Becomes ill and goes home or stays in the rest room instead of reporting to the Student Personnel Desk or counselor.

6. Gets to school late and does not report directly to student personnel or the office in order to be entered or does not go directly to class after being entered in school.

7. Is on campus and not in class unless he/she is out of class at the direction of a teacher or administrator.

Reports of truancy shall be made in accordance with the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law (MS CODE ' 37-13-91).

The District's tardy and truancy policy shall require teachers and school discipline administrative teams to assign tardies or truancies flexibly, including by taking into account reasonable explanations of why the student was late, and by providing temporary or permanent accommodations for certain reasons for tardiness or truancy.

This policy prohibits students who are tardy from being locked out or otherwise excluded from the classroom upon arrival.

LATE ARRIVALS MUST BE CHECKED IN BY A PARENT OR GUARDIAN

ELEMENTARY CONSEQUENCES

Tardy	Consequences
1st – 2nd	Verbal Warning
3rd – 4th	Student Conference
5th – 6th	Parent Contact
7th and/or above	Administrative Discipline Team meets to determine course of action to address tardies (e.g. parent conference, change of schedule, notify attendance officer, problem solving or reflective activities, home visit, etc.)

NON-EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE

Detention
A form of discipline used in schools in which a student is required to spend extra time in school. A detention usually takes place during a period after the end of the regular school day. Detention may also take place at other times, such as before the school day, and during breaks in the school day, such as recess.

Detention is usually considered one of the milder forms of disciplinary actions available to a school and may also include the provision of behavioral remediation through use of direct skill instruction and/or behavior packets.

In-School Detention (ISD)
This refers to a corrective strategy for behavioral infractions that involves the use of positive strategies to address the identified problem behavior. A detention may take place during breaks in the school day, such as recess or an elective period. Detention is usually considered one of the milder forms of disciplinary or corrective strategies available to a school where the student is not removed from instructional time. ISD should include remediation designed to teach the student replacement behaviors and generalization strategies to assist the student in displaying appropriate social replacement behaviors in the school environment. ISD cannot exceed more than 1 hour per day or remove the student from core academic instruction.

Students in grades K-5 may be kept from participating in physical education, music, or library activities for either disciplinary reasons or makeup work, so long as the teacher keeps the student during the entire period of the activity and he/she is under constant teacher supervision. The student may not be kept from participation in these activities for more than three (3) consecutive days because of discipline or makeup.

After School Detention – Teacher Led
A corrective strategy employed by teaching staff to address Level 1 behavioral infractions. Students are typically required to attend an extra 30 minutes after school to complete remedial activities related to their behavior. These activities may include completing targeted behavioral packets, completing a reflective activity, developing a problem solving plan to address repeated level 1 behavioral violations, and/or writing a letter of apology. Teachers may assign multiple ASD's for up to 5 consecutive days to address student behavioral infractions. **Parents are given a minimum of a 24 hour notice prior to the student serving the ASD.**

After-School Detention - Administrative
A corrective strategy designed to typically address non-threatening Level 1-2 and occasionally Level 3 behavioral infractions. After-School Detention (ASD) involves a student remaining after school for a specific period of time (e.g. up to one hour) to complete social skills activities that are related to the student's referral concern(s) and/or to complete academic assignments with appropriate educational supports. School administrators have the discretion to utilize multiple ASD's for up to 5 consecutive days as an alternative to exclusionary discipline consequences (e.g., In School Suspension, Out of School Suspension). **Parents are given a minimum of a 24 hour notice prior to the student serving the ASD.** Failure to report for detention as scheduled without reasonable explanation will result in additional disciplinary action.

Saturday School may be implemented for skipping and tardies.

EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE

Discipline and Make-Up Assignments
Students absent for disciplinary reasons, in accordance with the discipline plan will be allowed to complete any missing assignments and/or assessments. The school will provide make-up work as appropriate. Missed assignments and/or assessments must be completed within three days upon the student returning to school.

