Missoula County Public Schools

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT HANDBOOK
BIG SKY HIGH SCHOOL
2026-2027

Dear Big Sky Students & Families-

The 2026-2027 school year is here! My name is Scott Gragg and I am thrilled to kick off my 1st year at Big Sky High School. I've spent the last ten years at McNary High School in Keizer, Oregon, serving as both the Athletic Director and Principal. I have deep roots in Missoula. I played football for the Griz, earned my degree in mathematics from the University of Montana, and later returned to UM to coach football. My daughter is a BSHS graduate and was one of the first students in the Health Science Academy. After five years of coaching, I returned to education, where I'm passionate about serving and supporting students as they reach their full academic potential. It is going to be a great year!

At Big Sky, we are committed to fostering academic excellence and personal growth in a supportive environment. One way to achieve this commitment is encouraging EVERY student to be involved in at least ONE club, ONE sport or ONE activity, EVERY year. We call this **1:1:1.** Check out our list of **activities** that will list all of the opportunities that honor the **1:1:1** commitment.

GO EAGLES!
Scott Gragg
Principal, sgragg@mcpsmt.org

Big Sky High School's Mission & Philosophy

Big Sky High School empowers all students to achieve academic excellence, explore real-world career pathways, and grow as compassionate, engaged citizens. Through inclusive, hands-on learning in our academy model and strong community partnerships, we prepare students for success in college, careers, and life beyond the classroom.

BIG SKY HIGH SCHOOL

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BIG SKY BELL SCHEDULE 26 - 27

Blue	Gold	Time (M, T, W,F)	Time (Thurs.)
Zero	Zero	7:40am – 8:30am	7:40am – 8:30am
1st	5th	8:35am – 10:00am	8:34am – 9:45am
2nd	6th	10:10am – 11:40am	9:55am – 11:10am
Lunch		11:40am – 12:25pm	11:10am – 11:55am
3rd	7th	12:35pm – 2:00pm	12:05pm – 1:15pm
4th	8th	2:10pm – 3:35pm	1:25pm – 2:35pm

Missing Work Deadline	Grade Posting Deadline
September 24th	September 29th
October 29th	November 3rd
November 19th	November 24th
December 17th	January 5th
January 21st	January 26th
February 25th	March 2nd
March 25th	March 30th
April 29th	May 4th
May 27th	June 1st

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TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS

The Missoula County Public Schools District High School Student Handbook contains information that students and parents are likely to need during the school year. The handbook is organized alphabetically by topic. Throughout the handbook, the term "the student's parent" is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board policy. Please note that references to policy codes are included to help parents confirm current policy. A copy of the District's Policy Manual is available in the school office. All current policies can be viewed on the MCPS website.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees would like to extend an invitation to students, parents and community members to come to board meetings throughout the school year and summer. We would also like to encourage you to share with us your concerns, ideas, and general comments. We will be available to listen to and we will provide guidance on how to get your concerns addressed through the proper channels.

- **Jeffrey Avgeris**
  - **Email: javgeris@mcpsmt.org**
- **Virginia Haines** (represents Seeley Lake, Swan Valley, Clinton, Potomac and Sunset)
  - **Email:** vjhaines@mcpsmt.org
- **Christina Hayes**
  - **Email: chayes@mcpsmt.org**
- **Denise Juneau**
  - **Email: dmjuneau@mcpsmt.org**
- **Leslie McShane** (represents Hellgate K-8 School district)
  - **Email: lmcshane@mcpsmt.org**
- **London Meservy**
  - **Email: lmeservy@mcpsmt.org**
- **Ann Wake** (represents Lolo, Woodman and DeSmet K-8 districts)
  - **Email: awake@mcpsmt.org**
- **Arlene Walker-Andrews (**represents Target Range and Bonner K-8 districts)
  - **Email: awalker-andrews@mcpsmt.org**
- **Jenny Walsh**
  - **Email: jwalsh@mcpsmt.org**
- **Meg Whicher**
  - **Email: mwhicher@mcpsmt.org**
- **Keegan Witt**
  - **Email: kwitt@mcpsmt.org**

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

Missoula County Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability, in the educational programs and activities it operates including admission and employment. The District is required by federal law, including but not limited to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX, and Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act and their regulations to not discriminate against individuals in violation of these laws. The District also provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth

groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding complaints under Title IX (sex discrimination and sexual harassment) and all other non-discrimination policies:

Amy Shattuck, Title IX Coordinator
909 South Ave. West
Missoula, MT 59801
(406)728-2400, Ext. 1038

Inquiries may also be directed to the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

ALLERGIES

The District has procedures for the management of life threatening allergies of students. Information about these procedures may be found on the District's website under the student services then health services tab.

Life threatening reactions are called anaphylaxis (pronounced an-a-fi-LAK-sis). Anaphylaxis can occur from stinging or biting insects, medication, foods or latex. Anaphylaxis is a collection of symptoms affecting multiple systems of the body. The onset of these symptoms is most commonly immediate, although may be delayed by hours. The symptoms can include:

- **Mouth:** Itchy, swelling of tongue and/or lips
- **Throat:** Itchy, tightness/closure, hoarseness, trouble breathing/swallowing
- **Skin:** Itchy, hives, redness, swelling, red watery eyes
- **Gut:** Nausea, vomiting, cramps, diarrhea
- **Lung:** Short of breath, wheeze, repetitive cough
- **Heart:** Pale or blue skin color, dizzy/faint, weak pulse
- **Neurological:** Sense of "impending doom", irritability, change in alertness, mood change, confusion

On occasion, other students and parents may be asked to limit bringing in certain items due to another student's life threatening allergy. Your cooperation with these needed restrictions is greatly appreciated and important to keep all children safe.

ATTENDANCE

The Importance of Attendance

Attending school regularly and on time is essential for academic achievement, social development, and the formation of lifelong habits. Strong attendance supports meaningful partnerships between students, families, and teachers. Our approach is designed to promote learning, connection, and responsibility—rather than punishment—so that every student remains engaged in their education and our school community.

Consistent attendance contributes to:

- Academic progress and credit completion
- Eligibility for extracurricular activities and athletics
- Development of the master schedule and course offerings
- Access to both traditional and alternative learning opportunities

Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to:

- Attend all scheduled classes and learning activities on time
- Follow procedures for planned absences whenever possible
- Communicate with teachers and complete missed work within established timelines
- Provide appropriate documentation for medical, legal, or bereavement-related absences when required

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Parents and guardians play a vital role and are expected to:

- Support regular school attendance
- Notify the school of absences within 48 hours to ensure they are considered excused
- Assist students in providing necessary documentation for qualifying absences

Students must attend all scheduled classes unless a valid excuse is provided in accordance with Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 20-5-1.

Absence Categories

Unexcused Absences include:

- **Absences not verified by a parent/guardian within 48 hours**
- **Leaving campus or class without authorization**
- **Remaining on campus while skipping class**
- ***Arriving more than 10 minutes late to class***
- **Any absence not approved by a parent/guardian or the school**

Excused Absences include:

- Illness (reported by a parent/guardian within 48 hours)
- Family emergencies or bereavement
- Approved pre-arranged absences (e.g., family travel or non-school events)

Exempt Absences include:

- School-sponsored activities, athletics, and field trips
- Verified medical, legal, or bereavement circumstances with documentation
- Staff-approved activities or passes

Reporting Absences

Whenever possible, families should notify the attendance office in advance of an absence.

If not reported within 48 hours, the absence will remain unexcused.

Students who are more than 10 minutes late to class will be marked as absent unexcused and will risk a loss in ability to obtain credit for work done during class unless excused within the 48 hour timeframe.

Parents/guardians may contact the school to excuse absences in the following ways:

- Call the attendance hotline 406-728-0787
- Email the attendance secretary at bigskyattendance@mcpsmt.org

Attendance can also be monitored through Infinite Campus. Families will receive automated notifications (phone, text, and email) when a student is marked absent.

Appeals specific to unexcused absences may be submitted via email to the assigned administrator:

- A–L: Christine Hiller-Claridge (cmhiller-claridge@mcpsmt.org)
- M–Z: Sabrina Beed (sjbeed@mcpsmt.org)

Make-Up Work Expectations

For excused and exempt absences**,** students are responsible for requesting and completing missed work *according to teacher guidelines*:

- 1 day absent → 2 days to complete work
- 2 days absent →3 days to complete work
- More than 2 days →up to 1 week

Attendance Intervention Process

Students are expected to be present and engaged during all scheduled class time. Work missed due to unexcused absences may not be accepted.

- After 2 unexcused absences: Teacher contacts parent/guardian/documentation in PLP
- After 5 unexcused absences: Teacher submits an "Eagles Matter" referral
- Support Team reviews all Eagles Matter Referrals and implements interventions/monitors attendance
- After 8 unexcused absences: Support Team submits referral to Attendance Committee
- After 10 unexcused absences: Attendance Committee referral to Administrative review and further action

The Support Team and Attendance Committee will focus on restorative practices and support planning to improve attendance and engagement.

Our Partnership & Commitment

Our goal is to take a proactive and restorative approach. Patterns of attendance often reflect broader needs, and we are committed to early intervention, clear communication, and collaborative problem-solving with families.

Students who attend consistently are more likely to:

- Stay on track for graduation
- Maintain eligibility for activities
- Build strong relationships with peers and staff
- Be prepared for post-secondary opportunities

Together, we can ensure that Big Sky High School continues to be a place of academic excellence, meaningful engagement, and opportunity for all students. We appreciate your partnership and commitment to student success.

