



Muscogee County School District Columbus, Georgia

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

Dr. David F. Lewis
Superintendent of Education



Superintendent's Message

Dear Students and Parents of Muscogee County School District:

You and your child are an important part of our school family - a team that includes all school system employees, business partners, community agencies, houses of worship, and volunteers. Each team member is dedicated to supporting the educational growth of our students.

This handbook is designed to provide valuable information that will assist both students and parents in many of our policies and requirements. Please take the time to read this document as it can be used for a variety of resources for all students to be successful.

The policies explain many of the rules and regulations that students and parents need to know, including the student code of conduct and guidelines for student discipline. Please remember that you are completely responsible for adhering to the rules, procedures and expectations identified in this Handbook. This information will be reviewed with the students at the beginning of each school year.

Our entire staff and I look forward to helping make the 2016-2017 school year a successful one for all of our students.

Sincerely,

Dr. David F. Lewis
Superintendent of Education



BEMON G. MCBRIDE, III
CHIEF JUDGE OF SUPERIOR COURTS

11TH FLOOR, GOVERNMENT CENTER
P.O. BOX 1340
COLUMBUS, GEORGIA 31902-1340

TELEPHONE
706/225-4275
FACSIMILE
706/653-4269

June 1, 2016

Dear Parent or Guardian,

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

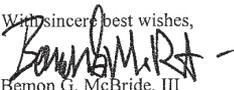
With these considerations in mind, you should know that your child's school is legally required to report students with excessive absences or late arrivals to your school's social worker for follow up and possible legal action.

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

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

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

With sincere best wishes,


Bemon G. McBride, III
Chief Judge,
Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit

BGM,III/ljj

Preface

The Muscogee County School District (MCSD) has reorganized and updated its Handbook for easier access to necessary information. Students, Parents, and Personnel, please carefully review the information in this Handbook and ask questions.

Muscogee County School District 2016-2017 Calendar

DATE	EVENT
Monday-Friday, August 1-5	Teacher Pre-Planning (No School for Students)
Monday, August 08	School Begins: First Semester Begins
Monday, September 05	Labor Day: System-Wide Shut Down
Thursday, September 08	Progress Reports
Monday, October 17	Teacher Planning Day (No School for Students)
Tuesday, October 18	Report Cards-All Levels
Friday, November 11	Veterans Day: System-Wide Shut Down
Monday, November 14	Progress Reports
Monday-Friday, November 21-25	Thanksgiving Break: System-Wide Shut Down
Tuesday, December 20	End First Semester Grading Period
December 21-January 06	Winter Break: System-Wide Shut Down
Monday-Tuesday, January 9-10	Teacher Planning Day (No School for Students)
Wednesday, January 11	Beginning Second Semester
Monday, January 16	Martin Luther King Jr. Day: System-Wide Shut Down
Tuesday, January 17	Report Cards-All Levels
Monday, February 13	Progress Reports
Monday, February 20	President's Day (No School for Teachers and Students)
Monday-Friday, March 20-24	Spring Break: System-Wide Shut Down
Thursday, March 30	Report Cards-All Levels
Tuesday, April 25	Progress Reports
Friday, May 26	Last Day of School
Friday, May 26	Report Cards- Elementary
Tuesday-Wednesday, May 30-31	Teacher Post Planning
Friday, June 02	Report Cards-Middle and High School
Tuesday, April 5	Early Release-Elementary
Tuesday, April 19	Progress Reports
Friday, May 20	Last Day of School
Friday, May 20	Report Cards- Elementary
Thursday, May 26	Report Cards-Middle and High School
Monday-Thursday, May 23-26	Teacher Post Planning
Friday, May 22	LAST DAY OF SCHOOL (Student day: 180)
Friday, May 22	Report Cards (Elementary)
Monday, May 25	Memorial Day (No school for students and teachers)
Tuesday – Friday, May 26-29	Teacher Post-Planning (Teacher day: 187-190)
Wednesday May 27	Report Cards (Middle and High School)

School Start and End Times / 2016-17 School Calendar

Level/School Name	Doors Open	Start Time	End Time
Elementary Schools	7:15 am	8:00 am	2:30 am
Middle Schools	8:20 am	8:50 am	3:50 pm
High Schools	7:40 am	8:10 am	3:25 pm
Eagle Ridge Academy	7:00 am	7:45 am	2:15 pm
North Columbus Elementary	7:00 am	7:45 am	2:15 pm
Fox Elementary	7:15 am	8:00 am	3:00 pm
Jordan High School	7:20 am	7:50 am	3:25 pm
Spencer High School	7:20 am	7:50 am	3:25 pm

Cost of Meals

Breakfast	Prices
Elementary	.95
Middle/High	1.20
Reduced	.30
Adult	1.50
Adult, Outside MCSD	1.50
Lunch	Prices
Elementary	2.10
Middle/High	2.35
Reduced	.40
Adult, MCSD Staff	3.75
Adult, Outside MCSD	4.50

I. General Information for Students and Parents

District Phone Numbers

If you need help with:

Switchboard	706-748-2000
Bully Hotline	706-748-2267
Report Bullying	706-748-2267
Registration Information	706-748-2221
Enrollment Information (Marcus DuBose)	706-748-2222
Transportation (Frank Brown)	706-748-2880
Transportation After Hours	706-748-2860
Office of the Superintendent (Dr. David Lewis)	706-748-2019
Guidance / Social Workers / Homeless Resources (Dr. Trikella Nelson).....	706-748-2226
Testing, Assessment & Accountability (Patrick Knopf).....	706-748-2118
Human Resources / Personnel (Kathy Tessin)	706-748-2011
Student Discipline Tribunal (Melvin F. Blackwell)	706-748-3336
Programs for Exceptional Students (Mary C. Lewis)	706-748-2225
School Psychology Department (Karyn Leggett)	706-748-2189
Section 504 / Student Support Teams (Karyn Leggett)	706-748-2189
Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) (LaChrista McQueen)	706-748-3166
Regional Chief : (See following page with designated school names)	
West Region: Terry Baker	706-748-2105
Central Region: James Wilson	706-748-3279
East Region: Dr. Ronald Wiggins	706-748-3294
Student Services/Central Registration (Marcus DuBose)	706-748-2236
Students Who are Hospitalized or Homebound (Marcus DuBose)	706-748-2222
Federal Programs (Dr. Timothy Smith)	706-748-2102
Title IIA (Stephanie Baldwin)	706-748-2157
Title VI & Title IX – Harassment and Discrimination Complaints / Concerns (Melvin F. Blackwell – Student Services/Coordinator of Compliance).....	706-748-3336
(Kathy Tessin – Human Resources / Personnel Complaints)	706-748-2011
Project Aware and PBIS (Tammi J. Clarke)	706-748-3339
Sports Equity/Title IX Coordinator (Jeffery Battles)	706-748-2595
School Nutrition (Susan Schlader)	706-748-2386

Region: WEST Terry Baker, Region Chief	Region: CENTRAL James Wilson, Region Chief	Region: EAST Dr. Ronald Wiggins Region Chief
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS		
Allen Elementary Britt David Magnet Double Churches Elementary Downtown Elementary Fox Elementary Hannan Elementary Magnet J. D. Davis Elementary Johnson Elementary North Columbus Elementary River Road Elementary Wynnton Arts Academy	Blanchard Elementary Brewer Elementary Clubview Elementary Dorothy Heights Elementary Eagle Ridge Academy Gentian Elementary Key Elementary MLK, Jr. Elementary Rigdon Road Elementary South Columbus Elementary	Dawson Elementary Dimon Elementary Forrest Road Elementary Georgetown Elementary Lonnie Jackson Elementary Mathews Elementary Midland Academy Reese Road Elementary St. Marys Road Magnet Waddell Elementary Wesley Heights Elementary
MIDDLE SCHOOLS		
Arnold Magnet Academy Double Churches Middle Veterans Memorial Middle	Baker Middle Blackmon Road Middle Eddy Middle Richards Middle	Aaron Cohn Middle East Columbus Magnet Fort Middle Midland Middle Rothschild Leadership Academy
HIGH SCHOOLS		
Columbus High Early College Academy Jordan High Northside High	Carver High Hardaway High Shaw High	Kendrick High Spencer High
ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS		
Anne Elizabeth Shepherd Home St. Elmo Center Woodall Center		AIM Alternative Center

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

PATH: About Us>Board of Education>Board Docs>Public>Policies>Policies

Repeal Clause

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

Forms that Must Be Reviewed and/or Returned to School:

Please visit with your school administrator for the following forms which must be reviewed, signed, and in some cases, returned prior to enrollment:

- Behavior Contract/Receipt of Handbook
- Parent and Student Notification Agreement – Compulsory Attendance
- Parent and Student Notification – Bad Checks
- Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) Agreement Form
- Parents Right to Know (Title I)
- Medication Administration Permission Form
- Parent Letter Regarding Student Medical/Health Information and Procedures
- Student Health Record Information
- Immunization Schedule
- Immunization Info (7th Grade Entry)
- Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)
- Parental Opt-Out of PPRA
- Education Records: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Medication Authorization Form
- Parental Opt-Out of Club Participation/Event Activities
- Student Handbook Notice-Complaints of Discrimination/Harassment (upon request)
- Field Trip Authorization Form
- Early Release (work-related for high school students)
- Library Card Registration
- Parent Permission Form (Safe and Drug-Free)
- Free & Reduced Application (for non-community eligibility provision – CEP)
- Attendance and State Tests

Accessing Student Grades and Information Online: The Infinite Campus Portal

MCSD uses the “Infinite Campus Portal” System to electronically store and provide access to student information. Information on how to access this Portal (Infinite Campus Portal Guide) is available at:

<https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/forstudents/pages/infinite-campus-student-portal.aspx>

If you need help accessing the Portal please reach out to a teacher or building administrator. Teachers may also keep individual ‘class websites;’ all information about those will be provided directly by teachers.