SUSPENSION

In-School Suspension (ISS)
ISS is a corrective consequence for violations of the Student Code of Conduct that involves the temporary removal of a student from regular school classes and the placement of a student in an approved in--school setting during the course of the school day. Students assigned to ISS are required to complete relevant social skills activities that relate to their referral concern(s), as well as their academic class work and other assignments that are in keeping with the student's curriculum. Assignment to ISS may occur for specific periods of time (e.g., 1 hr to 3 school days for 1 offense) deemed appropriate by the school district administrative team to effectively address behavioral infractions for which ISS is an appropriate consequence. ISS includes planned remediation designed to teach the student replacement behaviors and generalization strategies to assist the student in displaying the replacement behaviors in the school environment, as well as restorative justice practices, if appropriate. ISS cannot be assigned for more than 3 school days for 1 offense. ISS cannot be assigned for more than 5 school days in one 9-week school quarter. In-school suspension does not include in-school detention.

Out of School Suspension (OSS)

OSS refers to a consequence of 10 days or less for Level 4 and 5 behavioral infractions that removes a student from his or her regular classroom and school. OSS cannot be assigned for more than 3 school days for 1 offense. OSS cannot be assigned for more than 10 school days in one 9-week school quarter or more than 15 school days cumulatively per school year. OSS shall not be used for students under the age of 10 except for Level 5 infractions or in emergency situations involving a serious and immediate threat to student, school personnel, or public safety. OSS shall not be used for misconduct that occurs off school property or outside the school day unless the infraction occurs at a school-sponsored event or on a school bus, or the conduct substantially disrupts, or will substantially disrupt, the school environment, or seriously endangering the welfare or safety of other students or school personnel. Short-term placement (e.g., 1-3 days per incident) at the alternative site to serve OSS dispositions is described within the alternative site policies and procedures.

Any suspension must be preceded by the appearance of the student before the principal or his/her designee, at which time the student will be informed of the violation and the basis of the accusation. The principal shall investigate the situation causing the violation, to the extent possible and reasonable, including but not limited to interviewing other students and faculty members who may have witnessed the infraction. The student shall be allowed to have other students or faculty called in who would possibly support his/her side of the story and place such conduct in what he/she deems to be the proper context.

In all instances of suspension, parents shall be notified by telephone if they can be reached with reasonable effort, and by letter from the principal with a copy of the suspension notice to be given to the student. During any period of suspension, the student shall not be permitted to be on school grounds or attend any school-- related activity, including band, athletics, chorus, strings, etc.

Suspension of Special Education Students (Grades K-12)

Special education students are responsible for adhering to the same rules of conduct as regular education students. Special education students should not be suspended for more than ten (10) days without a manifestation determination review. Students with disabilities may be suspended for more than 10 days; however, they are entitled to receive a free and appropriate education on the eleventh (11th) day.

When considering exclusionary sanctions, the District shall provide students with disabilities all protections required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1975, and other applicable federal and state law. This shall include holding a manifestation determination review for any proposed exclusion of a student with a disability that exceeds 10 consecutive school days or will result in a change of placement. During this review, the District shall determine whether the student's conduct: (a) was a manifestation of the student's disability, or (b) the direct result of the school's failure to implement the student's Individualized Education Plan ("IEP"). If either condition is met, the District shall not administer the disciplinary consequence. If the conduct was the direct result of the failure of the school to implement the student's IEP, the District shall take immediate steps to properly implement the IEP. Also, the IEP team shall be convened and shall conduct a functional behavioral assessment to determine if a behavioral intervention plan should be implemented. If a behavioral intervention plan has already been developed, the IEP team shall review the plan and modify it as necessary to address the student's behavior. The student shall be returned to the placement from which the student was removed unless the parents and the District agree to a change in placement as part of the modification to the behavioral intervention plan. The District shall inform the parents of their right to challenge a manifestation determination or the District's proposed change in placement, including the right to legal counsel and the right to review the student's records.

The District shall permit students assigned to in-school or out-of-school suspension to work with qualified staff if the student's IEP requires such assistance.