Procedure for Student Prearranged Absence:

Prearrange Absence Forms can be found at the Attendance Office. These forms may be utilized for excused and or exempt absences and must be completed prior to the first day of the absence. The goal of this form is to provide the student and their parents/guardians with all coursework that they will need to have completed upon return from time away from school. Instructions for completion are found on the form itself. Any questions? Ask the Attendance Secretary.

Human Sexuality or Identity Instruction Absence

A student may be withdrawn or absent from a class period, assembly, school function, or other instruction at the request of a parent/guardian/other person responsible for human sexuality instruction. Human sexuality instruction is instruction that has the goal or purpose of studying, exploring, or informing students about intimate relationships, sexual anatomy, sexual reproduction, sexually transmitted infections, sexual acts, abstinence, contraception, or reproductive rights and responsibilities. These absences do not count toward the student's discretionary 10-day total.

Written consent from the parent or legal guardian is required prior to any student attending identity instruction. Identity instruction is instruction that has the goal or purpose of studying, exploring, or informing students about gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. A student is excused from not attending identity instruction unless the student's parent/guardian provided written consent for the student to be in attendance prior to the instruction.

The District will provide parents/guardians with at least five (5) school days' notice (but not more than 14 school days' notice) before human sexuality or identity instruction is scheduled to occur.

AWARDING HONOR ROLL STATUS

Honor Roll designations may denote 3.0, 3.5, or 4.0 levels of achievement.

BULLYING/HARASSMENT/INTIMIDATION/HAZING

The policy of the Board of Trustees of Missoula County Public Schools is to provide students and staff with a school environment free from bullying, harassment, and intimidation. Missoula County Public School District will not tolerate bullying, harassment, or intimidation in any form at school or school-sponsored activities and events, including off campus events, school buses, any event related to school business, or, through the use of electronic communications, that substantially and materially disrupts the orderly operations of the District.

Bullying is any harassment, intimidation, hazing, or threatening, insulting, or demeaning gesture or physical contact, including any intentional written, verbal, or electronic communication or threat directed against a student that is persistent, severe, or repeated and that:

- causes a student physical harm, damages a student's property, or places a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student or the student's property;
- creates a hostile environment by interfering with or denying a student's access to an educational opportunity or benefit; or
- substantially and materially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying (including cyber-bullying), harassment, intimidation, or hazing, by students, staff, or third parties, is strictly prohibited and shall not be tolerated. Bullying does not include the determination after an investigation that the students used reasonable and necessary physical force as self-defense or the defense of another in response to a physical attack.

All complaints about behavior that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated. Bullying/Harassment forms are available in the Attendance Office.

Retaliation is prohibited against any person who reports or is thought to have reported a violation, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry.

Missoula County Public Schools (MCPS) strives to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all students and staff. MCPS uses a behavioral threat assessment process to identify, assess, and respond to concerning behaviors or situations that may pose a risk to an individual or the school community.

Threat assessment is a prevention and problem-solving process designed to understand concerning behavior, determine the level of concern, and identify appropriate supports, interventions, and safety measures.

See Something. Hear Something. Say Something.

Students and families are encouraged to report concerns such as:

- Threats to harm oneself or others
- Threatening or intimidating statements, messages, or social media posts
- Bullying, harassment, or intimidation
- Discussion or planning of violence
- Weapons or concerns about access to weapons
- Drugs, fights, or other serious safety concerns
- Significant changes in behavior that cause concern for someone's safety

Concerns may be reported directly to a teacher, counselor, administrator, School Resource Officer, or other trusted adult.

Safer Montana Tip Line

Students, parents, guardians, and community members may also anonymously report school safety concerns through the Safer Montana Tip Line, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Submit a tip:
Online: SaferMT.com
Call or Text: 406-206-7431
Email: tip@SaferMT.com
Mobile App: SaferMT

Safer Montana may be used to report concerns including bullying, harassment, threats of violence, weapons, drugs, fights, cyberbullying, or concerns about someone who may harm themselves or others. Tips are reviewed and routed to the appropriate school officials and/or law enforcement for follow-up.

Students should not investigate a threat, confront the person involved, or share threats or rumors on social media. Report the concern to a trusted adult or through Safer Montana.

For additional information, please see MCPS Policy 3225.

CELL PHONES

The possession and use of cellular phones, pagers, and other electronic signaling devices on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities, or while otherwise under the supervision and control of District employees is a privilege.

Students in grades 9-12 may use electronic signaling and listening devices before school, after school, passing periods, and during lunch periods.

Students in grades 9-12 are prohibited from using electronic signaling and listening devices on campus throughout instructional time. (Board Policy 3630)

Students are prohibited from operating a cell phone or other electronic device (or camera embedded in such device) while in a locker room, bathroom, or any other location where the privacy rights of others may be violated.

Secondary students may use cellular phones, pagers, and other electronic signaling devices on campus before school begins, during the lunch period, and after the school day ends. These devices must be kept out of sight and turned off during the instructional day (including time out of a classroom on a hall pass and during study halls). Unauthorized use of such devices disrupts the instructional program, contributes to tardiness, and distracts from the learning environment. Therefore, school officials, including classroom teachers, may confiscate such devices when used inappropriately. Confiscated devices will only be returned to the parent or guardian. Repeated unauthorized use of such devices may result in progressive disciplinary action. For additional information, please see MCPS Policy 3630.

CHILD SAFETY GPS AND AUDIO CHILD TRACKING/MONITORY SYSTEMS

Parents and students are expressly prohibited from using covert means to listen- in or make a recording (audio or video) of any meeting or activity in school. This includes placing recording devices, or other devices with one- or two-way audio communication technology (i.e. technology that allows a person off-site to listen to live conversations and sounds taking place in the location where the device is located), within a student's book bag/backpack, on the student's person or otherwise in an area capable of listening in or recording without express written consent of the Superintendent. Any requests to place a recording device or otherwise with one- or two-way audio communication technology within a student's book bag/backpack or on a student's person shall be submitted, in writing, to the Superintendent along with an explanation of why such recording is necessary. The Superintendent or a designee shall notify the parent(s), in writing, whether such request is denied or granted within five (5) school days. Where consent has been given by the Superintendent, the Principal must be given access by the parent to be a school guardian on the device. This will ensure any "Listen-In" feature is disabled during school hours due to privacy concerns.

COLLEGE ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS

Students have a responsibility to register on the NCAA Clearinghouse website if they believe they may compete athletically at the college level. There are requirements for Division I and Division II schools, which include core classes and grade point average requirements. NAIA Colleges may have academic requirements which students should investigate.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE AND ILLNESS

To protect children from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. Parents of a student with a communicable or contagious disease should phone the school nurse or principal so that other students who **may** have been exposed to the disease can be alerted.

These diseases include, but are not limited to:

Amebiasis	Mumps
Campylobacteriosis	Pinkeye
Chickenpox	Ringworm of the scalp
Diphtheria	Rubella (German Measles)
Gastroenteritis	Scabies
Hepatitis	Shigellosis
Influenza	Streptococcal disease, invasive
Measles (Rubeola)	Tuberculosis
Meningitis	Whooping Cough (Pertussis)

Coronavirus

COMPLAINTS BY STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed simply — by a phone call or a conference with the teacher. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the District has adopted a Uniform Complaint Procedure policy for most complaints (Policy 1700) with the exception of complaints/concerns regarding involving challenges to educational material, those governed by a specified procedure in state or federal law that supersedes a uniform grievance process, and those about sexual harassment and/or disability discrimination. A written copy of the Uniform Complaint Procedure can be obtained at the Superintendent's office.

If a student or parent believes that the Board, its employees, or agents have violated their rights, he or she may file a written complaint with any District Principal or Supervisor. If still unresolved, the matter generally may be referred to the Superintendent. Under some circumstances, the District provides for the complaint to be presented to the Board of Trustees in the event the matter cannot be resolved at the administrative level.

Students shall use the Title IX Grievance Procedure to address complaints/concerns about sexual harassment. A copy of the Title IX Grievance Procedures can be obtained on the District's website www.mcpsmt.org or any District or school office or by contacting the Title IX Coordinator.

Students shall use the Section 504 Grievance Procedure to address complaints/concerns about disability discrimination. A copy of the Section 504 Grievance Procedures can be obtained on the District's website www.mcpsmt.org or any District or school office.

COMPUTER RESOURCES

Computer resources, including the District's electronic networks, are an integral part of the District's instructional program. Use of these resources is a privilege, not a right. Students have no expectation of privacy in material that is stored, transmitted, or received via the District's electronic networks or the District's computers. General rules for behavior and communications apply when using the District's computer resources. Students must sign the Acceptable Use Agreement prior to being authorized to use the District's computer resources. For additional information, see MCPS Policy 3612.

CONDUCT

In order for students to take advantage of available learning opportunities and to be productive members of our campus community, each student is expected to:

Demonstrate courtesy — even when others do not.

Behave in a responsible manner and exercise self-discipline.

Attend all classes, regularly and on time.

Prepare for each class; take appropriate materials and assignments to class. Meet

District or building standards of grooming and dress.

Obey all building and classroom rules.

Respect the rights and privileges of other students, teachers, and other District staff.

Respect the property of others, including District property and facilities.

Cooperate with or assist the school staff in maintaining safety, order, and discipline.

Applicability of School Rules and Discipline

To achieve the best possible learning environment for all our students, rules and discipline for each high school in the Missoula County Public Schools district will apply:

- On, or within sight of, school grounds before, during or after school hours or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group;
- Off school grounds at a school sponsored activity or event, or any activity or event that bears a reasonable relationship to school;
- Traveling to and from school or a school activity, function or event; and
- Anywhere, including virtual networks, if conduct may reasonably be considered to be a threat or an attempted intimidation of a staff member, an interference with school purposes or an educational function, or a threat to the safety and welfare of the student population, or conduct that detrimentally affects the climate or efficient operations of the school.