Enrollment and Attendance Procedures

NOTE TO PARENTS: Data indicate that missing more than five days of school each year, regardless of the cause, begins to impact student academic performance and starts shaping attitudes about school. Chronically truant students are not the only students negatively impacted by absences for students in the 6th grade through the 9th grade, student attendance is a better predictor of dropping out of school than test scores. This predictor is not limited to chronically truant students. Excused absences and unexcused absences have similar impact on student academic performance.

While absenteeism is more widespread in middle and high school, it still affects vast numbers of younger students. – Data shows that standardized test scores are

significantly affected by elementary students' attendance patterns, to the point that the number of absences is related to the student's chances of "passing" the Georgia Milestone.

Elementary students' school attendance habits often carry over into middle and high school.

Students are eligible for enrollment in the appropriate general education program, if they have reached the age of five (5) by September 1 and have not reached the age of twenty-one (21) by September 1 or received a high school diploma or equivalent. Students with Individualized Education Plans may be eligible for enrollment until they reach the age of twenty-two (22).

The Compulsory Attendance Law O.C.G.A. §20-2-690.1 continues to be in effect for the current academic year, which pertains to every school district in Georgia. The Compulsory Attendance Law states "children between their sixth and sixteenth birthday shall enroll and attend a public school, a private school, or a home study program". If a child is under 6 years of age and has attended more than 20 days in a public school, he/she is then subject to this law. The law also provides "penalties for parent(s), guardian(s), or other person residing in Georgia who are in violation of O.C.G.A §20-2-690.1; which are imposed at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction". Each day's violation of this law, after the School District has notified the parent, guardian, or other person in charge of a child having five unexcused absences from school, shall constitute a separate offense subjecting the person notified to the following measures:

1. Fine of not less than \$25 and not greater than \$100
2. Imprisonment not to exceed 30 days
3. Community service
4. Any combination of the above penalties

Absences

Students may be absent from school only fifteen (15) days per school year.

Excused Absences and Makeup Work

Students may be temporarily excused from school (1) who are personally ill and whose attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others; (2) in whose immediate family there is a serious illness or death which would reasonably necessitate absence from school; (3) on special and recognized religious holidays observed by their faith; (4) when mandated by order of governmental agencies (e.g. court order), or (5) upon principal's approval based on the merit of the request in advance.

Students will be deemed excused for any other absence not explicitly defined here but deemed by the local school board of education to have merit based on circumstances.

Students may be excused from school attendance when prevented from such attendance due to conditions rendering school attendance impossible or hazardous to their health or safety.

Students who are at least 12 years of age and are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly shall be credited as present by the school in which they are enrolled for days missed from school for this purpose.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences to include from failure to attend school for reasons other than those specifically excused by the administration. Unexcused absences shall include but not be limited to the following: (1) oversleeping; (2) missing the bus; (3) baby-sitting; (4) family vacation; (5) skipping school and cutting classes.

HB 984 – Absences Related to Military Parents

Excused absences for students to visit with parents preparing for deployment on leave from such duty will be granted. A maximum of five (5) excused days per year are permitted.

Procedures Related to Excessive Absences

1. For Students Under the Age of 16

Step One: Parent receives notification of the Compulsory School Attendance Law at the beginning of school. Signatures of parents and students are kept at the school for one year.

Step Two: Student's attendance is recorded daily.

Step Three: After three (3) unexcused absences, the school sends a letter to the parent notifying them of the unexcused absences. Students with 3 unexcused absences shall be referred to the school counselor or attendance designee for remediation. This process may include a conference with the student and/or their parent, legal guardian, or other person having charge. The student's attendance is monitored by the Attendance Team.

Step Four: A referral to the School Social Worker is initiated after five (5) unexcused absences. The School Social Worker sends a letter to the parent. In some cases, a "Request for Services" form may be required to address non-attendance related issues.

Step Five: After seven (7) unexcused absences, the School Social Worker may send a letter and/or initiate phone contact with the parent. Conferences may occur with students to discuss absences.

Step Six: At nine (9) unexcused absences, The School Social Worker schedules a conference with the parent or legal guardian to complete an Attendance Agreement.

Step Seven: If the attendance concerns are not resolved, the School Social Worker sends a certified letter of intent to pursue legal actions or referral to Muscogee County Attendance Panel to the parent and/or student.

Step Eight: The School Social Worker shall monitor the daily attendance of students declared "habitually truant." When the student's unexcused absences increase by at least two (2) or exceed fifteen (15) days, a truancy petition may be filed in the Court having jurisdiction or referred to Muscogee County Attendance Panel.

2. For Students 16 years of Age and Older

Step One: Parent receives notification of attendance law at the beginning of school. Signatures of parents and students are kept on file at the school for one year.

Step Two: After three (3) unexcused, excused and/or Out of School Suspension (OSS) absences, the school sends a letter to the parent notifying them of the absences.

Step Three: A referral to the School Social Worker is initiated after five (5) unexcused, excused, and/or OSS absences. The School Social Worker sends a letter to the parent and may request a parent conference. Attendance concerns are discussed and an Attendance Agreement may be initiated at that time.

Step Four: At seven (7) absences, the student/parent will confer with the Principal or Assistant Principal regarding potential consequences.

Potential consequences for excessive unexcused, excused, and/or OSS absences for students 16 years or older include:

- Loss of credit (Students are allowed 15 days of unexcused absences)
- Students may be withdrawn after being absent from school for 10 consecutive unexcused days

Withdrawal Procedures for Students 16 years of age and older, where students have accrued 10 or more consecutive days of unexcused absences:

School administrators shall document a minimum of three (3) attempts to contact a parent, guardian, or other person for the purpose of holding an attendance withdrawal conference prior to withdrawing a student.

MCSD procedure requires that where a parent or guardian seeks to withdraw his or her child from school, the parent or guardian must fill out a written withdrawal form; where the student being withdrawn is over 16, parents/guardians seeking to withdraw are also asked to confer with the school's Principal prior to withdrawing the student.

Checking a Student In or Out During the School Day

Students arriving at school during the school day must be 'checked in' to school. 'Check In' procedures are available in each school's handbook.

Students cannot be checked out during the last thirty (30) minutes of the school day.

Individual students who have emergencies necessitating their absence from school for a portion of the school day must have been present for the majority of the school day in order to be included in the average daily attendance count.

Students Who are Late to School: Tardiness

Definitions:

Tardy to School – Student who arrive after the school start time designated by the Board of Education and listed at page 3 of this Code of Conduct booklet are tardy. Any student who is on school property but is not in his or her assigned classroom or other authorized area following the designated start of the class time will be considered tardy.

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

Unexcused Tardies – Students accumulating three (3) days of unexcused tardies will receive a phone call from the teacher or office staff/automated calling system to the parent.

Continued Tardies – Students accumulating five (5) tardies will be referred to the Principal

or the Principal's designee for being tardy requires a mandatory parent conference and counselor referral. Consequences may include detention, in-school suspension, Friday or Saturday school, Muscogee County Attendance Panel referral or other actions in accordance with local school system policy.

Ten or More Days Tardy – Referral to the School Social Worker and to support agencies outside the school system, as the Principal deems appropriate. Among these agencies are the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS), law enforcement, Juvenile Court, Family Connection, or other external agencies.

Elementary School Tardy Procedure

The parent, guardian, or other responsible individual must report to the front office to check in his or her child when arriving to school after the tardy bell.

NOTE - Park in designated spots in order to not to impede the normal traffic flow or emergency vehicles.

Withdrawal From School

Georgia law does not recognize withdrawal from school as an appropriate disciplinary consequence. Withdrawal from school will not be offered or suggested by school administrators as a consequence for inappropriate behavior or as an alternative to a disciplinary action.

SENATE BILL 413 – Withdrawal of Unemancipated Minor

Students between the ages of 16 and 18 (unemancipated minors) must have parental permission to withdraw from school prior to earning a diploma.

The Principal must convene a conference with the parent of child within two (2) days of receiving notice of intent to withdraw.

Course Credits and Unexcused Absences

Credit for Classes

The school year is the equivalent of 180 days. A student in any Muscogee County school who misses more than fifteen (15) days in any class shall not receive credit. High school students may only be absent seven (7) times from a particular class per semester.

If a student's unexcused and excused absences exceed the numbers listed above in a particular class, then the student may lose credit for that class. When determining loss of credit, absences are counted whether excused or unexcused.

The parent or guardian may appeal a decision to withhold credit for an individual student based on excessive absences. Appeals must be made to the Principal in writing within two (2) weeks on the basis of hardship, extenuating circumstances or other extreme emergencies. If the appeal is denied by the Principal, a request in writing may be sent to the Superintendent or his/her designated assistant within five (5) school days for an informal review and hearing.

Students whose absences are caused by a disability or medical condition may and should seek assistance in dealing with absences from the Principal or Case Manager as early as possible and are encouraged to discuss absences with personnel at the school level.

Teenager and Adult Drivers' Responsibility Act (TAADRA)

Students who are under the age of 18 and seek a drivers' license or permit must first obtain a Certificate of School Enrollment form from the MCSD pursuant to state law. State law allows licenses or permits to be issued only to students who are enrolled in and not under expulsion from a public or private school. The Certificate of School Enrollment form satisfies this requirement. The new Certificate of Enrollment form is posted on the GaDOE website: www.dds.ga.gov/doc/forms/ds-1.pdf.

Confiscated Electronic Devices – How to Pick Up

MCSD personnel are authorized to confiscate a cell phone or any other technology device from a student. School administrators may exercise discretion to deny student use of electronic devices and impose reasonable consequences for such.