EXPULSION

Expulsion is the total exclusion of the student from participation in or attendance at any school-related activity. The Board of Trustees shall be the sole authority to expel a student from school. A student who has been expelled by the Board of Trustees from the Meridian Public School District must apply in writing and/or appear before the Superintendent for possible readmission. The Board of Trustees, on recommendation of the Superintendent or his/her designee, may expel or exempt students from attendance in accordance with the provisions of the statutes of the State of Mississippi.

Expulsion is defined as the total exclusion of a student from participation in or attendance at any school-related activity within the Meridian Public School District.

A parent or legal guardian has the right to a due process hearing when expulsion is recommended. The hearing shall provide the parent and student an opportunity to present information and respond to the recommendation prior to a final decision.

The Superintendent has the authority to expel a student from Meridian Public School District following the completion of the expulsion hearing. After the Superintendent renders a final decision, the parent or legal guardian may appeal the expulsion to the Board of Trustees. The appeal must be submitted in writing within (5) calendar days of the Superintendent's decision. The decision of the Board of Trustees shall be final.

Any student who has been expelled must submit a written application for readmission and/or appear before the Superintendent or designee for consideration of possible readmission in accordance with district procedures and the laws of the State of Mississippi.

RESTRAINT, ISOLATION (SECLUSION), AND CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Restraint, isolation (seclusion), and corporal punishment are not disciplinary consequences permitted by the Meridian Public School District's Code of Conduct.

PARENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Parents of students who are having serious disciplinary problems may be asked to come to the school and to attend classes with their children during an entire day in order to monitor conduct and establish new behavioral patterns.

EXCLUSION OF STUDENTS AGAINST WHOM COURT CHARGES HAVE BEEN FILED

Under certain circumstances, the Superintendent may exclude students from school until the charges against them have been disposed of by the courts.

ENROLLMENT OF STUDENTS SUSPENDED OR EXPELLED FROM OTHER SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Schools in the Meridian Public Schools shall not enroll nonresident students from other school systems while said students are under suspension or after they have been expelled.

ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL-SPONSORED EVENTS

During suspension, expulsion, or alternative placement, students shall not be permitted to attend any school- related activity, such as athletics, band, chorus, strings, prom, etc.

SCHOOL SEARCHES

Reasonable suspicion searches of students and/or their possessions, lockers, desks, and vehicles may be conducted by the school administration.

The administration may also authorize random screenings of students and/or their possessions, lockers, desks, and vehicles. Such screenings shall not be done on a regularly scheduled basis, but will include ALL STUDENTS in a selected school setting such as a classroom, group, or certain building or floor. Students assigned to an alternative setting may be screened on a daily basis.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

All students are prohibited from carrying, possessing in any manner, or attempting to possess, using, or selling alcoholic beverages, morphine, marijuana, cocaine, opium, heroin, their derivatives or compounds, drugs commonly called LSD, "pep" pills, tranquilizers, or any other narcotic drugs, barbiturate, substance, ingredient, or compound that, when taken orally, intravenously, inhaled, or consumed in any other manner, may cause the person to be under the influence thereof, or any other controlled substance regulated by law, including any substance that is falsely represented to be a controlled or counterfeit substance.
No student shall act in, aid, abet, assist, distribute, or conceal the possession and/ or the consumption, purchase, or the distribution of any illegal drugs or alcoholic beverages by another student or students.

The District may require any student to submit to a drug and/or alcohol test if there is reasonable suspicion that the student has or is using prohibited drugs and/ or alcohol. Reasonable suspicion must be based on specific contemporaneous physical, behavioral, or performance indicators of probable drug and/or alcohol use. The cost of the initial test will be paid by the parent.

Any student who violates the provisions of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action according to Policy JCDAC.

Students participating in extracurricular activities will be tested on a random basis for use of prohibited drugs and/or alcohol. The selection and testing of students will be performed by a laboratory certified by the National Institute of Drug Abuse. All breath, urine, blood, and hair specimens will be collected under reasonable and sanitary conditions. Universally accepted standards for testing, labeling, storage, and transportation of specimens will be strictly followed by the testing agency.