Violation of Student Code of Conduct

A student's past discipline records, individual circumstances and severity of a particular incident will determine the specific nature of the consequences. **The school administration reserves the right to determine the level of disciplinary action taken depending upon the severity of the infraction.** All discipline is cumulative for students during their years in Missoula County Public High Schools.

Infraction	Possible Consequences/Depending upon the Severity of the Infraction.
Use/Possession of Alcohol: Shows evidence of being under the influence or in possession of alcohol by look, smell, action, or result of Passive Alcohol Sensor (PAS). Refusal to comply with administrative request to submit to PAS will constitute evidence of use and result in commensurate consequence.	✓ OSS/ISS or Refocus (3-5 days) and police contact ✓ OSS/ISS or Refocus (5-10 days) and police contact ✓ OSS (10 days and/or possible recommendation for expulsion ✓ Students are automatically referred to Project SUCCESS where available.
Use/Possession of Tobacco/Marijuana: Use, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling tobacco, vapor products, or marijuana products (tobacco includes, but is not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, snuff, smoking tobacco, smokeless tobacco, alternative nicotine products, or any other tobacco or nicotine innovations; marijuana products include but are not limited to edible products, ointments, tinctures, marijuana derivatives, marijuana concentrates, and marijuana intended for use by smoking or vaping).	✓ Police Contact, citation, detentions or suspension or option to attend Tobacco Cessation classes where available. ✓ Police contact, citation, and OSS/ISS or Refocus (1-5 days)

Infraction	Possible Consequences/Depending upon the Severity of the Infraction.
Use/Possession of Drugs: Shows evidence of being under the influence or in possession of illegal drugs by look, smell or action. Includes possession of drug paraphernalia.	✓ OSS/ISS or Refocus (3-5 days) and police contact ✓ OSS/ISS or Refocus (5-10 days) and police contact ✓ OSS (10 days and/or possible recommendation for expulsion ✓ Students are automatically referred to Project SUCCESS where available.
Transfer/Distribution/Sale of Drugs: Evidence of reasonable suspicion of student engagement in the transfer/distribution/sale of illegal drugs.	✓ Police contact and OSS 10 days and possible recommendation for expulsion.
Weapons Possession: Having or transferring weapons, (including but not limited to) knives, guns, martial arts weapons, flammables, explosives or anything that could cause danger to the health and safety of students or staff. (Facsimiles of weapons are considered to be weapons.) Knives of any size are not allowed on campus.	✓ Knives will be confiscated. Parent may pick up. Subsequent offenses may result in suspension or recommendation for expulsion. ✓ OSS/ISS or Refocus (1-10 DAYS), police contact and/or possible recommendation for expulsion.
Threats or Physical Assault on School Employee	✓ OSS/ISS or Refocus (1-10 days) and police contact ✓ Possible recommendation for expulsion.
Defiance/Insubordination/Class Disruption: Includes insulting, verbal abuse, obscene language, profanity or gestures, and disruption of the learning environment.	✓ Warning, detention, OSS/ISS or Refocus (1 day) ✓ OSS/ISS or Refocus (2-5 days)
Harassment—Race, Religious, Cultural, or Sexual: Any degrading or threatening act that fails to respect the rights and feelings of others. May include slander, prejudicial/discriminatory/ inappropriate comments, touching, innuendos, or rumors. May also include any harassing or threatening act conducted via text message, voice message, email, sharing video evidence, or other means of online communication. If the behavior or its ramifications constitutes a disruption of the learning environment, administrators reserve the right to discipline students who threaten and/or harass their classmates regardless of where or how the specific behavior occurs.	✓ Conference, investigation, detention, OSS/ISS or Refocus(1-5 days) ✓ Possible formal complaint and further consequences. ✓ Police contact

Infraction	Possible Consequences/Depending upon the Severity of the Infraction.
Misconduct, Inappropriate Behavior or Disruption of Orderly School Process: Includes tampering with fire alarm system, bomb threats, arson, extortion, illegal entry, trespassing.	✓ OSS/ISS or Refocus(1-5 days) and police contact ✓ Long term suspension (10 days) and/or possible recommendation for expulsion.
Vandalism/Theft/ Malicious Mischief: Stealing from the school or peers or defacing personal or school property.	✓ Detention/Restitution ✓ Investigation and police contact ✓ Police contact, OSS/ISS or Refocus (1-5 days)
Cell Phones: Cell phones are to be turned off and out of sight during class time, unless authorized by the teacher. **Class time includes release time for senior study hall, activities, and time out of class on a hall pass. Students may only use cell phones before school begins, during passing periods, during the lunch period, and after the last class period is complete.** Staff will confiscate any cell phone that is being used or visible/heard during unauthorized times. Refusal to hand over cell phone to staff constitutes insubordination and may result in ISS or OSS. Confiscated phones will be returned to parent/guardian.	✓ Warning by teacher ✓ Confiscation, parent must pick up from office ✓ Confiscation, parent must pick up, progressive detentions, OSS/ISS or Refocus.
Cheating/Forgery/Pass Violations: An effort to improve grades by copying notes, papers, looking at another's paper or test, plagiarism, etc.	✓ Detention; zero for work; parent notification, possible replacement assignment, OSS/ISS or Refocus
Using signatures not authorized by parent to school authorities on progress reports, excuse slips, passes, or impersonating parent calls for excuses.	✓ Removal from class with failing grade; OSS/ISS or Refocus (2-5 days)
Appearance/Attire for School/Dress Code: Students may not wear revealing clothes or clothing that advertises, depicts, or promotes illegal (or controlled) substances, inappropriate language, sexually explicit pictures, slogans or gang logos.	✓ Correction of problem ✓ Sent home to change/parent notification ✓ OSS/ISS or Refocus (1-3 days)
Fighting/Assault: Using violence, force, coercion or other comparable conduct toward anyone or urging other students to engage in such conduct except when physical force is determined to be reasonable and necessary and used as self-defense or the defense of another person after an investigation into such conduct.	✓ OSS/ISS or Refocus (1-3 days) and police contact ✓ OSS/ISS or Refocus (4-10 days) and police contact
Altercation: Verbal quarreling; physical challenge to fight.	✓ Warning, detention, Mediation, OSS/ISS or Refocus (1-3 days) and police contact

Infraction	Possible Consequences/Depending upon the Severity of the Infraction.
During lunch period, failure to disperse upon staff request.	✓ Loss of open campus privilege during lunch; lunchroom restriction, detention
Inciting, Encouraging, or Supporting a Fight: If a staff member responds to the scene of an altercation or fight and orders the crowd to disperse, anyone who does not leave the scene will be disciplined. Sharing video evidence will be considered inciting, encouraging or supporting a fight.	✓ Detention ✓ OSS/ISS or Refocus(1-5 days) ✓ Police contact
Truancy: Skipping a class, study hall or school day without permission of parent/guardian.	✓ Detention for each period missed ✓ Possible loss of credit, OSS /ISS or Refocus (1- 5 days); contact with County Attorney for those under compulsory attendance age.
Tardies: HG: 0-5 min tardy period. 3 tardy per class per quarter. 4th tardy: 1 detention. 5th tardy: 2 detentions. 6th tardy (or more) multiple detentions/possible ISS. SENT: tardy after bell until attendance is taken and instruction starts; not to exceed 3 minutes. Three (3) tardies per class per semester, 4th tardy- 1 detention, 5th tardy – 2 detentions, 6th tardy – 1 day Refocus Program, 7th tardy – 2 days Refocus Program/parent conference. Tardy Absences have the same consequences. (Tardy Absence is after tardy bell but within the first 15 min. of class.) BS: 5 min. limit as tardy.	✓ Teacher penalty ✓ Detention by Administration
Closed Campus: Students must remain on school grounds throughout the day EXCEPT during lunch. Leaving grounds during lunch is a revocable privilege.	✓ Warning ✓ Detention ✓ Multiple detentions, OSS/ISS or Refocus
No Check-Out: Did not sign out with permission from parent/guardian to leave campus	✓ Absence remains unexcused ✓ Warning/parent contact ✓ Detention ✓ Multiple detentions, OSS/ISS or Refocus (1-3 days)
Violation of Computer Acceptable Use Policy: See further clarification in computer lab or on signed agreement.	✓ Warning or loss of computing privileges ✓ Removal from class ✓ OSS/ISS or Refocus(1-5 days)
Violation of MHSA Spectator Rules (Sportsmanship)	✓ Immediate removal from activity. Violation may result in prohibitions from attending further activities.

Infraction	Possible Consequences/Depending upon the Severity of the Infraction.
Academic Dishonesty: Engaging in dishonesty in academic work, including but not limited to plagiarism, cheating, unauthorized use of artificial intelligence (AI) applications to complete schoolwork, submitting work generated by artificial intelligence as original work, or any other form of academic dishonesty.	✓ Detention; zero for work; parent notification, possible replacement assignment, OSS/ISS ✓ Removal from class with failing grade; ✓ OSS/ISS (2-5 days)

Gun-Free Schools/Firearms

In accordance with the Gun Free School Act, any student who brings a firearm onto school property shall be expelled for a period of not less than one calendar year unless the Board of Trustees has authorized the school administration in writing to modify the requirement for expulsion, including eliminating the requirement for expulsion, on a case-by-case basis.