MCSD personnel will act reasonably to maintain the security of a phone or device once confiscated, and are not responsible for any unintentional loss or damage to confiscated items.

Parent/guardian may pick up device at the close of the school day during the 30 minutes prior to the last bell.

Parent/guardian may give an adult written permission to pick up the device during the same 30 minute time frames above. (Schools may verify by asking for identification of the adult picking up the device)

Valuables at School

MCSD personnel cannot search for personal items lost or misplaced while at school. MCSD personnel will not be responsible for the value of an item in the event of an unintentional damage, loss or theft while at school. Parents – please consider this carefully when sending items to school with your child / children.

Athletics and Extracurricular Activities

Outside of the regular school day, MCSD students have many opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities. Through extracurricular activities, students experience success both in and out of the classroom. Such activities may include athletics, academic competitions, before and after-school clubs, as well as various fine arts programs. **Parents – the law allows a wide variety of clubs, including clubs that address age-appropriate lesbian/gay/bisexual issues. We want all parents to be comfortable with what their child(ren) are doing while at school. Please know that you may restrict your child from participating in any club by filling out the "Opt-out" form provided to you by the Principal in the form packet at the beginning of the school year.**

For a number of reasons, students are encouraged to participate in one or more extracurricular activity while in high school. For one, students who are involved are more connected to their school. For another, extracurricular competitions allow students to represent their school and earn recognition for their achievements. Extracurricular activities offer students a chance to learn something new or learn more about something that interests them, to develop a talent, or perform with their peers. Extracurricular activities also give students an opportunity to develop and demonstrate leadership.

Eligibility for Competition

The governing body for all competitive interscholastic teams is the Georgia High School Association (GHSAA). The GHSAA sets the following guidelines:

Eligibility:

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

***Note: Students establishing eligibility as entering 9th graders are automatically eligible for the first semester.

Limits of Participation:

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

Age Restriction:

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

Academic Standing:

Students must accumulate units toward graduation according to the following criteria: First-year students (freshmen entering 9th grade) are eligible academically. Second semester first-year students must have passed courses carrying at least 2.5 units the previous semester in order to participate.

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

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

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

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

Notice to Students

Federal and state law prohibits discrimination based on gender in athletic programs of local school systems. This notifies you that the MCSDD does not discriminate on the basis of gender in its athletic programs. If you have an inquiry or complaint concerning sports equity in this school system, you may contact the Sports Equity/Title IX Coordinator by writing or calling:

Jeffrey Battles
Sports Equity/Title IX Coordinator
Muscogee County School District
2960 Macon Road
Columbus, GA 31906
706-748-2595

II. Behavior Expectations and Procedures:

Authority of School Leadership

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

It is the policy of the Muscogee County Board of Education that each school within this school district shall develop and implement age-appropriate student codes of conduct designed to improve the student learning environment.

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

Introduction to Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

PBIS is an evidence-based set of practices to manage behavior that is proactive, positive and preventative. This framework helps schools design effective environments and supports that, when implemented with fidelity, increase teaching and learning opportunities for all students. MCS D is dedicated to implementing PBIS in every school, but is in the beginning stages of this implementation. Each year approximately ten schools will begin the process of developing PBIS. It takes at least 3-5 years from the beginning of implementation for a school to develop a full framework. As of January 2016, Double Churches Middle School is the only "operational" PBIS School in Muscogee County. If your child(ren)'s school is in the process of building a 'PBIS' framework, you may request detailed information about what that means for the handling of discipline events at your school. Please note that the Code of Conduct applies to every student enrolled in MCS D, regardless of the school's PBIS status.

While a Student is Suspended or Expelled:

Definitions: Detention, Suspension, Expulsion

Detention: A specific period of time before or after school where students are required to remain at school as a consequence for misbehavior. Transportation is the responsibility of the student and/or parents. Detention is not considered a suspension.

Expulsion: The student is not allowed to enroll in or attend a public school beyond the current school semester or year. To expel a student, the Principal must submit a written recommendation to the Superintendent of Education who will provide for a hearing which will ensure procedural and substantive due process.

In-School Suspension: A period of time during the regularly scheduled school day where a student is assigned to a specific classroom as a consequence for misbehavior. In-School Suspension removes the student from the regular classroom. Students assigned to serve In-School Suspension will be with a teacher or District employee at all times. The student will work on assignments from his or her regular classes.

Short-Term Suspension: A student is prohibited from attending school for a period of ten (10) days or less. The Board supports leaving the authority and responsibility to administer suspension to the Principal.

Long-Term Suspension: A student is barred from attending a public school for more than ten (10) school days but not beyond the current school semester or year. For periods of suspension longer than ten (10) school days the Principal must submit a written recommendation to the Superintendent of Education who will provide for a hearing which will ensure procedural and substantive due process.

Students may not attend or participate in any school function and may not be on the any MCSD property or event while suspended out-of-school or assigned to the Alternative School.

Enrollment of Students Suspended from Other Systems

Students suspended from other school systems will be required to complete their assigned suspension prior to attending regular classes. Students may complete their suspension as assigned at the Alternative School, In-School Suspension or Out-of-School Suspension.

Attendance at School Events While Suspended

Students that are assigned In-School Suspension, Out-Of-School Suspension, Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion from school may not attend or participate in any school functions on the day of the infraction or the days of suspension until the assigned suspension is complete. Students assigned Out-Of-School Suspension, Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion from school may not be on any MCSD Property without the Principal's permission.

Eligibility While Suspended

Students assigned to the Alternative School, In-School Suspension, Out-Of-School Suspension, or Expulsion for disciplinary reasons lose their eligibility to participate in any before/after school-related activities on the day(s) of suspension. Additionally, students are considered suspended on the day of the infraction until the assigned suspension is complete. An assigned disciplinary suspension is considered to have ended when the student returns to the regular class setting on the next regular school day. Students whose suspensions end on Friday will regain eligibility on the following Monday.

Student Discipline Tribunal Hearing and Appeal Procedures:

Where a student is accused of violation of the MCSD Code of Conduct, and where the Principal seeks to impose punishment of a suspension or expulsion of longer than ten (10) school days, the student must be offered a hearing before an impartial panel of educators [Student Discipline Tribunal Panel].

Where a student is accused of assault or battery on a teacher or school district employee, that employee can require that the student appear before the Tribunal Panel.

The MCSD Panel is made up of between three (3) and five (5) members, and these members are appointed by the Board of Education and serve at its pleasure.

Filing of Tribunal Referral

A tribunal referral specifying the disciplinary infraction shall originate the action of the Tribunal and shall be filed by the Principal or his/her designee.

In addition to such a referral by the Principal, the teacher, other school official, employee or student who has been subjected to an assault or battery, or where property is damaged, can file a complaint with the School Administration and with the Board of Education, and this complaint shall also originate action by the Discipline Tribunal. Note that failure to file such complaint shall not prevent the tribunal from taking action to hold a hearing.

Hearing

Notice: Reasonable notice of the hearing shall be given all parties, including the parent or guardian of the student, either personally or by mail.

Evidence: All parties will be afforded an opportunity to present and respond to evidence and to examine and cross examine witnesses on all issues unresolved. Parents and students: if you plan to bring an attorney, please reach out to that person early enough to ensure they can attend the scheduled date and time of the hearing.

Record: A verbatim electronic or a written record of the hearing shall be made available upon request to all parties.

Decision: The decision of the Tribunal shall be based solely upon the evidence received. The decision shall be based solely on the record and shall be given to all parties within ten (10) days of the close of the record. Such decision shall be final unless appealed.

Appeal: Any decision by the Tribunal may be appealed to the Board of Education by filing a written notice of appeal within twenty (20) days from the date the decision is rendered. This right of appeal shall apply to the parents or guardian of the child.

Review by the Board

On Appeal: Where a parent / student appeals the decision of the Tribunal, the Board of Education shall review the record and shall render a decision in writing based solely upon the record. **Note: The student must serve any punishment rendered while the appeal is pending.**

Public Meeting and Record

Hearings related to student discipline matters, both by the Tribunal and the Board of Education, shall be closed to the press and other media and to the general public.

Waiver of Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing

Students / Parents/Guardians may waive their right to a hearing by signing a waiver form to forego the hearing and accept the agreed upon consequences. Parents/guardians who sign a waiver are also waiving their right to an appeal. **Parents are required to read the waiver form before signing.**

When MCSD Rules Apply / The Jurisdiction of the MCSD:

The MCSD Code of Conduct applies while students are at school, while students are on any school district property, and while students are on the way to or from school, from the time the student leaves home to go to school until he/she returns home from school.

The Code of Conduct also applies:

- off school grounds at any school-related activity or field trip;
- while traveling to and from school-related events;
- on school buses or other MCSD-provided transportation, and
- at school bus stops.

Student behavior at athletic and / or extracurricular events is subject to the provisions of this Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct also governs student behavior on any school-related or school-sponsored trip. A school-sponsored trip is defined as any off-campus experience whereby one or more students, under the supervision of school personnel, represent the school in some capacity. The trip begins upon arrival at school and concludes upon return to school and dismissal from campus.

Due Process

Prior to being punished, students are entitled to be told why they are being punished and to respond with a brief statement of explanation. If the student is found to be in violation of the Code of Conduct, the Administrator will determine the appropriate intervention and/or consequence using the Code of Conduct as a guideline. School officials may involve law enforcement officials when evidence surrounding a situation necessitates their involvement or when there is a legal requirement that an incident be reported. In cases where criminal charges could result, parents will be notified at the onset of the investigation.

Chronic Disciplinary Problem Students

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

Procedures Specific to Chronic Disciplinary Problem Students

Any time a teacher or Principal identifies a student as a chronic disciplinary problem student, the Principal shall notify the parent/guardian of the disciplinary problem, invite such parent or guardian to observe the student in a classroom situation when possible, and request

at least one parent or guardian to attend a conference with the Principal or the teacher or both to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan.