If the test indicates a positive result, the MPSD Athletic Director shall notify the student and his or her parent/guardian in writing of such results. A student that tests positive for the first time shall be suspended from all extracurricular activity events for a time to be determined based on the activity. If a student athlete tests positive for drugs, the student is to have no affiliation with any extracurricular activities. This includes practicing with any club. The student must attend a drug counseling program at his/her own expense with proof of attendance submitted prior to reinstatement. The student must provide a negative test to be reinstated in the extracurricular activity. The student will also be required to submit to periodic retests up to one (1) calendar year after the first positive.

A student that tests positive for a second time shall be suspended from all extracurricular activities for one (1) calendar year. The student must attend a drug counseling program at his/her own expense with proof of attendance submitted prior to reinstatement. The student must also provide a negative test to be reinstated in the extracurricular activity.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

The same appropriate behavior as expected at school is expected on the school bus. A student's failure to conform to acceptable standards of behavior and courtesy will result in his/her being subject to disciplinary action. Students on the bus are subject to the Code of Conduct.

REMEMBER:

- Parents will be held financially responsible for damage to the inside and/or outside of the bus.

- Bus transportation is provided for kindergarten through twelfth grade. State law prohibits Pre-kindergarten students from riding any district provided bus or van.
- For additional information or questions regarding school bus service, contact the Director of Transportation at 601-484-4951.

CAFETERIA BEHAVIOR

In order to keep the cafeteria clean and attractive, the following rules must be observed:

1. After eating, place disposable trays in the provided garbage containers.
2. Keep milk cartons, food, and waste paper on the tray.
3. Keep tables, chairs, and floors clean.
4. Push the chairs back after eating.
5. Talk in a normal voice.
6. Keep the cafeteria lines orderly.
7. Never push or run.
8. Pick up and clean up any food dropped or spilled.
9. Respect adult authority.
10. Stay out of the teaching area during lunch.

BULLYING

Student Complaints of Bullying or Harassing Behavior

The Meridian Public School District prohibits bullying or harassing behavior. The District also prohibits retaliation against any person, including a victim, a witness, or another person, who in good faith provides information concerning an incident of bullying.

This complaint procedure provides a process for filing, processing and resolving complaints of such conduct. Adherence to these procedures is mandatory. The failure of any person with a complaint to follow these procedures will constitute a waiver of the right to pursue a complaint at any level, including consideration by the Board.

Definitions

Bullying or harassing behavior is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, or any act reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus, and that:

- Places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or
- Creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits.

A “hostile environment” means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is inappropriate bullying or harassing behavior.

Procedures for Processing a Complaint

Any student, school employee or volunteer who feels he/she has been a victim of bullying or harassing behavior, or has witnessed, or has reliable information that a student, school employee or volunteer has been subject to bullying or harassing behavior shall report such conduct to a teacher, principal,

counselor or other school official. The report shall be made promptly but no later than five (5) working days after the alleged act or acts occurred.

The school official shall complete an "Allegation of Bullying Complaint" form which shall include the name of the reporting person, the specific nature and date of the misconduct, the names of the victims 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 who shall institute an immediate investigation. Complaints against the principal shall be made to the superintendent and complaints against the superintendent shall be made to the Board chairman.

The complaint shall be investigated promptly. Parents will be notified of the nature of any complaint involving their child. The investigating staff member will arrange such meetings as may be necessary with all concerned parties within five (5) working days after initial receipt of the complaint by the District. The parties will have an opportunity to submit evidence and a list of witnesses.

All findings related to the complaint will be reduced to writing. The District official conducting the investigation shall notify the victim or parents as appropriate when the investigation is completed and a decision regarding disciplinary action, as warranted, is determined.
If the victim is not satisfied with the decision of the investigating staff member, he/she may submit a written appeal to the superintendent. Such appeal shall be filed within ten (10) working days after receipt of the results of the initial decision. The superintendent will arrange such meetings with the victim and other affected parties as deemed necessary to discuss the appeal. The superintendent shall provide a written decision to the victim's appeal within ten (10) working days.