An administrator may immediately suspend a student if there is cause to believe the student brought a firearm to school or possessed a firearm at school prior to any board hearing on a recommendation for expulsion. If there is a recommendation to expel a student for bringing a firearm to school or possessing a firearm at school, the trustees shall notify the adult student or parent/guardian of a minor student in a clear and timely manner that the student may waive his or her privacy right by requesting the hearing be held in public and may invite other individuals to attend the hearing. At a due process hearing on the recommendation for expulsion due to a student bringing a firearm to school or possessing a firearm at school, there shall be a presentation of a summary of the information leading to the allegations and an opportunity for the student to respond to the allegations. The Board of Trustees is permitted to expel a student only when the trustees determine that the student knowingly (had knowledge of the facts) brought a firearm to school or possessed a firearm at school.

The Board of Trustees is not required to expel a student who has brought a firearm or possessed a firearm at school as long as the firearm is secured in a locked container approved by the District or in a locked motor vehicle the entire time the firearm is at school unless the firearm is in use for a school-sanctioned instructional activity.

If a student is determined by trustees to not have knowingly brought or possessed a firearm at school, the student's record will be expunged of the incident.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

No person who is employed or engaged by the District may inflict or cause to be inflicted corporal punishment on a student. Corporal punishment does not include, and district personnel are permitted to use, reasonable force as needed to maintain safety for other students, school personnel, or other persons, or for the purpose of self-defense.

COUNSELING

Academic Counseling

Students and parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or principal to learn about course offerings, the graduation requirements of various programs, and early graduation procedures. Each spring, students in grades 8 through 11 will be provided information on anticipated course offerings

for the next year and other information that will help them make the most of academic and vocational opportunities. [See **Graduation Requirements** on page 27]

Students who are interested in attending a college, university, or training school or pursuing some other type of advanced education should work closely with their counselor so that they take the high school courses that best prepare them. The counselor can also provide information about entrance examinations and deadlines for application, as well as information about automatic admission to state colleges and universities, financial aid, housing, and scholarships.

Personal Counseling

School counselors are available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, or emotional issues, or substance abuse. Counselors may also make available information about community resources to address these concerns. Students who wish to meet with a counselor should contact guidance office.

Please note: The school will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parent's written consent, unless required by state or federal law for special education purposes. The school will notify the parent or guardian of the right to opt a student out of a mental health screening and will be notified of any issues or concerns resulting from a mental health screening.

DISCIPLINE AND DUE PROCESS

Students who violate District policies, rules, and directives are subject to discipline at the discretion of District administration. Discipline may include referrals, detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion. Administrators have the discretion to impose, or in the case of expulsion, recommend, the level of discipline deemed appropriate for the misconduct.

Suspension

An administrator has the authority to suspend a student for up to ten (10) school days. The student is entitled to oral or written notification of the charges and is entitled to the opportunity to provide his or her version. Immediate suspension when the student's presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption to the educational process may occur without notice or the opportunity to be heard provided that notice and the opportunity to be heard shall follow as soon as practicable. Notice of the suspension including an explanation of its basis and notice of the right to a review of the suspension will be provided to the parents as soon as possible. At the request of the parents, the building principal, Assistant Superintendent, and/or the Superintendent will review the appropriateness of the suspension. The decision of the Superintendent is final.

An administrator has the authority to extend a suspension for an additional ten (10) school days. Prior to extending the suspension beyond the original length not to exceed ten days, the administrator must hold an informal hearing with the student and determine that the student's immediate return to the school would be detrimental to the health, welfare, or safety of others, or would be disruptive to the educational process. Students, who have been suspended for behavior, will have an opportunity to complete missed homework; however, they will have no additional time to complete the work. It is the responsibility of the suspended student to contact their teacher about missed work and complete it independently as if they were in attendance. Teachers will have individual discretion to grant additional time. Tests missed during suspension will be taken on the day the student returns from their suspension.

Expulsion

Expulsion is any removal of a student for more than twenty (20) school days without the provision of educational services. Only the Board of Trustees has the authority to expel a student after holding a hearing that provides the student with an opportunity to be heard.

After an investigation into the student's conduct, the administrator must notify the student's parent of the intent to proceed with an expulsion. The administrator must send a written notice to the superintendent regarding the

recommendation to expel the student, the specific charges against the student, a description of the rule or regulation broken and supporting evidence.

The superintendent must send written notice to the parents regarding the recommendation to expel the student, the specific charges against the student, a description of the rule or regulation broken, supporting evidence, the date, time, and location of the Board hearing, a copy of the Board's procedure, and a description of the student's and parents' rights at the hearing.

Students With Disabilities

Students with rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 may be suspended in the same manner as students without those rights or expelled under certain circumstances, but prior to the imposition of either penalty, the District must follow all procedural requirements of those Acts, including holding a manifestation determination meeting when necessary, as required by these Acts.

DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIAL

School Materials

School publications distributed to students include: school newspapers, yearbooks, and literary publications. All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the principal. School officials have the discretion to edit or delete material which is inconsistent with the District's educational mission. School-sponsored groups are permitted to distribute materials directly to students upon approval of the building Principal or Superintendent.

Non-School Materials

Written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials may not contain material that is obscene, libelous, invasive of the privacy of others, substantially disruptive to the proper and orderly operation and discipline of the school or school activities, or which advocates conduct inconsistent with the shared values of civilized social order are not permitted. Outside groups, including governmental agencies, parent and student organizations not sponsored by the school, and community organizations are permitted to display their materials on a centrally-located bulletin board and/or table available for the displaying of these materials.

Any student who posts material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action. Prior approval must be obtained before displaying these materials. Materials should be submitted to Activities Office at least one week prior to the requested distribution and be stamped to show approval.

DRESS AND GROOMING

The student dress code supports equitable educational access and is written in a manner that does not reinforce stereotypes, or increase marginalization or oppression of any group based on race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, household income, gender identity or cultural observance.

Missoula County Public Schools expect that all students will dress in a way that is appropriate for the school day or for any school sponsored event. Student dress choices should respect the school's intent to sustain a community that is inclusive of a diverse range of identities. The primary responsibility for a student's attire resides with the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s). Each MCPS High School is responsible for seeing that student attire does not interfere with the health or safety of any student, and that student attire does not contribute to a hostile or intimidating atmosphere for any student.

Minimum Expectations:

1. Shoes must be worn at all times.
2. All underwear and undergarments will not be visible. Undergarments must be covered when sitting, standing, or bending. (visible waistbands and visible straps are allowed)
3. Clothing will not contain wording or graphics that advertise or promote illegal activities, are sexually explicit, or that contain obscenity or profanity.

The dress code guidelines shall apply to regular school days and summer school days, as well as any school-related events and activities, such as graduation ceremonies, dances, and prom. Student athletic apparel will be defined by safety and competitive performance standards.

DUAL CREDIT COURSES / COLLEGE COURSEWORK

Check with grade level counselors about dual credit, college coursework, and other advanced academic opportunities.

EPINEPHRINE AUTO-INJECTORS IN SCHOOLS

Each district school may maintain a stock supply of auto-injectable epinephrine to be administered immediately for actual or perceived anaphylaxis (life threatening allergic reaction) in any student by a school nurse or other authorized personnel in accordance with Montana law (MCA § 20-5-421) and Board Policy 3416. Emergency Medical Services (911/EMS) will be called immediately. The parent will be notified following all administration of epinephrine and EMS notification. The limited stock of this medication is not intended to be used in place of medications previously or currently prescribed for specific students or staff with known allergies. Students with known allergies are expected to continue to provide their own health care provider ordered medications and written individual annual anaphylaxis plan.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

A Student must achieve a current GPA of 2.0 or higher and may not have an F in any subject at each grading period: i.e.,' mid-quarter, quarter, and semester, to be eligible for participation in competitive athletic and specific activity programs.

Academic, Residence, and Behavioral Requirements and Responsibilities

MCPS Academic Requirements: These academic requirements apply to athletics, MHSA sponsored chorus, band, and orchestra festivals or competitions, competitive Speech & Debate, and cheerleading. Students may not participate in spring tryouts (i.e., cheerleading) if they are ineligible.

Residence and Age Eligibility Requirements

1. Residence eligibility rules are established by the MHSA and apply to MHSA sanctioned activities only. Basically, students must live with their parents, in the school attendance area of the school for which they compete.

    a) If a student moves from the attendance area of one MCPS school into the attendance area of another MCPS school (within the city) he/she may choose to remain at the original school or enroll in the new school. Eligibility will remain intact as long as the move is valid (with the parents). In-district transfers not involving a parent move to the new attendance area must be approved by the Superintendent. Students must also adhere to the Transfer Rule as imposed by the Montana High School Association.
    b) A student who is ineligible due to the transfer rule may compete on the JV, sophomore, or freshman level but not varsity.
    c) All questions concerning residence eligibility should be directed to the building Principal and/or Activities Director.

2. Age eligibility rules are established by the MHSA. Students are not eligible for MHSA events if they turn 19 before midnight of August 31 previous to the school year participation.

3. A student attending a nonpublic school or home school that meets the requirements under MCA § 20-5-109 may participate in extracurricular activities offered by Missoula County Public School District subject to the student's eligibility as set out in **the Student Activities Handbook**. The student's academic eligibility must be verified by the head administrator of the nonpublic school or educator providing the student instruction in the home school as verified by the principal. Any nonpublic or home school student seeking to participate in an extracurricular activity shall be required to provide proof of identity and residence in the same form as a student enrolling in school in order to establish residency. Parent permission must be obtained for the student to participate in the extracurricular activity.