The plan should include the consolidated ideas from the Principal and parent/guardian to keep the child in the current school. Also, the plan must address the consequences for the child's inappropriate behavior and steps to prevent reoccurrences.

Procedures after Suspension or Expulsion of a Chronic Disciplinary Problem Student

Before any chronic disciplinary problem student is permitted to return from an expulsion or suspension, the school to which the student is to be readmitted shall request by telephone call and by mail the following: at least one parent or guardian to attend a conference with the Principal to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan. Failure of the parent or guardian to attend shall not preclude the student from being readmitted to the school. At the discretion of the Principal, a teacher, counselor, or other person may attend the conference. The Principal shall ensure that a notation of the conference be placed in the student's permanent file.

Bus Behavior Expectations & Safety Requirements for All Students

The walking distance to schools shall be one and one-half miles. The walking distance to a bus stop shall not exceed one-half mile.

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

Students should keep their bus pass with them at all times in case the driver needs to check eligibility.

To provide for a safe and comfortable trip to and from school, students are expected to observe the following rules:

1. At the Bus Stop

- Remember that school rules apply at the bus stop. For example, fighting or physical play, use or possession of tobacco, drugs, and alcohol are prohibited.
 - Use profane or vulgar language while waiting for the bus is prohibited.
- Stand off the roadway while awaiting the bus.

2. When the Bus Arrives

- Students shall be prohibited from using any electronic devices while entering the school bus.

3. On the Bus

- Remember that school rules apply to the school bus. For example, fighting or physical play, use or possession of tobacco, drugs, and alcohol are prohibited.
 - **REMAIN SEATED WHILE BUS IS IN MOTION.**
 - Make an effort to sit three to a seat.
 - Keep arms, head and objects inside windows.
 - Use of profane or vulgar language while waiting for the bus is prohibited. **ABSOLUTE SILENCE** is required at railroad crossings.
 - No eating or drinking allowed.
 - Students may transport band instrument(s) on the bus, if space is available.
- Using mirrors, lasers, cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices or electronic devices that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus is prohibited.

4. Exiting the Bus

- Exit at your designated bus stop.
- Students shall be prohibited from using any electronic devices while exiting the school bus.
- When crossing street is necessary, students will immediately cross in front of the bus in full view of the driver.

Punishment for violation of any of the above rules may result in your student being removed from the bus utilizing the following progressive plan. Any student found guilty of student endangerment may result in automatic removal from the bus. **Riding the bus is a privilege not a right. Do not abuse your privilege.**

Drivers are in charge of the bus, and may assign seats to students. Many school buses are monitored by surveillance cameras.

Emergency Evacuation of School Buses

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

Front Door Evacuation

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

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

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

Rear Door Evacuation

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

Front and Rear Exit Evacuation

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

The rear portion of the bus will evacuate by the same procedure as the rear door evacuation.

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

Consequences for Bus Violations include, but are not limited to:

The driver is in full charge of the bus and students and will initially work with parents to resolve minor incidents.

1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense	5th Offense
Parent contact	Parent conference	Parent conference	Parent conference required	Parent conference required
Student conference	Student Bus Behavior Contract is conducted through a scheduled meeting with the parent and Other essential personnel	Modify Student Bus Behavior Contract conducted through a scheduled meeting with the parent and Other essential personnel	Modify Student Bus Behavior Contract conducted through a scheduled meeting with the parent and Other essential personnel	Modify Student Bus Behavior Contract conducted through a scheduled meeting with the parent and Other essential personnel
Seat change on bus	Bus Suspension (0 to 3 days)*	Bus Suspension (0 to 5 days)*	Bus Suspension (0 to 10 days)*	Bus Suspension (Remainder of the Semester)*
	<i>*Based on discretion of the Principal</i>	<i>*Based on discretion of the Principal</i>	<i>*Based on discretion of the Principal</i>	<i>*Based on discretion of the Principal</i>
Appropriate Action Required Additional Bus or School Suspension Commensurate with Offense Implement Code of Conduct as Appropriate				

Expectations Regarding Electronic Devices at School

Electronic Device Expectations for All Students

During classroom instructional time, students are permitted to use personal electronic communication devices only as requested/required by an instructor, and only for academic purposes.

Students may have an electronic communication device, but it is not to be visible on the person, or powered on during school hours unless permitted by a school administrator.

The Muscogee County School District will provide parents or guardians and their children access to a telephone line for communication in the Guidance/Main Office. It is the sense of the Board of Education that every effort is made to support and facilitate such parent/child communication.

MCS D personnel may confiscate a cell phone or other technology device in accordance with its policies and procedures.

MCS D personnel are not expected to search for items that students have lost after they elect to bring them to school and personnel will not be responsible for the value of a phone or other device in the event of an unintentional damage, loss or theft of the phone or device. Parents should consider this carefully when sending devices to school with their child/ren. School administrators may exercise discretion to deny student use of electronic devices.

Corporal Punishment is Prohibited

The Muscogee County Board of Education prohibits the use of corporal punishment by its employees.

Corporal punishment is the infliction of physical pain as a form of punishment for wrongdoing.

Use of Reasonable Physical Force or Reasonable Physical Contact

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

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

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

Return to School After Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion

Student (and parent/guardian) must report to the Chief Student Services Officer for a return to school conference. After receiving a school assignment, students (and parent/guardian) must then report to the Principal to receive a permit to return to class.

The Principal shall schedule a conference to be attended by the student, the student's parent/guardian, and the school personnel involved in the case. Failure or refusal on the part of the student's parent/guardian to appear for the scheduled conference may result in the Principal making a recommendation to the Superintendent for another period of suspension.

Alternative Education - Achievement, Integrity, Maturity (A.I.M.) Program at the Edgewood Student Services Center

The AIM Center serves students in grades 3 – 12 who are disruptive behavior problems or have violated school policies.

III. Student Health

Medicine at School

Students who need to bring medications, either prescription or non-prescription, onto school district property, must comply with MCSD Board Policy JGCD, which is available at the MCSD website.

Note that parents must complete a Medication Registration form annually, or whenever medication is prescribed or changed, in order to allow the student to take or be administered medications while at school. Controlled substance medications will be counted upon receipt.

Students may carry and self-administer emergency medications (auto-injectable epinephrine, albuterol, etc.) and insulin / diabetes supplies, so long as relevant paperwork is on file with the school. All other medications must be delivered to the designated staff member in original, properly labeled containers.

Students with Severe Food or Other Allergies

The district works to accommodate students with severe allergies. We rely on parents and students to provide accurate and updated information about a student's allergy(ies), their impact, and what to do to avoid an exposure or address an exposure. The school district allows Epi-pens and other allergy medications, but asks that parents share information with the district about their child's allergy (ies) and medications. Please provide information about your child's allergies to the Principals or building administrator as early as possible, so that appropriate steps can be taken.

Serious Infectious Illnesses

Any student who has a communicable disease that poses a substantial threat to the health or safety of the school community may be removed from the school by the Principal on the approval of the superintendent until such student no longer poses such a threat. MCSD works with the local health department and the student's health care provider and follows their guidance and recommendations regarding exclusion and re-entry for communicable diseases that are considered a threat to the safety of the school and community. Additional information is available at MCSD Board Policy JGCC.

Immunization

No child shall be admitted to or attend any MCSD school or facility unless the child shall first have submitted a certificate of immunization (GA form 3231- www.gadoe.org) to the responsible official of the school or facility.

Head Lice

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

Fever

If a student has a fever of over 100.4 degrees, that student should not come to school or to a school function unless/ until he or she has been fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications. Students with fever of over 100.4 or other symptoms of a contagious disease may be asked to go home.

Communicable Condition

When it is discovered that a student exhibits symptoms consistent with a possible communicable illness, the principal, or his designee, should immediately notify the parent/guardian and request the child be picked up and taken to the primary care provider for evaluation. The condition must be verified by the doctor and treated, if needed, before the child may return to school. The child will be given an exclusion form and the physician must sign it upon examination. This form needs to be returned to the school upon return.

Students who are Hospitalized or Homebound

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

The school will provide the parent with a Hospital/Homebound Referral Form to be completed and signed by a physician indicating that the student is unable to attend school. The form is returned to the school and then submitted to Student Services or the parent/guardian may bring the completed form to the Muscogee County Public Education Center, Mr. Marcus DuBose, 706-748-3271.

Optional Student Accident Insurance Available

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

It is the responsibility of parents or guardians to make sure their children are covered by medical insurance. In additions, it is School Board Policy that all high school football participants must subscribe to a football plan if the parents or guardians do not have coverage of their own for the student/player.

As a convenience to you, the school district has provided a resource page listing available student insurance vendors. This can be found on our parent tab available for purchase. If you do not have other insurance, these plans may be a resource to consider.

For more information contact Tracy L. Fox at 706-748-2380 or e-mail: Fox.Tracy.L@muscogee.k12.ga.us.

IV. Where to Go for Help

McKinney-Vento Students:

Students experiencing homelessness are protected by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

The MCSD is committed to assisting students who qualify as McKinney-Vento Students. Please contact your School Counselor or Principal at your school or the McKinney-Vento Department at the Muscogee County Public Education Center.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act identifies students experiencing homelessness as those who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence.