If the victim is not satisfied with the decision of the superintendent, a written appeal may be filed with the Board. Such appeal shall be filed within ten (10) working days after receipt of the decision of the superintendent. The Board shall, within twenty (20) working days, allow the victim and parents as appropriate to appear before the Board to present reasons for dissatisfaction with the decision of the superintendent. The Board shall provide a written decision within ten (10) working days following the victim's appearance before the Board.

The District recognizes the fundamental right of every student to take reasonable actions as may be necessary to defend himself or herself from an attack by another student who has evidenced menacing or threatening behavior through bullying or harassing. Furthermore, the District defines "reasonable action" as promptly reporting the behavior to a teacher, principal, counselor, or other school employee when subjected to bullying or harassing behavior.

Counseling options for a student who is a victim of or a witness to bullying or who engages in bullying are available and provided by the District.

Mississippi Code Ann 37-7-301 JDDA Bullying JDDA-P Bullying Procedures

CYBER STALKING/CYBER BULLYING

1. Use in electronic mail or electronic communication any words or language threatening to inflict bodily harm to any person or to that person's child, sibling, spouse or dependent, or physical injury to the property of any person, or for the purpose of extorting money or other things of value from any person.

2. Electronically mail or electronically communicate to another repeatedly, whether or not conversation ensues, for the purpose of threatening, terrifying or harassing any person.
3. Electronically mail or electronically communicate to another and to knowingly make any false statement concerning death, injury, illness, disfigurement, indecent conduct, or criminal conduct of the person electronically mailed or of any member of the person's family or household with the intent to threaten, terrify or harass.
4. Knowingly permit an electronic communication device under the person's control to be used for any purpose prohibited by this section.

WEAPONS

Any student who violates this policy will be suspended and/or recommended for expulsion and may be subject to criminal action and penalties as provided in Miss. Code Ann. '97-37-17; Policy JCDAE.

Firearms
Any student who has in his/her possession any type of firearm, real or facsimile, operable or inoperable, while he/she is in school, on school property, at a school function or activity, on the school bus, on the way to and from school or any school function or activity will be suspended from school. Any student who violates the provisions of this policy will be suspended from school and subject to disciplinary action according to policy JCDAE (2). Firearms in student possession shall be seized and turned over to the School Resource Officer (SRO). Principals shall notify the Superintendent of each violation of this policy.

Other Weapons - Use Of
Any student who uses or threatens to use any object, regardless of its original purpose, for a weapon while he/she is in school, on school property, at a school function or activity, on the school bus, on the way to and from school or any school function or activity will immediately be suspended and recommended for expulsion. Examples of such weapons include, but are not limited to, gun, rifle, pistol, other firearm; dynamite, cartridge, bomb, grenade, mine or other explosive; BB gun, air rifle, air pistol; bowie knife, dirk, dagger, switchblade, pocket knife or other knife; slingshot; leaded cane, blackjack; metallic or other artificial knuckles; razor, razor blades; any sharp--pointed or edged instrument (except instructional supplies, unaltered nail files and clips and tools used only to prepare food for instruction and maintenance of school property); any instrument having the effect or appearance of a weapon (including utensils, imitation firearms or knives, etc.).

Weapons used by students shall be seized and turned over to the School Resource Officer (SRO). Principals shall notify the Superintendent.

Other Weapons - Possession Of
Possession, by students, of any object, regardless of its original purpose, that may be considered a weapon while he/she is in school, on school property, at a school function or activity, on the school bus, on the way to and from school or any school function or activity shall be considered in violation of this policy. Suspension and/or other recommendation for expulsion for violation of this section of the policy shall be directed by the principal, who shall deal with each individual case based on the circumstances.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

In accordance with Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, as amended in 1972, Section 703, no student in the Meridian Public School District shall be subject to sexual harassment.
It is the intent of the school district to maintain an environment free from sexual harassment of any kind. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature amounting to or constituting harassment are prohibited.
Complaints of violation of this policy may be made to the appropriate building administrator without fear of reprisal. Should violations prove to be legitimate, the offending employee/student shall be subject to disciplinary action. Student-on-student sexual harassment is also prohibited.