MCPS Student Responsibilities

Activity Attendance

1. The primary focus for student enrollment is education. MCPS distinguishes absences as:

    a) Unexcused: no valid reason given for non-attendance
    b) Excused: parent or guardian has excused the student for a known reason
    c) Exempt: absence is due to a legal, medical/dental, bereavement, or school sponsored reason. These absences can be documented.

2. MCPS counts absences in the first two categories towards the district attendance policy.

3. For activity participation, either in practice or competition, a student needs to be in class every scheduled period of the school day or has provided documentation for an exempt absence to the attendance clerk or an administrator for that day. Students missing class due to unexcused or excused absences are ineligible on the day of absence for practice or competition.

4. Students missing classes for school activity events will be "school related absent." This does not provide students with any additional makeup time for work missed.

Discipline

1. Students participating in school activities are expected to represent their families, school, and community with maturity and respect. At all athletic and activity-related events, students must demonstrate good sportsmanship, treat others respectfully, and follow the school's Code of Conduct.

    2. All students participating in school activities are subject to the MCPS Code of Conduct. Students and parents should review the code and be familiar with the MCPS Alcohol and Drug Policy.

3. Students involved in activities will be disciplined when necessary. Everyone involved will be treated firmly, consistently, and fairly according to the situation.

Citizenship Policy

The Board of Trustees of the Missoula County Public Schools offers a variety of voluntary activities designed to enhance the classroom education of its students. Students who participate in extracurricular activities serve as ambassadors of the District throughout the calendar year, whether away from or at school. Students who wish to exercise this privilege of participating in extracurricular activities must conduct themselves in accordance with this Code of Conduct. Participation in these activities is a privilege, conditioned upon meeting the eligibility criteria established by the Board, administration, and individual activity coaches and sponsors. The Activities Director shall keep records of violations of the Citizenship Policy.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

1. The policy shall be enforced during the school year when a student (regardless of age) is enrolled at MCPS for school sponsored activities and will also include any school activities that extend beyond the school year.
2. Any student involved in an extra-curricular, performing or competitive activity or athletic program shall not knowingly purchase, possess, use, transmit, or be under the influence of alcohol, tobacco, tobacco derivative, vape, performance enhancing drugs, or controlled substances of any kind during a school year, regardless of the student's age.
3. Any student who finds himself/herself in the company of persons who illegally possess, use, transmit, or are under the influence of alcohol, performance enhancing drugs, or controlled substance (i.e., frequenting of areas, places or sites where drugs and/or alcohol are present), is expected to leave within a reasonable period of time. Failure to do so will result in discipline as if they were in violation of this policy.
4. Any student engaging in inappropriate or offensive conduct or any act that would be grounds for arrest or citation in the criminal or juvenile justice system, excluding minor traffic offenses, regardless of whether the student was cited, arrested, or convicted, or adjudicated for the act(s).
5. Student Transfers. A student who transfers from one Missoula County Public School to another or from another district will maintain his/her accumulative offense status regarding the alcohol and drug policy.

Alcohol and Drug Policy Violations

1. First offense in a student's high school career: The student shall be suspended from competing or performing in any school-sanctioned activity for ten (10) school days.
2. Second-offense in a student's high school career: The student shall be suspended from competing or performing in any school-sanctioned activity for twenty (20) school days.
3. Third offense in a student's high school career: Full suspension from all extra-curricular activity programs for the remainder of the student's high school career. The student will be referred to the Board of Trustees for a hearing for imposition of this penalty.

VIOLATIONS ARE CUMULATIVE DURING A STUDENT'S FOUR YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL

Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct

The essential elements of character building and ethics in athletics are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship.

and six core principles: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. The highest potential of athletics is achieved when competition reflects these "six pillars of character."

Therefore, I agree:

1. I will refrain from coaching my child and other players during games and practices.
2. I will respect the officials and their authority during games and will never question, discuss, or confront coaches at the game field, and will take time to speak to coaches at an agreed upon time and place.
3. I will remember that student athletes participate to have fun and that the game is for youth, not adults.

4. I will demand that my child treat other players, coaches, officials, and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex, or ability.
5. I will promote the emotional and physical wellbeing of the student athletes ahead of any personal desire I may have for my own child to win.
6. I will not encourage any behaviors or practices that would endanger the health and wellbeing of the student athletes.
7. I (and my guest) will be a positive role model for my child and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, officials, and spectators at every game, practice, or sporting event.
8. I (and my guest) will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, player, or parent such as booing and taunting; refusing to shake hands; or using profane language or gestures.
9. I understand that any violation of this code of conduct will be cause for dismissal, suspension, or permanent expulsion from future athletic contest.

Please note: Student clubs, performing groups, and athletic teams may have behavior standards and consequences that are stricter than general school rules. If a violation also breaks a school rule, the administrator may impose school consequences in addition to any consequences established by the organization.

FEES

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds and are at no charge to a student. A student, however, is expected to provide his or her own pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks and may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including:

- Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.
- Voluntarily purchased student accident insurance.
- Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance, when uniforms are provided by the District.
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
- Student replacement identification cards.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books or textbooks.
- Fees for driver training courses, if offered.
- Fees for optional courses offered for credit that requires use of facilities not available on District premises.
- Summer school courses that are offered tuition free during the regular school year.

Any required fee or deposit may be waived if the student and parent are unable to pay. Application for such a waiver may be made to the Activities Office.

FOOD SERVICES

The District participates in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program and offers students nutritionally-balanced and appealing meals daily. Free and reduced-price meals are available based on financial need. The District will make every effort to prevent the overt identification of students participating in the free and reduced-price meals by utilizing electronic identification and payment systems. Applications are available in the main office or online.

Free & Reduced Meals are available to eligible families. Families must re-apply each year for eligibility.

Applications are accepted any time during the school year. Visit the website – Meal and Nutrition Services - for details.

Please refer to Policy 8200 for additional information regarding the District's wellness program and its meal charging policy.

Paying for Cafeteria Purchases

A computerized debit system is used for all purchases. Students use their 5-digit student ID number at the register. Parents have options to monitor and make payments to their student's meal accounts.

FUNDRAISING

Student clubs or classes, outside organizations, and/or parent groups occasionally may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. An application for permission must be made to the principal before the event.

Please refer to MCPS Policy 3530 for additional information.

GRADE CLASSIFICATION

After the ninth grade, students are classified according to the number of credits earned toward graduation. Promotion to the next grade level is based on successful completion of the coursework, attendance, performance based on standardized testing, or other testing administered.

Credits Earned	Grade Placement
6 credits	10th grade, sophomore
12 credits	11th grade, junior
18 credits	12th grade, senior

GRADING GUIDELINES

Letter Grades--Students' grade are alphabetically designated (i.e., A, B, C, D, F). Grade point averages will be computed on a 4-point scale as follows:

- A--4.0 points
- B--3.0 points
- C--2.0 points
- D--1.0 points
- F--0.0 points

"I" is used as an incomplete and the students are given a specific length of time by the teachers to complete the work in the course. Incompletes not made up are recorded as failures (F).

GRADUATION

Requirements for a Diploma

A student in one of Missoula County Public High Schools enrolled for credit prior to the end of the senior year may receive a diploma and participate in the graduation ceremony if he/she passes required courses, pays all fines, and meets school and state requirements. 24 total credits are required for graduation.

Subject	MCPS Graduation Requirements (Class of 2017 & beyond)	Montana University Admission	College of Technology Admission
English	4 credits	4 credits	4 credits
Math	3 credits	3 credits (Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2)	2 credits
HPE	2 credits	2 credits	2 credits
Science	2 credits (Earth & Space Science, Biology)	2 credits	2 credits
Social Studies	2.5 credits (1 US History; 1 US Government)	3 credits (1 of global studies)	2.5 credits (no global studies requirement)
Fine Arts	1 credit	1 credit	1 credit
Practical Arts	1 credit	1 credit	1 credit
Other Electives	8.5 credits	As required for HS graduation	As required for HS graduation
Foreign Language	Not required	Not required (2 years recommended)	Not required

A student with a disabling condition will satisfy those competency requirements incorporated into the individualized education program (IEP). Satisfactory completion of the objectives incorporated in the IEP will serve as the basis for determining completion of a course.

Graduation requirements will not generally be waived; however, in rare and unique circumstances, a recommendations may be made to approve a minor deviation from the graduation requirements.

A student who has an experienced educational disruption will be entitled to graduate with a diploma if the student has met the minimum credit requirements established by the Board of Public Education. The District may distinguish the diploma in a reasonable manner from other diplomas issued. The Board of Trustees may enroll a student who is not yet 19 years and was awarded a diploma due to educational disruption and who seeks access to reasonable curriculum designed to advance postsecondary success.

HEALTH SCREENINGS

Hearing screening is done for kindergarten, 1st and 9th grade students and vision screening is done for Pre-school through 5th grade students. Parents are notified if there are concerns. Screenings are not meant to take the place of professional exams.

HEALTH SERVICES

First aid for injuries and illness response is provided by school staff and if present and available, a school nurse. It may be necessary for the school to contact emergency services or to send a child home due to illness or injury. It is VERY important that the school have current emergency names and phone contacts. Parents and guardians should complete a new health history form whenever there are significant health

changes in your child such as a new life threatening allergy. Ask the school secretary or school nurse for this and any other health related forms, procedures or information or see the district website under the student services then health services tab.

HOMELESS STUDENTS

In accordance with federal and state law and regulations, the District will provide homeless students with access to the instructional programming that supports achievement of the content standards and to other services for which they are eligible. Students shall not be segregated into a separate school or program based on their status as homeless, nor shall they be stigmatized in any way.