This includes children and youth who:

- Share the housing of other persons due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons and live in hotels, motels, camping grounds, emergency or transitional shelters, cars, parks, and public places.
- Transitional students shall have "equal access" to the same education as other students.
- School assignments are made based on the "best interest" of the student.
- Students in transition are to be "immediately enrolled" even if medical, academic or residence records are not available.
- The "notice of the educational rights" of homeless/transitional students is disseminated in schools, shelters, community agencies and the parent or guardian is fully informed of all services provided.
- Unaccompanied youth (emancipated) includes youth in a homeless situation who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian
- For more information, see Board Policy JBC(1)

Helpful Resources Outside the MCSD:

- **United Way of Chattahoochee Valley CONTACT 2-1-1: Dial 2-1-1 or 706-405-4775**

CONTACT 2-1-1 is an information and referral line program. CONTACT 2-1-1 callers can speak to a certified specialist that will link them to local community resources such as food, shelter, counseling, employment assistance, quality child care and much more.

Residents can also search the comprehensive database online at www.211uwc.org. The program provides online and telephone access 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, and is confidential, free, and available in multiple languages.

- For help with suicidal thoughts or depression:
 - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255**
 - Boystown National Hotline: 1-800-448-3000**
 - TDD: 1-800-448-1833**
 - NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Georgia**
 - Crisis Line: 1-800-715-4225**
 - NAMI – Columbus, Georgia**
 - PO Box 8581 Columbus, Georgia 31908**
 - (706) 320-3755**
- **Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS)**
 - Dfcs.dhs.georgia.gov**
 - (706) 649-7311 (Columbus)**
 - (800) 436-7442 (Atlanta)**
- **Human Sex Trafficking (Georgia):**
 - Children Treehouse**
 - A program of Twin Cedars Youth and Family Services, Inc.**
 - 18 9th Street, Suite 102**
 - Columbus, GA 31**
 - 706-327-9612**
- For free help with homework: <http://cvlga.org/kids/homework>;
Click on "brainfuse"

MCS D Prohibits Harassment and Discrimination

Harassment:

1. Muscogee County School District (MCS D) does not tolerate harassment on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation/ gender identity and/or age. MCS D is committed to taking immediate action to eliminate harassment, address its effects, and prevent its recurrence.
2. Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment on the basis of disability or sex is encouraged to report the offense to the building administrator. Complaints may also be made to the District's Compliance Coordinators.
3. Students and/ or employees found to have engaged in acts of harassment on the basis of race, disability, sex, national origin, religion, sexual orientation/ gender identity, color and/or age, will be promptly disciplined. Such discipline may include, if circumstances warrant, suspension or expulsion for students or suspension or termination for employees.
4. MCS D strongly encourages students, parents, and district staff to work together to prevent harassment or discrimination for any reason.

Discrimination:

1. MCS D supports the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
2. MCS D does not discriminate against others based on sex, race, color, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation/ gender identity and/or age.
3. MCS D does not condone the discrimination or harassment of students or employees on any of the aforementioned basis.
4. MCS D does not discriminate in the admission or access to, or treatment of employment, in its programs or activities.
5. MCS D has designated the following individuals to coordinate its efforts with and carry out its responsibilities under these laws, including any investigations of complaints alleging noncompliance.

Complaints by Students about Students:

Melvin F. Blackwell
Chief of Student Services
Coordinator of Compliance
2960 Macon Road
Columbus, Georgia 31906
(706) 748-3336
Blackwell.Melvin@Muscogee.k12.ga.us

Complaints by Anyone about MCS D Personnel:

Kathy Tessin
Chief of Human Resources
Coordinator of Compliance
2960 Macon Road
Columbus, Georgia 31906
(706) 748- 2011
Tessin.Kathy.A@Muscogee.k12.ga.us

Discrimination/Harassment and Appeal Procedures:

How to Make a Complaint and How to Appeal a Decision.....

This Procedure applies to Student Complaints of Harassment or Discrimination on the basis of disability, race, sexual orientation/gender identity, color, national origin, age, religion, or sex; it governs:

Complaints of discrimination and harassment by students under Section 504, Title II, Title VI, and Title IX.

Complaints against school district personnel alleging harassment or discrimination on the basis of disability, race, gender, color, national origin, age, religion, or sex are governed by the MCSD Board Policies GAE and GAEB. Both policies are available at the MCSD website or upon request. Please see also the "PSC Reporting Requirements" below.

This procedure applies where a student:

- Alleges harassment or discrimination on the basis of disability, race, sexual orientation/gender identity, color, national origin, age, religion, or sex;
- Alleges retaliation or harassment after filing a grievance or participating in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing regarding a charge of discrimination.

Harassment and discrimination on the bases listed above are expressly prohibited. MCSD also prohibits retaliation.

MCSD will correct its discriminatory effects on the complainant and others, if appropriate, in the event that discrimination and/or harassment were determined to have occurred. MCSD will take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator or other school personnel who retaliates against any person who reports an incident of alleged sexual, racial, ethnic or disability related harassment or violence, or any person who testifies, assists or participates in a proceeding, investigation or hearing relating to such harassment or violence.

Complainants under this policy will be granted a prompt, impartial, and adequate investigation. Complainants, and accused, as provided herein, will be given written notification regarding the outcome of each investigation.

All appeals must be submitted within ten (10) school days after receipt of each finding.

1. Complaint Investigation and Resolution Process:

- A. Complaints under this policy will be made to the school Principal or building administrator; a list of each Principal's name and contact information is available on the MCSD website or can be obtained by calling Chief of Student Services / Coordinator of Compliance, Mr. Melvin F. Blackwell, at 706-748-3336.
- B. Upon receipt of allegations of harassment or discrimination on the bases listed herein, MCSD will conduct a prompt and equitable investigation into the reported

allegations. This investigation may consist of interviews with the complainant, the individual against whom the complaint is filed, and others who have knowledge of the alleged incident or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may also consist of the evaluation of any other information or documents which may be relevant to the particular allegations.

- C. MCSD encourages resolutions at the lowest level. Complaints must be filed with the Principal initially.

2. Investigation Procedures:

- a. The complainant and accused will be given the opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence. Students utilizing these procedures are entitled to be represented by an individual of their choice or by legal counsel where doing so does not conflict with any relevant confidentiality or privacy laws or principles.
- b. The MCSD may be represented by any of its employees and / or by legal counsel.
- c. The initial investigation shall be completed no later than five (5) school days from receipt of the report.
- d. The results of the Principal's investigation of each complaint filed under these procedures will be reported in writing to the complainant, the accused, and other parties as appropriate, and in accordance with state and federal laws regarding data or records privacy, and consistent with the privacy rights of all individuals involved.
- e. Nothing in this procedure extinguishes the obligation of a Principal (or designee) to report allegations of criminal activity to the police or allegations of neglect or abuse to the relevant authorities as required by law and in accord with MCSD Policy JGI.

3. Initial Appeal Procedure:

- a. If the student or parent wishes to appeal the Principal's written response, the student (or parent) can do so by submitting an appeal, in writing, to the Regional Zone Chief for the school's zone.
- b. Regional Zone Chief contact information is available in the Student Handbook or can be obtained from the school Principal or administrator;
- c. Appeals should be written and delivered to the Regional Zone Chief.
- d. The Regional Zone Chief shall initiate an investigation within 1-5 school days of receipt of an appeal.
- e. The Regional Zone Chief shall issue a written response to the accused student and / or parent within 1-10 school days of receipt of the appeal.

4. Secondary Appeal Procedure:

- A. If the student or parent wishes to appeal the Zone Chief's written response, the student (or parent) can do so by submitting an appeal, in writing, to the Chief of Student Services / Coordinator of Compliance, Mr. Melvin F. Blackwell:

**Chief of Students Services/ Coordinator of Compliance
Muscogee County School District
2960 Macon Road
Columbus, GA 31906
(706) 748-3336**

- B. Claim/Appeal forms are provided at the school upon request.
- C. The Compliance Coordinator or designee shall initiate an investigation within

1-5 school days of receipt of the appeal.

- D. The Compliance Coordinator or designee shall issue a written response to the student and / or parent no later than fifteen (15) school days from receipt of the appeal.

5. Appeal to Superintendent:

- A. If the student or parent wishes to appeal the Compliance Coordinator's written response, student (or parent) can do so by submitting an appeal, in writing, to the Superintendent for review.
- B. The Superintendent will conduct a timely review of the appeal and respond as appropriate.
- C. Within thirty (30) school days of receipt of the appeal, if the complaint is not otherwise resolved, the Superintendent shall present the matter to the Board of Education. With respect to a matter so presented, the Board shall review the original complaint, the response of the Chief Student Services Officer or Chief Human Resources Officer, the response of the Superintendent and the response of the complainant. In addition, the Board may, but is not required to, hear directly from any individuals with knowledge of any relevant facts relating to the complaint.
- D. The Board of Education will either uphold the recommendation of the Superintendent or make an alternate recommendation. A copy of the action of the Board will be furnished to the complainant, either as part of the minutes of the Board of Education or as a separate written statement. The Board shall be the final reviewing authority within the System. The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected consistent with the Board's legal obligations, and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and take corrective action where appropriate.

Student Reporting of Acts of Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct by a School District Employee (PSC Mandated Procedure):

- A. Any student who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school.
- B. Any teacher, counselor or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school principal or principal's designee, and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school principal or principal's designee within 24 hours. If the principal is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee.
- C. Any school Principal or Principal's designee receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 shall make an oral report immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report in writing, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing

protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.

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

Bullying Information:

MCSD does not tolerate bullying, and strives to maintain a positive learning atmosphere. Students who experience bullying are encouraged to report and share information with any school district personnel. In the event you see or hear about bullying, please let someone at the school know.

Additional reporting resources:

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

How to Make a Silent Report:

The district encourages reporting of bullying behaviors by students, and will strive to maintain the confidentiality of reporters wherever possible and appropriate. Parents and students, please report bullying or harassing behaviors to any adult at the school.