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL PLACEMENT PROCEDURES

The alternative school program provides students an opportunity to continue their education in a more restrictive environment for a specified time period. The purpose of alternative education is to accommodate behavioral and academic needs of children and adolescents which cannot be adequately addressed in a traditional school environment. In addition, alternative education provides direct social, emotional, and behavior management instruction to students.

Entry Criteria for Placement
Alternative school placement may be assigned for the following categories of students:

1. Students suspended for more than 10 days or recommended for expulsion, except for students expelled for possession of a weapon or other felonious conduct;
2. Students referred by the parent or guardian due to disciplinary concerns;
3. Students referred to the alternative school by the dispositive order of a chancellor or youth court judge, with the consent of the Superintendent; and
4. Compulsory school-age students who significantly disrupt the educational environment, in the determination of the school superintendent, school PBIS coordinator, and principal, such as that the placement is necessary for the safety and welfare of the class as a whole.*

Before the district considers alternative school placement for students in this category, the school principals must verify and document evidence the student failed to respond successfully to Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 behavioral interventions and supports that were implemented with integrity. All alternative school placements in this category shall be reviewed by the District PBIS Office and approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee before they are finalized.

Criteria packet must include:

A. Documentation of Due Process
B. Documentation of Recommendation Review by the superintendent or his designee
C. Documentation of all Tier paperwork including Behavior Intervention Plan
D. Completed Individual Instructional Plan (IIP) or Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) with all supporting documentation
E. Copy of Cumulative Record Insert
F. Copy of all current assessments (Common Assessment, MAAP, iReady, etc.)
G. Documentation of Guardianship

GUIDELINES FOR LENGTH OF PLACEMENT, REVIEW OF STUDENT BEHAVIOR PROGRESS, AND PROVISIONS FOR TRANSITION BACK TO HOME SCHOOL

The goal of alternative school placement is to improve the student's behavior so that he/she may return to his/her home school in a timely manner.

1. Alternative school placement will typically be 45 days but can be longer for extreme cases.

2. Every 30 days, the principal of the alternative school, the school Behavior Counselor, the principal of the home school, the student, the student's parent, and one representative of the student's choice, as requested, shall meet to review and assess the student's progress. The review will include:

A. Academic Progress
B. Weekly Behavior Reports
C. Attendance
D. Tier Documentation
E. Discipline
F. Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)
G. Provision of Mental Health or Rehabilitation Services

After this review, if the student has performed successfully in the alternative school, the district shall consider returning the student to the home school with a revised Behavior Intervention Plan with strategies to use within the home school environment.

3. Once the student's term of placement in the alternative school is successfully completed, the district must return the student to the home school unless the principal of the alternative school, the school PBIS coordinator, the principal of the home school request the student remain for an additional 30 days at the alternative school. The district PBIS office shall review all such requests. The recommendation to remain in alternative for additional days will be based on:

A. Attendance
B. Discipline
C. Provision of Mental Health or Rehabilitation Services

4. Alternative school placement shall not exceed one semester except in extraordinary circumstances.*

Alternative school placement that exceeds one semester must be approved by the alternative school PBIS coordinator, the alternative school principal, and the District PBIS Office.

GUIDELINES FOR THE PROVISION OF CULTURALLY SENSITIVE TIERED BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS

Alternative school placement shall include positive behavior interventions and restorative justice practices, curricula addressing cultural and learning style differences, and individual academic plans.

Positive behavior interventions shall include:

A. Providing parents and students with School Wide Rules and Expectations.
B. Teaching and re-teaching school wide rules as needed.
C. Implementing individual teacher positive behavior incentives.
D. Implementing school wide positive behavior incentives.
E. Providing parent seminars through Weems Mental Health.