The District will determine, according to the best interest of the child whether the child will be enrolled in the school of origin or in the public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child is actually living are eligible to attend. In determining the best interest of the child, the District will, to the extent feasible, keep the child in the school of origin, unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent.

If the child is unaccompanied by a parent or guardian, the homeless liaison will assist in placement and enrollment decisions, with the views of the child taken into consideration.

The District shall immediately enroll the homeless child, even if the child into the selected school even if the parent/child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, immunization records, evidence of residency, or other documentation.

Homeless students shall be provided services comparable to services available to other students in the school system including, but not limited to, transportation services; educational services for which the student meets the eligibility criteria, such as educational programs for disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, and students with limited English proficiency; vocational and technical programs; preschool programs; before and after school-care programs; and school meals/nutrition programs.

Homeless students are entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled.

HOMEWORK

Homework is a constructive tool in the teaching/learning process when geared to the needs and abilities of students. Purposeful assignments not only enhance student achievement, but also develop self-discipline and associated good working habits.

Teachers may give homework to students to aid in the student's educational development. Homework should be an application or adaptation of a classroom experience, and should not be assigned for disciplinary purposes.

IMMUNIZATIONS

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical or religious reasons, the student will not be immunized. The immunizations required are: diphtheria, pertussis, rubeola (measles), rubella, mumps, poliomyelitis, varicella and tetanus. Haemophilus influenza type B is required for students under age five (5). Except for those vaccinations required by law, the District will not discriminate against a student by denying or withholding educational opportunities based upon the student's vaccination status.

A student who transfers into the District may photocopy immunization records in the possession of the school of origin. The District will accept the photocopy as evidence of the immunization. Within thirty (30) days after a transferring student ceases attendance at the school of origin, the District must receive the original immunization records for the student who transfers into the District.

If a student's religious beliefs conflict with the requirement that the student be immunized, the student must present a signed form signed by the student (or by the parent, if the student is a minor) stating that immunization conflicts with the religious tenets and practices of the parents and student. This certificate will be maintained as part of the student's immunization records.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a health care provider who is licensed, certified, or otherwise authorized by the laws of any state or Canada to provide health care under Montana law, is authorized within the provider's scope of practice to administer immunizations to which the exemption applies, and has previously provided health care to the student seeking the exemption or has administered an immunization to which the student has had an adverse reaction. This certificate must indicate the specific nature and probable duration of the medical condition or circumstances which contraindicate immunization. This certificate will be maintained as part of the student's immunization records. For further information, see MCPS Policy 3413.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Questioning of Students

Law enforcement or social service works must contact students through the administrative office. Students will not usually be questioned or interviewed by law enforcement or other lawful authorities while at school. When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities, however, wish to question or interview a student at school or the principal requests that the student be interviewed at school:

- The principal shall verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority.
- If the interview is not at the request of the principal, the principal shall ascertain the authority of law enforcement to question or interview the student at the school. If the interview is by court order or other exigencies exist (concern about loss/damage of evidence, flight from jurisdiction, or health, safety, or welfare of the student or other students or staff), the principal has the discretion to allow the interview to take place. Otherwise, if law enforcement can reasonably interview the student at a time when the student is not in school, the principal may, absent a court order, deny the request for an immediate interview of a student.
- The principal will make reasonable efforts to notify parents unless the officer produces a court order prohibiting the notification of the parents.
- In the event that a parent cannot be present or cannot be reached, the principal will observe the interview.
- Law enforcement must comply with all legal requirements regarding notification of parents and consent prior to interviewing students.
- Social service workers may be permitted to interview students at a school consistent with Montana law. The principal or designee will observe the meeting if the social service worker declines to notify the parents.

Students Taken into Custody

State law requires the District to permit a student to be taken into legal custody by a law enforcement officer or probation officer to comply with a lawful court order, a warrant for arrest, or a law enforcement determination that probable cause exists for the arrest. To the extent practicable, the arrest should be conducted out of the view of other students in the administration offices. A social service worker may take custody of a student with a lawful court order or under the powers of MCA § 41-3-301.

The principal will immediately notify the Superintendent and will make reasonable attempts to notify a parent unless the officer or official produces a court order prohibiting the notification of the parents.

Because the principal does not have the authority to prevent or delay a custody action, notification will most likely be after the fact.

Service of Process

At times, law enforcement may seek to serve a student with a subpoena or other legal documents (i.e., complaint, summons). Absent a court order, the principal has the discretion to determine whether service at school is disruptive to the educational environment. If service is directed by a court or is not disruptive to the educational environment, the principal will make reasonable attempts to contact the parents regarding the service. Where the principal has determined that service would be disruptive to the educational environment, the principal will make a reasonable attempt to coordinate with law enforcement to serve the student when school is not in session. Service on a student will be accomplished out of the view of other students in the administration offices.

MEDICINE AT SCHOOL

Most student medication can be taken at home either before or after school. Only those medications that your child must have while at school are permitted. "Medications" include prescription, over the counter and homeopathic or alternative medications such as vitamins. For the safety of all students, students are not allowed to carry any medication unless permitted by law (allergy and asthma medications) or by an accommodation plan. Parents or guardians must bring all other medications to the school office or health office in a pharmacy or manufacturer labeled container. All medications must have annual written parent permission and health care provider signature on file. Unused medication is discarded at the end of the school year. Related medication information and forms may be found on the district website under the student services then health services tab.

A student who has authorization to possess and self-administer medication must have completed and filed, with the office, a written order for self-administration of a medication from a licensed health care provider or dentist as well as written authorization from the parents for the self-administration. The principal may authorize, in consultation with medical personnel, a student with asthma, severe allergies, or anaphylaxis to possess and self-administer emergency medication from an epinephrine pen (EpiPen), epinephrine nasal spray, or asthma inhaler. The written order and written authorization must be provided annually.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND RIGHTS

The District believes that the best educational result for each student occurs when all three partners are doing their best: the District staff, the student's parent, and the student. Such a partnership requires trust and much communication between home and school. To strengthen this partnership, every parent is urged to:

- Encourage his or her child to put a high priority on education and commit to making the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Review the information in the student handbook with his or her child and sign and return the acknowledgment form(s) and the directory information notice.
- Become familiar with all of the child's school activities and with the academic programs and course of study; including special programs, offered in the District. Discuss with the counselor or principal any questions, such as concerns about placement, assignment, or early graduation, methods to opt-out of programs and instruction consistent with parent/family rights, and other options available to the child.
- Monitor the child's academic progress and contact teachers as needed, including to discuss homework, attendance, and discipline. Parents have the right to review their child's education records upon request.
- Attend scheduled conferences and request additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, counselor, or principal, please call the school office for an appointment. A teacher will usually arrange to return the call or meet with the parent during his or her conference period or at a mutually convenient time before or after school.
- Become a school volunteer.
- Access District policies, handbooks, Board and committee meeting agendas, and District grievance

procedures to participate in the governance of the District through the Board of Trustees. Contact information for administrators and trustees is available on the District's website.
- Contact a counselor or principal to discuss rights related to student name and pronoun use consistent with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act Policy 3600.
- Participate in campus parent organizations. Parents have the opportunity to support and be involved in various school activities, either as leaders or in supporting roles.

PROTECTION OF STUDENT RIGHTS

Parent Rights

All fundamental parental rights are exclusively reserved to the parent of a child without obstruction or interference by a government entity in accordance with state and federal law (including without limitation to statutes and the common law) and District policy.

Surveys

Parents have the right to inspect any survey or evaluation and refuse to allow their child to participate in such survey or evaluation that does not require the collection of personally identifiable information and is not necessary and essential for establishing the student's education record or validating an achievement test for admission to a postsecondary institution. Parents have the right to opt their student in to a survey or data collection that requires the collection of personally identifiable information and is not necessary and essential for establishing the student's education record or validating an achievement test for admission to a postsecondary institution.

Instructional Materials

Parents have the right to inspect instructional materials used as a part of their child's educational curriculum, within a reasonable time. This does not include academic tests or assessments.

Collection of Personal Information from Students for Marketing

The District will not administer or distribute to students any survey or other instrument for the purposes of collecting or compiling personal information for marketing or selling such information, with the exception of the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products/services for, or to, students or educational institutions.

Pursuant to federal law, the District will not request, nor disclose, the identity of a student who completes any federally-funded survey or evaluation (created by any person or entity, including the District) containing one or more of the following:
- Political affiliations.
- Mental and psychological problems
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, and demeaning behavior.
- Criticism of other individuals with whom the student or the student's family has a close family relationship.
- Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of students or the student's parent/guardian.
- Income, except when the information will be used to determine the student's eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL

A student will not be released from school at times other than at the end of the school day except with

permission from the principal or designee and according to the building sign-out procedures. Unless the principal has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the instructional day.

A student who will need to leave school during the day must have permission from his or her parent that morning. Parents/guardians should notify the attendance office at least an hour in advance to excuse the student. The student must check out at the attendance office before leaving school grounds. A student who becomes ill during the school day should, with the teacher's permission, report to the office or school nurse. The administrator or nurse will decide whether or not the student should be sent home and will notify the student's parent. When in doubt as to custodial rights, the District will rely on the most recent information available in the student's records. A student will only be released with prior written permission from the custodial parent to a previously unauthorized adult unless an emergency situation justifies a waiver.

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Each student has a right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other activities of the school. Students may also pray in groups and discuss their religious views with other students as long as they are not disruptive or coercive. The school will not require, encourage, or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity. Student prayer, even if nonsectarian or non-proselytizing, will not be broadcast over the school public address system.