Students who want to make a report of bullying behavior in writing, may obtain and fill out a "Silent Report" form. These forms are available in the offices of school counselors and school administrative offices.

V. Students with Disabilities

Message to Parents:

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

At MCSD, students with disabilities are provided a free, appropriate education in schools where placement and service decisions are made based on the individual needs of the student, in the least restrictive environment and in accordance with the guiding principles of the applicable laws.

Special Education Child Find

What is Child Find? "Child find" refers to the process of locating, identifying, and evaluating children with disabilities to ensure that they receive services to which they are entitled. Children and youth, age birth to 21, living in the Muscogee County School District attendance zone, who are suspected of having a disability, may be referred for a possible evaluation to determine if they are eligible for special education services.

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

School age children and youth: If you have a child who is already enrolled in a Muscogee County school and may be in need of special education services, please contact the school and express your concern to your child's teacher or to the school administrator. If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact the Program for Exceptional Students at (706) 748-2230.

Transfer students: If a child is transferring into the Muscogee County School District and has received special education services in another district, please visit the Program for Exceptional Students in the Muscogee County Public Education Center at 2960 Macon Road, Columbus, GA 31906 or call the Program for Exceptional Students at (706) 748-2230 for additional information.

Student Support Teams

A Student Support Team (SST) is a school-based, solution-focused team designed to support the learning or behavioral needs of regular education students. SST committees convene on a regular basis and can be initiated by parent, teacher, or other school related professional. SST chairs at each school are the contact persons for scheduling a student for the SST process; your teacher or Principal can help you set up an SST meeting.

Responses to Interventions – The RTI Process

RTI is a method and framework that schools use in order to determine how to step in when a student is struggling. RTI is a method that encourages teachers to start looking at students' skills in reading, writing and math early in the year. Teachers can provide targeted teaching—called interventions—to help struggling students catch up. A big part of the RTI process involves closely monitoring student progress. That way the school can see which kids need more academic support. RTI is not a 'roadblock' to special education services, and RTI and a referral for special education or a 504 meeting are not mutually exclusive.

Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as "Section 504," is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have access to educational opportunities and benefits.

Section 504 plans are available to students with a physical or mental impairment which impacts a major life activity (learning, self-help skills, walking, breathing, talking, etc.). A

504 Plan outlines reasonable accommodations, regular or special education, related aids and services to ensure the student's civil rights are being met.

For more information regarding Section 504, or if you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact your teacher or Principal, the 504 Chair at your school, or the local system's Section 504 Coordinator:

Karyn Leggett
Program for Exceptional Students
Muscogee County Public Education Center
2960 Macon Road
Columbus, GA 31906
(706) 748-2230
Leggett.Karyn.L@muscogee.k12.ga.us

Notice of Section 504 Procedural Safeguards and Parent / Student Rights

Any student or parent or guardian ("grievant") may request an impartial hearing due to the school district's actions or inactions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing must be in writing to the District 504 Coordinator of the MCSD (Karyn Leggett); however, a grievant's failure to request a hearing in writing does not alleviate the school district's obligation to provide an impartial hearing if the grievant orally requests an impartial hearing through the District 504 Coordinator.

The District 504 Coordinator will assist the grievant in completing the Request for Hearing as necessary. The District 504 Coordinator may be contacted at the information above. Copies of the 504 Procedural Safeguards and Notice of Rights of Students and Parents may be found at the district website or may be picked up at the school or central office (2960 Macon Road).

Students Eligible for Special Education Supports and Services under the Individuals with Disabilities Act / Students with IEPs

Parents and children have many rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This law provides that eligible students should receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). The term "appropriate" is based on the educational needs of the individual child. The Individuals with Disabilities Act provides that each public school child who receives special education and related services must have an IEP. The IEP outlines the needs and strengths of the individual student, and guides the delivery of special education supports and services for that student.

Parent Rights

It is the responsibility of the District to provide parents with notice of their rights under the IDEA. The MCSD's Parent Rights form is available at the MCSD website at:

<https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/AboutUS/AcademicsEnrichment/Pages/Exceptional.aspx>

Discipline for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities will be disciplined in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations. At times, discipline procedures for students with disabilities will be the same as the procedures implemented for students without disabilities, and, at times, the procedures implemented for students with disabilities will not be the same. A comprehensive discussion of those procedures and their legal underpinnings is outside the scope of this handbook. However, if you have questions about the disciplinary process related to a student with disabilities, and those questions cannot be answered at the school level, please contact the Regional Chief for the school provided in the District Phone Numbers chart on Page 8.

The information provided below is general, and is included here only to give parents and students general information.

Manifestation Determination Meetings

Within ten (10) school days of any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, the MCSD will notice and hold a Manifestation Determination Meeting (MDM). An MDM will include relevant members of the child's IEP Team. Parents will be given notice of the meeting and are encouraged to attend.

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

A decision will be made at the Manifestation Determination Meeting. After that meeting and decision, the parent can ask for a "decision review" by the Senior Regulatory Compliance Director, which will be a review of the relevant documents only - no new facts will be presented - or he or she may appeal by requesting a due process hearing. If a due process hearing request is filed, an expedited hearing must occur within twenty (20) school days.

Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavior Improvement Plans: FBAs and BIPs

FBAs and BIPs will likely also be part of the process where a student with a disability has violated the Code of Conduct and a change of placement is contemplated.

An FBA focuses on identifying the behaviors that are problematic, and the function or purpose behind a behavior. Typically, the process involves looking closely at a wide range of child-specific factors (e.g., social, affective, environmental). Knowing why a child misbehaves is directly helpful to the IEP Team in developing a BIP that will reduce or eliminate the misbehavior.

A BIP is a Plan that guides school district personnel in the handling of behaviors.

FBAs and BIPs are required when the LEA, the parent, and the relevant members of the child's IEP Team determine that a student's conduct was a manifestation of his or her disability.

If a child's misconduct has been found to have a direct and substantial relationship to his or her disability, the IEP Team will need to conduct an FBA of the child, unless one has already been conducted. Similarly, the IEP Team must write a BIP for this child, unless one already exists. If a BIP already exists, then the IEP Team will need to review the plan and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior.

Change in Placement

A change of placement in the context of a discipline event occurs if the removal from school is for more than (10) consecutive school days, or the child has been subjected to a series of removals from school that constitute a pattern.

VI. What Students and Parents Can Expect

Acceptable Uses of Technology at School or School Events

For purposes of this document, a user is anyone who is authorized to gain access to the MCSD Network, Internet, or Intranet. Unauthorized use or access is prohibited.

The Network is the connection between the WAN (Wide Area Network), the LANs (Local Area Networks) and the technology components at a school or building.

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

Internet: Only the internet gateway provided by the District may be accessed while on campus. Personal devices with internet connectivity, such as but not limited to, cell phones/cell network adapters, are not permitted to be actively used to access outside internet sources at any time.

Security and Damages

Personal Devices: responsibility to keep personal devices secure rests with the individual owner. MCSD is not liable for any personal device stolen or damaged on school district premises. If a device is stolen or damaged, it will be handled through the administrative office similar to other personal artifacts that are impacted in similar situations. It is recommended that skins (decals) and other custom touches be used to physically identify individually owned devices. Additionally, protective cases for technology are encouraged.

District Issued Devices for School Use: use of school computers is a privilege that is earned by abiding by the rules described in MCSD Student Behavior Code. Failure to use the computer properly and respectfully can result in the privilege being revoked and possible disciplinary action. The parent will be notified.

Student Responsible Use Agreement:

The use of technology to provide educational material is a necessity today. Computer use is no longer an option that students can opt out of but a necessity for our 21st Century

learning environments. Muscogee County uses a web-based learning management solution (LMS) that permits students to participate in an online learning environment in a format with which they are already familiar. Students log into the LMS with a district provided username and password so the activity can be monitored for safety and compliance. Students and parents will actively participate in the Responsible Use trainings at the start of school and agree to abide by the following acceptable use guidelines:

- Adhere to the Student Code of Conduct as well as all Board policies, particularly Internet Acceptable Use (Policy IFBG) and Internet Safety (Policy IFBGE).
- Take full responsibility of personal or district issued mobile devices and keep it with himself or herself at all times.
- Keep all devices in silent mode while on the school campuses and while riding school buses.
- Access the computer with the assigned student user name and password and use the device for instructional purposes only.
- Be respectful of others and never use the device to record, transmit or post photographic images or video of a person, or persons on campus or while attending school sponsored events unless it is a teacher requirement for a school assignment. Permission to photograph or video another person must be obtained even in the case of school assignments.
- Be respectful of other students' work and never copy, change, or remove another student's work from the device, the school network, the Internet, or any of the eLearning solutions used by MCSD.
- Make comments and discussion responses that are helpful and respectful and directly related to the purpose of the original post.
- Immediately inform a teacher or administrator whenever anything on the Internet is encountered or that may be inappropriate or a violation of school policies.
- As required by Children's Online Privacy Policy Agreement (COPPA), never share personal information (or another student's) online.
- Comply with teacher request to shut down the device, close the screen, or put away.
- Use the school's connection to the internet without bypassing it so that the content filters can be applied to the connected device.
- Take care of the equipment being careful not to bring on the premises any Virus, Trojan, or program designed to damage, alter, destroy, or provide access to unauthorized data, and/or to participate in acts of "hacking" or bypassing the network security.
- Submit the device to be examined any time it is suspected of causing problems or is the suspected source of an attack or virus infection.
- Back up files on personal media or One Drive accounts in the case of loss of data on the issued device.
- Ensure the device is fully charged prior to bringing it to school each day.
- Use the MCSD issued e-mail account responsibly adhering to all the guidelines in Board Policy IFBG.
- Report any damage or problems with the device to a teacher who will create a work order for the device to be checked by a MCSD technician only as per the Property and Risk Management protocol.
- Grant permission for student's photograph and publication of student work and name to be published on the school and/or district websites and released to local news agencies for publication concerning school/district events.