Restorative justice continuum of practices shall include:

A. Affective statements and questions (e.g. statements that communicate people's feelings, questions that cause people to reflect on how their behavior has affected others)
B. Impromptu restorative conferences
C. Structured conference with all primary stakeholders
D. Groups and circles conducted during day treatment, group therapy, or with school counselor
E. Formal conference with all primary stakeholders including parent

Curricula addressing cultural and learning style differences

A. Provide Professional Development in cultural sensitivity and learning styles
B. Complete a Learning Style Inventory for each student
C. Review the risk factors identified on the Individual Instructional Plan to be more sensitive to individual needs and diversity

Individual academic plans shall include:

A. Reviewing and revising as needed the Individual Instructional Plan
B. Reviewing academic progress throughout alternative placement

GUIDELINES FOR PROVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH OR REHABILITATION SERVICES

Alternative school placement shall include educational compliance with federal and state guidelines for students with disabilities, and counseling services for parents and students. This shall include:

A. Students may be provided with day treatment or group therapy and individual counseling.
B. Individual or group counseling by the school Guidance and/or Behavior Counselor if needed.
C. Providing parent seminars

GUIDELINES FOR CURRICULUM

The alternative school shall operate under the same academic calendar and standards as other district schools, including having the same academic calendar, offering physical education or health if there is no opportunity to take the course prior to graduation, and continuation of honors or advanced placement courses for students enrolled in such courses via online media.

LEAVING THE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL BEFORE DISMISSAL TIME

When a student becomes ill or an emergency arises during the regular school day which may warrant early dismissal, the student must report to the administrator's office. Before the student may be released from school, a parent, legal guardian, or person authorized by a parent must come to the school office and sign the student out.

In cases of divorce, it shall be the responsibility of the parent who receives legal custody of the child involved to place on file in the school a copy of the custody order. The child shall be released only to the parent having legal custody or to the person having written authorization from the custodial

parent. Written authorization must be filed with the school at the time of registration. A student will be released for a doctor's appointment, dental appointment, or any other just reason when the parent, legal guardian, or person authorized by the parent comes to the school and signs the student out.

A student who leaves the school campus at any time must obtain permission from the administrator and meet the requirements established under the check-out policy.

ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL-SPONSORED EVENTS

During alternative placement, students shall not be permitted to attend any school-related activity, such as athletics, band, chorus, strings, prom, etc.

DEFINITIONS

"Alternative Placement" refers to the removal of a student from his or her regular classroom to an alternative school setting established by the District.

"Central Office" refers to the central administrative office for the District, located at 1019 25th Avenue, Meridian, MS 39301, or such office at any successor locations.

"Child with a disability" and "Student with a disability" refer to a student who would qualify to receive disability-related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1975.

"Corrective Strategies" refer to teacher and administrator behavior management techniques designed to prevent the occurrence of student infractions, teach alternative or replacement behaviors, or motivate students to demonstrate compliance with established school expectations outlined in the Code of Conduct. These may include, but are not limited to, in-school detention, behavior contracts and/or Behavior Support plans, conflict resolution, de-escalation strategies, and reflective activities.

"District PBIS Director" refers to the person in the District PBIS Office assigned to track and assist with the implementation of the PBIS model, including analyzing classroom, grade, and school-level discipline data; developing corrective action plans; coordinating professional development on PBIS; and serving as a contact for parent and student complaints regarding discipline.

"District PBIS Office" refers to the component of the Central Office with responsibility for the implementation of PBIS in the District.

"Exclusionary discipline" refers to any disciplinary consequence that removes a student from classroom instruction in his or her home school, including, but not limited to, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, placement in an alternative setting or program, and expulsion. Exclusionary discipline does not refer to positive interventions or corrective strategies, including in-school detention.

"Expulsion" refers to an out-of-school consequence of more than 10 days imposed by the School Board for violations of the Code of Conduct.

"In-School Detention" and "ISD" refer to a consequence for violations of the Code of Conduct during which a student receives positive interventions using corrective strategies. Assignment to ISD cannot exceed one hour per day or remove a student from core academic instruction.