Students may study religions ancillary to the studies of human history and development and various national, cultural, and ethnic groups. This study will give neither preferential nor derogatory treatment to any religion or religious belief. The inclusion of religious music, symbols, art, or writings in school programs or performances may occur where the religious content has a historical and/or independent educational purpose consistent with the approved curriculum. A student may read the Bible or other religious material during free reading time or when self-selected and consistent with a classroom or course requirement. For additional information, please see MCPS Policy 2460.

REPORT CARDS, PROGRESS REPORTS, AND CONFERENCES

Written reports of absences and student grades or performance in each class or subject are issued to parents at the end of each semester. At other times written reports may be obtained by contacting the records clerk. Grades, attendance and discipline records are available electronically at every report period through Infinite Campus Parent Connect or Student Connect. Please contact the school records clerk to sign up for this valuable resource.

SAFETY

Accident Prevention

Student safety on campus and at school-related events is a high priority of the District. Although the District has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensure school safety. A student should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk.
- Follow the behavioral standards in this handbook, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the principal, teachers, or bus drivers.
- Remain alert to and promptly report safety hazards, such as intruders on campus.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other District employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

Emergency Medical Treatment and Information

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent cannot be reached, the school will need to have written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment and information about allergies to medications, etc. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up to date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the office to update any information.

Drills: Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergencies

From time to time, students, teachers, and other District employees will participate in drills of emergency procedures. When the alarm is sounded, students should follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

Emergency Response

Our school uses the **"I Love U Guys" Standard Response Protocol (SRP)** to provide clear, consistent directions during emergencies and safety situations. The five SRP actions are:

- **HOLD – "In Your Room or Area. Clear the Halls.**
    - **Students:** Remain in your classroom or assigned area and follow staff directions. Normal activities may continue.
    - **Parents/Guardians:** No action is usually needed. Monitor school communications if additional information is provided.
- **SECURE – "Get Inside. Lock Outside Doors."**

  Used when there is a potential concern or threat **outside the school**.
    - **Students:** Go inside immediately, remain inside, and follow staff directions.
    - **Parents/Guardians:** Do not come to the school unless directed. Monitor official school communications for updates.
- **LOCKDOWN – "Locks, Lights, Out of Sight."**

  Used when there is a potential threat **inside the school** or circumstances require rooms to be secured.
    - **Students:** Follow staff directions immediately, move out of sight, remain quiet, silence electronic devices, and do not open doors.
    - **Parents/Guardians:** Do not come to the school or attempt to enter the building. Monitor official school communications and avoid calling or repeatedly texting students during the incident.
- **EVACUATE – "To the Announced Location."**

  Used when students and staff need to move to another location.
    - **Students:** Follow staff directions, leave belongings behind unless instructed otherwise, stay with your class or group, and report to the designated location.
    - **Parents/Guardians:** Do not go to the school or evacuation site unless directed. If reunification is necessary, the school will provide instructions on where and how students will be released.
- **SHELTER – Hazard and Safety Strategy Announced**

  Used when protective actions are needed because of severe weather, hazardous materials, or another environmental hazard.
    - **Students:** Listen carefully and follow the announced safety instructions.
    - **Parents/Guardians:** Monitor official school communications and follow any instructions provided by the school or emergency officials.

During Any Emergency

Students should remain calm, follow staff instructions, and avoid posting photos, videos, or unverified information on social media.

Parents and guardians should rely on **official school communications**, avoid coming to the school unless instructed, and follow all directions regarding dismissal or student-parent reunification.

SCHOOL CLOSURE

Severe Weather or Other Emergency Notifications

Missoula County Public Schools will notify students and parents as early as possible if severe weather or other emergency circumstances require that:

- **Schools delay their starting time OR**
- **Schools are closed and cancelled for the day.**

School District officials work closely with the bus company and city/county transportation officials to monitor the condition of local roads and highways during severe weather or when other circumstances arise.

The District will use the Blackboard communications system to notify student and staff households by telephone and/or e-mail should school be cancelled or delayed. A recorded phone message and email (assuming there is an email address for the household provided to the district for communications) will be generated to each household as early as 6:15 a.m.
In addition, notifications will be made to:

- Visit the District's website.
- Tune into one of these media outlets:
  Missoulian
  KGVO (1290 AM)
  KYSS (94.9 FM)
  KGGL (FM 93.3)
  KZOQ (FM 100.1)
  KXDR (98.7 FM)
  KMSO (FM 102.5)
  KECI (local NBC Television Affiliate)
  KPAX (local CBS Television Affiliate)
  KTMF (local ABC Television Affiliate)

If you hear that school buses are delayed or that school is starting late due to severe weather, keep your child(ren) at home and supervised until either buses arrive or until the publicized time that school begins. Remember, teachers and other staff may also have difficulty getting to school and may not be available to supervise students.

Parent Cooperation during an Emergency

Missoula County Public Schools' personnel are prepared and practice regularly for a variety of emergencies in the schools. If you, as a parent, hear of an emergency, please check the district's website or local radio/television media. The district will keep local media informed if there is an emergency. The District's website will also be used to post information as it becomes available. **Please do not telephone the school or travel directly to the school.** Phone lines may be needed to respond to the emergency. In addition, emergency vehicles and first-response workers must be able to get to the school. If your child must be evacuated during school hours, your child will be taken to and cared for at a safe location. If you have specific concerns about emergency procedures, stop by and visit with your student's teacher or the school principal.

SEARCHES AND SEIZURES

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that schools are safe and drug free, District officials may from time to time conduct searches. Such searches are conducted without a warrant

and as permitted by law. Searches may include the use of canines.

Students' Personal Effects

School officials may search a student and/or the student's personal effects (e.g., purses, backpacks, coats, etc.) when there is reasonable suspicion that the search will produce evidence that the student has violated or is violating the law or the District's rules. The search must be conducted in a manner which is reasonably related to its objectives and not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction.

Students' Desks and Lockers

Students' desks and lockers are school property and remain under the control and jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student.

Students are fully responsible for the security and contents of the assigned desks and lockers. Students must be certain that the locker is locked, and that the combination is not available to others. School officials may cut locks in order to conduct a search.

Searches of desks or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by District policy, whether or not a student is present. Searches may also be conducted at random, in accordance with law and District policy. See MCPS Policy 3231.

The parent will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker.

Vehicles on Campus

Vehicles parked on school property are under the jurisdiction of the school. School officials may search any vehicle any time there is reasonable cause to do so, with or without the presence of the student. A student has full responsibility for the security of his or her vehicle and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others.

Seizure of Property

Evidence produced by a search that reveals that a student has violated or is violating the law or District rules may be seized and impounded by school officials. When appropriate, such evidence may be transferred to law enforcement authorities.

Evidence produced by a search may be used in a disciplinary proceeding against the student.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The District encourages parental and student support in its efforts to address and prevent sexual harassment in the public schools. Students and/or parents are encouraged to discuss their questions or concerns about the expectations in this area with the District's Title IX coordinator.

Sexual harassment is conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. Quid pro quo: An employee of the recipient conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the recipient on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct

2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the recipient's education program or activity; or

3. "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), , or "stalking" *as* defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30).

A determination of responsibility resulting from a formal complaint against a student for engaging in sexual harassment will result in appropriate disciplinary action, according to the nature of the offense.

Complaints may be submitted via the District's Title IX Grievance Procedure. Please refer to Policies 3210 and 3225 for additional information regarding the District's prohibition against discrimination and harassment.

STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE

Students in foster care are entitled to educational stability under Title I for the duration of their time in foster care. "Foster care" means "24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the child welfare agency has placement and care responsibility." This includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions, and pre-adoptive home.

The District will take efforts to ensure that a child in foster care:

- Remains in his or her school of origin (school last enrolled in at the time of placement in foster care) unless it is not in the child's best interest; or

- If the school of origin is not in the child's best interest, the child must be immediately enrolled in a new school regardless of being able to produce records otherwise required.

The District will collaborate with the child welfare agency involved in a particular student's case to make the "best interest" determination as quickly as possible. The District will also collaborate with the child welfare agency regarding the provision of transportation to the selected school for the student.

STUDENT OFFICES AND ELECTIONS

Student elections take place in the spring of the previous year. Freshmen elections take place at the beginning of the school year. Contact the activities director in the front office for more information.

STUDENT RECORDS

Access by Parents and Student: A student's school records are confidential and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. The District maintains two sets of records: a permanent record and a cumulative record.

By law, both parents, whether married, separated, or divorced, have access to the records of a student who is under 18 years of age. A parent whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records, if the school is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights.

The building principal will be responsible for maintenance, retention, or destruction of a student's permanent or cumulative records, in accordance with District procedure established by the Superintendent. The principal will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records. Access to records will be granted within 15 days of receipt of a written request. If circumstances prevent a parent or eligible student from inspecting the records, the District will either provide a copy of the requested records or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review the requested records.

Parents of a minor, the student (if 18 years of age or older), and school officials with legitimate educational interests are persons who may regularly access a student's records. "School officials with legitimate educational interests" include any employees, agents, or Trustees of the District; cooperatives

of which the District is a member; or facilities with which the District contracts for the placement of students with disabilities, as well as their attorneys and consultants, who are:

- Working with the student;
- Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, an individual education plan (IEP) for a student with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or an individually designed program for a student with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973;
- Compiling statistical data; or
- Investigating or evaluating programs.