Sanctions for Misuse

Use of the Internet and any district issued or personally owned devices is contingent upon

compliance with state and federal laws, district regulations, and the user responsibilities outlined in this document.

- Violations may result in loss of some or all privileges.
- Specific disciplinary actions involving student misuse will be determined in accordance with Board of Education Policies and the Muscogee County School District Behavior Code.

Valuables at School

MCSD personnel cannot search for personal items lost or suspected stolen while at school. This specifically applies to electronics items brought by students to school.

MCSD personnel will not be responsible for the value of an item in the event of an unintentional damage, loss or theft while at school. Parents, please consider this carefully when sending items to school with your child / children.

Searches of Students or Property and Questioning of Student

School district personnel has the authority to question students when needed regarding discipline or other topics. School district personnel also have the authority to conduct searches of students in order to investigate and address student misconduct. Students may consent to a search. In order to conduct a search without consent, school officials must have "reasonable suspicion" that the search will reveal evidence that a particular student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school. The scope of the search and the measures used during the search will be reasonably related to the purpose of the search.

Searches of School Property

All lockers, desks, and any other school property available for student use belong to the school district and are therefore subject to search at any time.

Searches of Student Property

Bringing a vehicle to school or to a school event is a privilege. Where a student chooses to bring a vehicle to school or to a school event, the student has waived any expectation of privacy as related to the vehicle, and in bringing a vehicle to school or to a school event, the student and his or her parents/guardians acknowledge and agree that the vehicle is subject to search at any time.

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

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

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

Student Information and the Media

The MCSD does not authorize or permit media, organizations, groups, or businesses on or in its schools/facilities for video, recordings, or interviews etc. without those individuals first obtaining express written permission from MCSD/Communications Department. Requests, which include, but are not limited to interviews, photographs, television broadcasts, print, radio, videos and social media must be approved.

NOTE: From time to time, with the Superintendent's or Designee's prior approval, media representatives may be permitted for a brief/limited time to cover an activity or event that takes place on school district property or at a school. At these times, students' images or voices may be captured by the media.

At the beginning of each school year, parents are given a document called an AUP / Media Release form that discusses this. Parent(s) must complete the AUP/Media Release form indicating whether or not their child(ren) may be photographed, video-taped, interviewed, posted/published online or in promotional materials for school related academics, awards or sports events etc. If a parent(s) objects to the child being photographed, video-taped, or interviewed etc., the form must be marked 'no,' and returned to the school administrator within the first thirty 30 days after the student's school start date.

Demonstrations and Strikes

School officials have the power to control demonstrations, strikes and similar activities on a school campus.

Visitors to School

Visitors to the school must register at the school office as they enter the building. Visitors must also adhere to the guidelines set forth by the school and park in designated parking areas. All yellow curbed areas are reserved for emergency vehicles only. Visitors parking in these areas are subject to ticketing.

Dress Code

MCSD has a district-wide dress code that is enforced at each school. For specific information about the district-wide dress code, please review Rule 16 in the attached Code of Conduct. In addition to the district-wide dress code, Principals have authority and discretion to set school-specific dress codes and uniform codes at each school. In order to allow students time to obtain appropriate clothing, school-specific uniform codes are not enforced during the first five (5) school days that a student attends the school. If students or parents need assistance to comply with dress or uniform codes, please contact the Principal or designee.

VII. Code of Conduct:

The following rules apply from the time the student leaves home to go to school until s/he returns home, and any time a student is on school grounds. These rules also apply off school grounds while en route to or from any school activity, function, or event, en route to and from school and school functions, activities, or events, any time a student is on a school bus or any other transportation furnished by the school district. The school district also addresses certain off-campus misconduct as authorized by law; please see Rule 10.

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

<p>Rule 1 – Verbal Assault, Physical Assault, Disrespectful Conduct of Students</p> <p>Rule 2 – Alcohol, Narcotics, Stimulants, and Other Dangerous Drugs and Controlled Substances</p> <p>Rule 3 – Weapons and Dangerous Instruments</p> <p>Rule 4 – Bullying and Cyberbullying</p> <p>Rule 5 – Chronic Disciplinary Problem Students</p> <p>Rule 6 – Sexual Misconduct or Inappropriate Display of Affection</p> <p>Rule 7 – Gangs</p> <p>Rule 8 – Student Welfare – Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination Based on Sex, Race, Color, National Origin, Religion, Disability, Gender and/or Age</p> <p>Rule 9 – Disruption and Interference with School</p> <p>Rule 10 – Off-Campus misconduct</p>	<p>Rule 11 – Disregard of Directions or Commands</p> <p>Rule 12 – Bus Conduct</p> <p>Rule 13 – Tobacco Products in the Schools</p> <p>Rule 14 – Damage or Destruction or Theft of School Property</p> <p>Rule 15 – Damage or Destruction or Theft of Private Property</p> <p>Rule 16 – Dress and Grooming</p> <p>Rule 17 – Leaving School without Permission</p> <p>Rule 18 – Unexcused Absences</p> <p>Rule 19 – Trespassing on School Property is Prohibited</p> <p>Rule 20 – Incitement of Student</p> <p>Rule 21 – Falsifying Reports of Alleged inappropriate Behavior by a Teacher/School Personnel</p> <p>Rule 22 – Acts of Misconduct</p>
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Rule 1 – Verbal Assault, Physical Assault, Disrespectful Conduct of Students

The following conduct of students is prohibited:

- A. Verbal assault (including threats of violence) against teachers, administrators, and other school personnel;
- B. Physical assault or battery of teachers, administrators, and other school personnel;
- C. Disrespectful conduct (including the use of vulgar or profane language) toward teachers, administrators, and other school personnel;

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

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

A student found by a Disciplinary Hearing Officer, Panel, or Tribunal to have intentionally made physical contact which causes physical harm to (unless such physical contacts were in self-defense) a teacher, school bus driver, school official, or school employee, that student shall be expelled from the public school system for the remainder of the student's eligibility to attend public school. The local school board, at its discretion, may permit the student to attend an alternative education program for the period of the student's expulsion.

Any student who is found by the Disciplinary Tribunal to have committed an act of intentional (non self-defense) physical violence which causes physical harm to a teacher, school bus driver, or school official shall also be referred to juvenile court with a request for a petition alleging delinquent behavior.

If the student who commits an act of physical violence is in kindergarten through eighth grade, the school board at its discretion and on recommendation of the Disciplinary Hearing Tribunal committee may permit such a student to re-enroll in the regular public school program for grades nine through twelve.

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

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

Substances prohibited by this rule include:

- A. All substances, chemicals, and drugs made illegal or defined as dangerous or illicit by any local, State, or Federal law;
- B. Drugs including, but not limited to narcotic drugs, synthetic marijuana, amphetamines, barbiturates, marijuana, herbal marijuana, cocaine, stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens, inhalants, opiates, or any other

controlled substance or intoxicant;

- C. Alcoholic beverages or other intoxicants of any kind;
- D. Prescription and non-prescription medicine that has not been registered with the school pursuant to Board Policy JGCD;
- E. Any item or substance which is thought, represented to be, or treated as if it is an illegal or dangerous drug, illicit substance, intoxicant, or alcohol will be treated as such for the purposes of student discipline under this policy; and,
- F. Where a lawful substance is used inappropriately to cause or attempt to cause intoxication, that substance will be treated as an unlawful drug for the purposes of student discipline under this policy.

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

All medication (prescription/non-prescription/over-the-counter) is to be turned in to the office prior to the beginning of the school day. See MCSD Board Policy JGCD.

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

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

Rule 3 – Weapons and Dangerous Instruments

A student shall not possess, use, handle, transmit, or control any object which is or may reasonably be considered as a weapon.

"Weapon", while not meant to be all inclusive, examples of objects which may be considered as weapons are any pistol, revolver, or any weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind, or any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straight-edge razor, razor blade, spring stick, knuckles, whether made from metal, thermoplastic, wood, or other similar material, blackjack, any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapon, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more ridged parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chahka, nun chuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any weapon of like kind, any stun gun or taser as defined in subsection (a) of Code Section 11-11-106.

A student who wishes to bring an object which could be reasonably considered to be a weapon on school grounds as a part of or in conjunction with a class assignment or other school project must first receive permission from the office of the Principal.

At the discretion of the Principal, a student who is accused of violating this policy will be taken before the Muscogee County School District Discipline Tribunal, and police may be summoned to the campus.

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

Rule 4 – Bullying and Cyberbullying

Bullying behavior is prohibited.

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

Bullying behavior is:

- A. Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; or
- B. Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or
- C. Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that:
 1. Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of Code Section 16-5-23.1 or "visible bodily harm" as such term is defined in Code Section 16-5-23.1. Visible bodily harm is defined by 16-5-23.1 as bodily harm capable of being perceived by a person other than the victim;
 2. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;
 3. Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment;
 4. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school; or
 5. Any teacher or other school employee who are reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that someone is target of bullying shall immediately report it to the school principal.

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

- A. Is directed specifically at students or school personnel;
- B. Is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, and
- C. Creates a reasonable fear of harm to the students' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose.

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

optical system.

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

Each reported incident of bullying behavior will be documented and investigated by the school principal / designee, and a disposition determined which may include suspension from school or a referral to the Student Discipline Tribunal. School district personnel will conduct follow-ups on reports as appropriate.

Any person who reports in good faith an incident of bullying, harassment, or intimidation to an appropriate school official, and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures in the school district's policy shall be immune from civil liability for any damages caused by such reporting or any failure to remedy the reported incident.