"In-School Suspension" and "ISS" refer to a consequence for violations of the Code of Conduct that removes a student from the regular classroom to a different in-school setting during the course of the regular school day. In-school suspension does not include in-school detention.

"Instructional Staff" refers to certificated staff (*e.g.*, teachers, counselors) and non-certificated staff (*e.g.,* teacher aides) who work directly with students.

"Meridian Public School District" and "the District" refer to the Meridian Municipal Separate School District, the School Board, and the public schools it operates.

"Out-of-School Suspension," "Suspension," and "OSS" refer to a consequence of 10 days or less for violations of the Code of Conduct that removes a student from his or her regular classroom and school.

"Parent" refers to either or both biological or adoptive parent(s) of the student, the student's legal guardian, or other person legally responsible for a student under state law.

"Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports" and "PBIS" refer to a system of evidence-based strategies and structures which, if implemented effectively and with fidelity, assist schools and school personnel in establishing a positive school culture by constructively teaching school rules and social-emotional skills; positively reinforcing appropriate student behavior; using effective classroom management strategies to provide early intervention for misbehavior; and developing a continuum of graduated and appropriate consequences for more serious and continuous misbehavior.

"PowerSchool" refers to the District-wide data system used for academic and behavioral data, or any similar system by any name used by the District for this purpose.

"Response to Intervention" and "RTI" refer to methods by which school discipline administrative teams and other relevant personnel at schools identify students at risk for poor learning and/or behavioral outcomes, monitor student progress, teach social-emotional skills, provide evidence-based interventions, and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's individual needs.

"Restorative Practices" refers to an approach to student discipline that focuses on resolving conflict, repairing relationships, and assisting students to redress harms caused by their conduct, and may include positive interventions and processes such as mediation, family group counseling, and peer mentoring.

"School discipline administrative team" refers to the individual or group of faculty, staff, and administrators at each school, designated by the Superintendent, the PBIS Office, and the school principal, who are authorized to administer or assign disciplinary consequences at school.

"Teacher Support Team" and "TST" refer to the school-wide team responsible for developing and monitoring research-based interventions to improve students' academic and behavioral progress.

"Uniform Code of Conduct" and "Code of Conduct" refer to the District-level policy for student behavior and discipline.

DISCIPLINE COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

The school district takes seriously all concerns and complaints by students and parents. Parents are encouraged to address all concerns to school personnel. If the complaint is not resolved at the school site, parents are encouraged to contact the Central Office at 1019 25th Avenue Meridian, MS or by phone at 601-483-6271. Parent complaints may be submitted in verbal or written form. The discipline complaint form is also available on the district website **www.mpsd.k12.ms.us**

Meridian Public School District **Discipline Complaint Form** **2026-2027**
School:
Date:
Parent's Name:
Address:
Telephone:
Student's Name:
Discipline Complaint:
Parent Signature & Date:
Resolution Details:
Administrator's Signature & Date

ASBESTOS NOTIFICATION

On October 30, 1987, the Environmental Protection Agency published the Asbestos-Containing Materials in Schools Rule (40 CRF Part 763 Subpart E). This new rule requires all public and private schools to inspect for friable and non-friable asbestos, develop asbestos management plans that address asbestos hazards in school buildings, implement response actions in a timely fashion and report results of the assessment studies to school employees and parent/teacher organizations.

We are pleased to announce that none of our schools contain any friable asbestos. Friable asbestos is material that is easily crumbled and may release harmful fibers into the environment. Friable asbestos may cause severe health problems.

Your building does, however, contain non-friable asbestos building materials such as floor tile, pipe insulation, boiler insulation, flue pipes, ceiling tile sheeting and, in a few cases, sprayed-on material that has been encapsulated. None of this material poses a health hazard as long as it remains undamaged. Through a program of training and surveillance, we are certain that these materials will pose no health hazard until they are removed.

A copy of the inspection and management plan is available for your examination in the administrative office of your school.

For further information, interested persons should contact:

Jack Massey
601-484-4945
Asbestos Coordinator
Meridian Public Schools