The parent's or student's right of access to, and copies of, student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records, such as teachers' personal notes on a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher, records pertaining to former students of the District, and records maintained by school law enforcement officials for purposes other than school discipline do not have to be made available to the parents or student. Access will also not be granted to the parent or the student to confidential letters and recommendations concerning admission to a post-secondary educational institution, applications for employment, or receipt of an honor or award, if the student has waived his or her right of access after being advised of his or her right to obtain the names of all persons making such confidential letters or statements.

Students and Parents are encouraged to access grade, schedule, discipline and attendance information using the Parent Connect and Student Connect components of the district's school management software Infinite Campus. You can access Infinite Campus Parent Portal or Student Portal by visiting the MCPS website. If you do not have user ID or password information please contact the school's record's clerk.

Access by Other Individuals and Entities

Certain officials from various governmental agencies may have limited access to the records without prior consent by the parents or student (over 18 years of age). Disclosure to these governmental agencies may be done under some of the following circumstances:

- The District may grant access to or release information from student records to employees or officials of the District or the Montana State Board of Education, provided a current, legitimate educational interest is shown.
- The District may grant access to or release information from student records without parental consent or notification to any person, for the purpose of research, statistical reporting, or planning, provided that no student or parent can be identified from the information released, and the person to whom the information is released signs an affidavit agreeing to comply with all applicable statutes and rules pertaining to school student records.
- The District will grant access to or release information from any student record as specifically required by federal or state statute.
- The District may release student records or information in connection with an emergency, without parental consent, if the knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons. The Superintendent or Principal will make this decision, taking into consideration the nature of the emergency, the seriousness of the threat to the health and safety of the student or other persons, the need for such records to meet the emergency, and whether the persons to whom such records are released are in a position to deal with the emergency.
- The District may disclose student records or information to the youth court and law enforcement authorities, pertaining to violations of the Montana Youth Court Act or criminal laws by the student.
- The District will comply with an *ex parte* order requiring it to permit the U.S. Attorney General or designee to have access to a student's school records without notice to or consent of the student's parent.

The District forwards a student's records on request and without prior parental consent to a school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. Records are also released in accordance with court order or lawfully issued subpoena. Unless the subpoena is issued for law enforcement purposes and the subpoena orders that

its contents, existence, or the information sought not be disclosed, the District will make a reasonable effort to notify the parent or eligible student in advance of compliance.

Parental consent is required to release the records in most circumstances. When the student reaches 18 years of age, only the student has the right to consent to release of records.

The District charges a nominal fee for copying records; however, no parent or student will be precluded from copying information because of financial hardship. An access log will also be maintained for each record which details those individuals accessing the records and their legitimate interest in the records.

Challenging Content of Records

Students over 18 years of age, and parents of minor students may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. If the District refuses the request to amend the records, the requestor has the right to ask for a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the requestor has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, parents and the student are not allowed to contest a student's grade in a course or references to expulsions and out-of-school suspensions through this process.

Directory Information

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone, including military recruiters and/or post-secondary institutions, who follows procedures for requesting it, unless the parent objects to the release of any or all directory information about the child. The opportunity to exercise such an objection was provided on the form signed by the parent to acknowledge receipt of this handbook. Should circumstances change, the parent can contact the principal to indicate his or her desire to change the original request.

Directory information includes: a student's name, address, telephone number, electronic mail address, date of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, photographs, dates of attendance, and honors and awards received in school.

Maintenance of Records

Permanent records are maintained in perpetuity for every student who has enrolled in the District. Cumulative records will be maintained for eight (8) years after the student graduates or permanently leaves the District. Cumulative records which may be of continued assistance to a student with disabilities, who graduates or permanently withdraws from the District, may, after five (5) years, be transferred to the parents or to the student if the student has succeeded to the rights of the parents.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Protecting the health and well-being of all students is of utmost importance to MCPS. The school district will help to protect all students through the following steps:

- Recognizing and responding to warning signs of suicide in friends, using coping skills, support systems and seeking help for themselves and peers. This curricular content will occur in all health classes throughout the school year. The encouragement of help-seeking behavior will be promoted at all levels of the school staff, leadership and stakeholders.
- Mental health staff will serve as a point of contact for students in crisis and to provide students appropriate resources.
- For at-risk students, a risk assessment will be completed by a trained school staff member(s). If needed, staff will connect the student and family to outside resources.
- Students and families may be given national resources that they can contact for additional support, such as:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Dial 988
  - suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- Text Line: Text MT to 741-741
  - Text "NATIVE" 741-741
  - Crisistextline.org
- The Trevor Lifeline: 1-866-488-7386
  - thetrevorproject.org/get-help-now
- Trevor Lifeline Text/Chat Services, available 24/7
  - Text "TREVOR" to 678-678 Crisis

MCPS strives to create a district and school culture of acceptance and support, where students feel comfortable seeking help for themselves or friends. Students are encouraged to tell any staff member if they or a friend are feeling suicidal, or are in need of help.

While confidentiality and privacy are important, if there is risk of suicide, safety comes first and may result in school staff sharing information with necessary individuals in order to maintain the safety of the student

SUMMER SCHOOL
Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. The principal, however, may make an exception if the parent personally requests that the student be permitted to ride with the parent, or the parent presents (before the scheduled trip) a written request that the student be permitted to ride with an adult designated by the parent.

TEXTBOOKS

Board-approved textbooks are provided free of charge for each subject or class. Books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. A student who is issued a damaged book should report the damage to the teacher. Any student failing to return a book issued by the school or damaging a book issued by the school may be charged to replace the book.

TRANSPORTATION

School Sponsored

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. The principal, however, may make an exception if the parent personally requests that the student be permitted to ride with the parent, or the parent presents (before the scheduled trip) provides a written request that the student be permitted to ride with an adult designated by the parent.

Buses and Other School Vehicles

The District makes school bus transportation available to all students living more than 3 miles from school. This service is provided at no cost to students. Bus routes and any subsequent changes are posted at the school. Further information may be obtained by calling **Beach Transportation at 549-6121.**

Students are expected to assist District staff in ensuring that buses remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. When riding school buses, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook. Students must:

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Enter and leave the bus in an orderly manner at the designated bus stop nearest home.
- Keep feet, books, band instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the bus or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the bus.
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the bus and before crossing in front of the bus.

When students ride in a District van or passenger car, seat belts must be fastened at all times. Misconduct will be punished and bus-riding privileges may be suspended.

VIDEO RECORDING OF STUDENTS

The District has the right to use security and surveillance video equipment on District property to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of all staff, students, and visitors to District property, and to safeguard District facilities and equipment. Video equipment may be used in locations as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent. Students may be videoed at events and practices open to the public, including but not limited to public performances, dress rehearsals, athletic practices open to the public, and athletic competitions.

Students in violation of Board policies, administrative regulations, building rules, or law shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Others may be referred to law enforcement agencies.

Video recordings from security and surveillance cameras may become a part of a student's educational record. The District shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws related to record maintenance and retention. Signs will be posted at various locations to inform students, staff, and members of the public that video surveillance cameras are in use. The District will seek consent before recording students individually in the classroom. A consent form seeking permission to record during extracurricular activities for coaching or instruction will be provided.

VISITORS

Parents and others are welcome to visit District schools. For the safety of those within the school, all visitors must first report to the principal's office. Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher and so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment.

VOLUNTEERING IN THE MCPS SCHOOLS

Missoula County Public Schools (MCPS) welcomes and encourages community members to volunteer their time, talents, and expertise in support of students and staff. The District is committed to recruiting, training, and placing more volunteers in meaningful service opportunities throughout the school year. Volunteers may support schools in a variety of ways, including serving as library aides, reading assistants, classroom helpers, writers and editors for school newsletters, field trip chaperones, and mentors for student projects, job shadows, or internships. Volunteers may also assist with other school and classroom activities as approved by the District.

In accordance with Montana law, all MCPS volunteers are required to register with the District and successfully complete a fingerprint-based criminal background check before volunteering in any MCPS school, classroom, or other school-related setting. Volunteers may not begin service until all required registration and background check requirements have been completed and approved.

All volunteers must register through the MCPS online volunteer portal at MCPS Volunteer Portal. After submitting the volunteer application, volunteers may schedule their required fingerprint background check by emailing **volunteers@mcpsmt.org**. Fingerprinting is by appointment only; walk-ins will not be accepted. Volunteers must complete the registration and fingerprint background check process and receive approval before beginning volunteer service. For additional information, contact the MCPS Volunteer Coordinator at 728-2400, ext. 1039.

Appendix A – FERPA RIGHTS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records:

Parents will receive annual notice of their FERPA rights. This appendix is intended only as a summary of such rights. Parents generally have the following rights:

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

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the District to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the District decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the District will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for
amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official includes a person employed by the school or school district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by the school, performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

4. Upon request, the school district discloses education records without consent to officials of another school or school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

5. The District classifies the following as Directory Information: a student's name, address, telephone number, electronic mail address, date of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, photographs, dates of attendance, and honors and awards received in school. School officials may release this information to any person without the consent of the parents or the student. Any parent or eligible student who objects to the release of any or all of this information without his consent must notify, in writing, the principal of the school where the records are kept by October 1 of this school year, or within 10 working days following enrollment if enrollment takes place after October 1 of this school year. The objection must state what information the parent or student does not want to be classified as Directory Information. A parent has the right to provide a limited opt-out of directory information, which could include but is not limited to the District's disclosure or sharing of student photographs or images. If no objection is received as required above,

information designated above will be classified as Directory Information until the beginning of the next school year.

6. Copies of the complete FERPA Policy adopted by the District may be obtained from the Superintendent's Office or from the Principal's Office of each school within the District.

7. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Missoula County Public School DIstrict to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

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