Note that some student misconduct prohibited by this policy may also trigger responsibilities under the District's policies preventing discrimination on the basis of Sex, Race, Color, National Origin, Religion, Disability, Gender and/or Age. Individuals receiving complaints of bullying or harassment should consider both sets of District policies that prohibit both 'bullying' and peer harassment based on Sex, Race, Color, National Origin, Religion, Disability, Gender and/or Age.

When the Student Discipline Tribunal panel finds a student in grades six through twelve guilty of bullying behavior for the third time in a school year, that student shall be assigned to an alternative school.

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

Rule 5 – Chronic Disciplinary Problem Students

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

A student shall not willful and persistent violate the student code of conduct.

Procedures:

Any time a teacher or principal identifies a student as a chronic disciplinary problem student, the principal shall notify the guardian of the disciplinary problem, invite such parent or guardian to observe the student in a classroom situation, and request at least one parent or guardian to attend a conference with the principal or the teacher or both to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan. The plan should include the consolidated ideas from the principal and parent/guardian to keep the child in the current school. Also, the plan must address the consequences for the child's inappropriate behavior and steps to prevent reoccurrences. Once all of these steps have been taken and documentation of parental involvement is given, if the problem continues, the student may be referred for a tribunal hearing.

Conference after Expulsion or Suspension for Chronic Misbehavior

Before any chronic disciplinary problem student is permitted to return from an expulsion or suspension, the school to which the student is to be readmitted shall request by telephone call and by either certified mail or statutory overnight delivery with return receipt requested or first-class mail at least one parent or guardian to schedule and attend a conference

with the principal or his or her designee to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan. Failure of the parent or guardian to attend shall not preclude the student from being readmitted to the school. At the discretion of the Principal, a teacher, counselor, or other person may attend the conference. The principal shall ensure that a notation of the conference be placed in the student's permanent file.

The local board of education may, by petition to the juvenile court, proceed against a parent or guardian as provided in this Code section. If the court finds that the parent or guardian has willfully and reasonably failed to attend a conference requested by a principal, the court may order the parent or guardian to participate in such programs or such treatment as the court deems appropriate to improve the student's behavior. After notice and opportunity for hearing, the court may impose a fine on a parent or guardian who willfully disobeys an order of the court entered under this Code section.

Rule 6 – Sexual Misconduct or Inappropriate Display of Affection

A student shall not:

- A. Indecently expose himself or herself, or engage in any inappropriate heterosexual or homosexual action;
- B. Molest or rape another person;
- C. Engage in any form of inappropriate bodily contact or display of affection (fondling, making out, intercourse are all prohibited);
- D. Participate in inappropriate activities such as mooning (pulling one's own pants down) or anklng (pulling another student's pants down); and/or
- E. Possess, pose for, and/or transmit pornographic materials (magazines, pictures, images within cellular phone, web sites, etc.);
- F. Take, show, distribute, or pose for any inappropriate photo or video. By way of example, the following are inappropriate: photos or videos with weapons that are intended to be threatening; photos or videos while undressed or that expose breasts, buttocks, or genitals).

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

Parents and guardians are encouraged to inform their children of the consequences, including potential criminal penalties, of underage sexual conduct and crimes for which a minor can be tried as an adult.

Rule 7 – Gang

Gang activity is prohibited.

Gangs are clubs, groups, or organizations of limited membership, which are known to advocate, practice, engage or participate in unlawful acts such as intimidation, violence, or destruction to property. Gangs are not permitted on school premises or in school facilities. Gang members are prohibited from conducting any activities, meetings, or gatherings on or about school facilities, premises, or property at any time.

Students are prohibited from:

- A. Wearing any insignia, and/or uniforms, or other means of any gang identification, or using or making any signs, signals, or other means of gang communication or identification;
- B. Allowing or inviting non-student gang members onto any school district property;
- C. Using, employing, or relying upon his or her gang membership or affiliation to threaten, to intimidate, or to harass verbally or physically other students or employees of the Muscogee County School District.

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

Rule 8 – Student Welfare – Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination Based on Sex, Race, Color, National Origin, Religion, Disability, Gender and/or Age.

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

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

Sexual harassment, as defined above, may include but is not limited to verbal harassment or abuse, pressure for sexual activity, repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications, unwelcome touching, suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning ones’ grades, job, etc.

Harassing conduct may take many forms, including verbal acts and name-calling; graphic and written statements, which may include the use of cell phones or the internet; or other conduct that may be physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating.

Rule 9 – Disruption and Interference with School

No student shall:

- A. Occupy any school building, gymnasium, school grounds, properties or part thereof with intent to deprive others of its use, or where the effect is to deprive others of its use;
- B. Block the entrance or exit of any school building or property or corridor or room thereof as to deprive others of access thereto;
- C. Prevent or attempt to prevent the convening or continued functioning of any school, class, activity or lawful meeting or assembly on the school campus;

- D. Prevent students from attending a class or school activity;
- E. Except under the direct instruction of the Principal, block normal pedestrian or vehicular traffic on a school campus or adjacent grounds;
- F. Continuously and intentionally make noise or act in any other manner so as to interfere with the teacher's ability to conduct his/her class;
- G. In any other manner, by the use of violence, force, noise, coercion, threat, intimidation, fear, passive resistance, or any other conduct, intentionally cause the disruption of any lawful mission, process or function of the school, or engage in any such conduct for the purpose of causing the disruption or obstruction of any such lawful mission, process or function;
- H. Refuse to identify himself/herself upon request of any teacher, principal, superintendent, school bus driver, or other authorized school personnel;
- I. Use profanity or obscene language; nor
- J. Urge, encourage or counsel other students to violate any of the preceding paragraphs of this rule.

Rule 10 - Off-Campus Misconduct

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

Cyberbullying is bullying which is the behavior that occurs through the use of electronic communication, whether or not such electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment. The school district has the authority to take disciplinary action regarding cyberbullying where it has a direct impact on the school and / or the welfare or safety of students and / or school personnel.

The school district can refuse to readmit or enroll a student that has been expelled or suspended because the student has been convicted of, has been adjudicated to have committed, has been indicted for, or has had information filed for the commission of any felony or any delinquent act that would be a felony if committed by an adult.

Rule 11 – Disregard of Directions or Commands

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

Rule 12 – Bus Conduct

All Rules in this Code of Conduct apply to students while on the bus, at the bus stop, at any school activities or en route to or from school or any school activities or on any district-provided transportation.

Students who fail to respond to the direction of the bus driver will be reported to the school principal, who is authorized to deny the student bus transportation.

Any bus driver who believes that a student's continued presence on the bus will imperil or endanger other students or district personnel may bring this to the attention of the principal first, and then, if the principal does not remove the student from the bus, may appeal to

his or her transportation department supervisor and ultimately to the School Board. Students shall be prohibited from using any electronic devices during the operation of a school bus, including but not limited to cell phones, pagers, audible radios, tape or compact disc players without headphones; or any other electronic device that might interfere with the school bus communication equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.

Rule 13 – Tobacco Products in the Schools

Students enrolled in the Muscogee County public schools shall not possess, transmit, or use tobacco in any form. Principals can suspend students for a period of no longer than ten (10) days when they are found guilty of possession, transmission or use of tobacco products in any form.

An electronic cigarette (or e-cigarette), electronic-vaping device, personal vaporizer (PV), or electronic nicotine delivery system (ENDS) is a battery-powered device which simulates tobacco smoking. It generally uses a heating element that vaporizes a liquid solution. They are considered and sold as tobacco products and are prohibited.

Rule 14 – Damage or Destruction or Theft of School Property

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

Rule 15 – Damage or Destruction or Theft of Private Property

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

Rule 16 - Dress and Grooming

It is not the intent of the Muscogee County School District to dictate the quality or style of clothing worn, but rather an effort to encourage good habits and acceptable group behavior. A student shall not dress, groom, or wear or use emblems, insignias, badges or other symbols where the effect thereof is to distract unreasonably the attention of other students or otherwise to cause disruption or interference with the operation of the school.

It is prohibited for any student to wear clothing items which advertise alcoholic beverages, sex, tobacco, obscene, crude or suggestive messages or use of profanity. Designs or insignias that are part of a haircut, satanic symbols, gang-related badges, insignias and colors; logos or symbols which denigrate social or ethnic groups are also prohibited. "Fake" alcohol or drug advertisement is also disallowed.

Individual schools may create a school-specific dress code, and are permitted to designate uniforms or apparel for students to wear. The schools shall present their choice to the Board of Education for review.

Clothing Assistance

Students who cannot afford a uniform or required clothing shall not be denied admission to school for that reason. Each principal will develop a procedure to offer assistance to students who would have or are having difficulty complying with the school's dress code. Parents or students may request assistance from the principal or designee. Where assistance is requested, the request shall be maintained as confidential.

Religious attire will be permitted.

Dress Code for New and Transfer Students

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

Rule 17 – Leaving School without Permission

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

Rule 18 - Unexcused Absences

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

Rule 19 – Trespassing on School Property is Prohibited

- A. A student will be in violation of this rule and subject to discipline if they have been suspended and/or expelled from school and found on any school property during the suspension/expulsion period without prior permission from the school district.
- B. A student and/or non-student will be in violation of this rule and subject to discipline if he or she fails to leave school district property or a school event after being ordered to leave by an authorized individual.

Rule 20 – Incitement of Student

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

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

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

Rule 22 – Acts of Misconduct

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

Teacher Removal of Student

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

NOTES

CRIME STOPPERS

**CRIME STOPPERS of the
COLUMBUS & VALLEY AREA**
PRESENTS



706-653-3188

**Crime Stoppers is now introducing
Gun Stoppers.**

Gun Stoppers will pay a reward of \$100 for information leading to the recovery of an illegal gun in the school system.