

Meriwether County Schools 2026-2027 Student Handbook



Mission: The Meriwether County Schools is committed to empowering students to aim high, achieve, graduate and succeed.

Vision: The Vision of the Meriwether County Schools is to prepare all students to be effective, responsible and productive members of society.

The Meriwether County School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or sex in its employment practices, student programs and dealings with the public. It is the policy of the Board of Education to comply fully with the requirements of Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act and all accompanying regulations.

Every Student Matters, Every Moment Counts

Dr. Robert Griffin, Superintendent

Christopher Owens, Chair | Rebecca “Kay” King, Vice-Chair | Willie A. Hinton, Jr. | Levi Fletcher | Dr. Bob Patterson

Dear Students, Parents/Guardians and Community Members:

The mission of the Meriwether County Schools is to empower students to aim high, achieve, graduate, and succeed. In an effort to achieve this mission, the Meriwether County School System is committed to providing safe and clean schools, academic accountability, fiscal responsibility, and friendly and respectful relationships. As a parent/guardian or family member, I encourage you to engage in your child’s educational experience. Your involvement in your child’s educational progress will have a positive impact regarding the assurance that your child maximizes his or her potential.

The following handbook is designed to assure the Meriwether County Schools provide a safe and structured learning environment where teaching and learning are enhanced. You are encouraged to review all of the information in the handbook with your child. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Meriwether County Schools, please contact the central office at 706-441-0601 or visit our website at www.mcssga.org. Your engagement in your child’s education is appreciated. A collaborative effort among all the stakeholders in the educational process will help us realize our vision of preparing our students to be effective, responsible, and productive members of society.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Griffin, Ed.D
Meriwether County Schools Superintendent

2100 Gaston Street, P.O. Box 70 | Greenville, GA 30222 | Phone 706.441.0601 | Fax 706.672.1618 | www.mcssga.org

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Meriwether County School System 2026-2027 Handbook
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**Meriwether County Schools
Board of Education**

Mr. Christopher Owens	Chairperson
Ms. Kay King	Vice Chairperson
Dr. Bob Patterson	Member
Mr. Willie A. Hinton, Jr.	Member
Mr. Levi Fletcher	Member

Mission: The Meriwether County Schools is committed to empowering students to aim high, achieve, graduate and succeed.

Vision: The Vision of the Meriwether County Schools is to prepare all students to be effective, responsible and productive members of society.

We value...

- ❖ Quality Relationships: Building understanding and trust so that the school, home and community are all working together to meet the needs of the students.
- ❖ Involvement: Participating in all aspects of the student's education.
- ❖ Active Learning: Engaging everyone in striving to create the best opportunities for learning.
- ❖ Rigor: Creating learning opportunities that equip every student to perform to their maximum potential.
- ❖ Relevance: Students can relate to and understand the concepts being learned.
- ❖ Citizenship: Learning responsibility to contribute to society.
- ❖ Character: Qualities that prepare students to become successful adults.

2026 Board Meetings

August 11, 2026
September 15, 2026
October 6, 2026
November 10, 2026
December 8, 2026

Every Student Matters, Every Moment Counts

MERIWETHER COUNTY SCHOOLS

2026-2027 SCHOOL CALENDAR YEAR

*Every Student Matters;
Every Moment Counts!*

IMPORTANT DATES



FIRST DAY FOR STUDENTS
July 31, 2026



OPEN HOUSE
July 29, 2026



**PRE-PLANNING /
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING DAYS**
July 23–30, 2026



LABOR DAY HOLIDAY
September 7, 2026



OCTOBER BREAK
October 12–16, 2026



END OF 1st NINE WEEKS
October 2, 2026



THANKSGIVING BREAK
November 23–27, 2026



END OF FIRST SEMESTER / HALF DAY
December 18, 2026



CHRISTMAS BREAK
December 21, 2026–January 1, 2027



**TEACHER WORK DAY /
PARENT CONFERENCES**
January 4, 2027



STUDENTS RETURN
January 5, 2027



MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. HOLIDAY
January 18, 2027



WINTER BREAK
February 15–19, 2027



END OF 3RD NINE WEEKS
March 17, 2027



SPRING BREAK
April 5–9, 2027



LAST DAY OF SCHOOL / HALF DAY
May 26, 2027



**POST-PLANNING /
TEACHER WORK DAYS** May 27–28, 2027



MEMORIAL DAY
May 31, 2027



JUNETEENTH HOLIDAY June 19, 2027

2026-2027 School Calendar Year

JULY 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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25	26	27	28	29	30	31

AUGUST 2026						
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SEPTEMBER 2026						
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OCTOBER 2026						
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NOVEMBER 2026						
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DECEMBER 2026						
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Schools closed on Fridays during the summer						
11-month calendar start and end dates						
89 Days 1st Semester						
91 Days 2nd Semester						
190 Teacher Days						
180 Student Days						

June 29 - July 3	System Closed
July 23	New Teacher Orientation
July 23-30	PrePlanning / Professional Learning Days
July 29	Open House
July 31	First Day for Students
Sept 4	1st 9 Weeks Progress Reports
Sept 7	Labor Day Holiday - System Closed

Oct 2	1st 9 Weeks Ends
Oct 12-16	October Break - System Closed
Oct 19	Teacher Work Day / Parent Conferences
Nov 10	2nd 9 Weeks Progress Reports
Nov 23-27	Thanksgiving Break - System Closed

Dec 18	End of First Semester Half Day
Dec 21 - Jan 1	Christmas Break - System Closed
Jan 4	Teacher Work Day / System Confessed
Jan 4	Teacher Work Day / Parent Conferences
Jan 5	
Jan 18	Martin Luther King, Jr.

Feb 5	Holiday
Feb 15 - 19	3rd 9 Weeks Progress Reports
Feb 15 - 19	Winter Break - System Closed
March 17	End of 3rd 9 Weeks
April 5-9	Spring Break - System Closed
April 23	4th 9 Weeks Progress Reports

May 26	Last Day of School / Half Day
May 27-28	Post Planning / Teacher Work Day
May 31	Memorial Day - System Closed
June 19	Juneteenth

JANUARY 2027						
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FEBRUARY 2027						
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MARCH 2027						
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APRIL 2027						
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MAY 2027						
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JUNE 2027						
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**EVERY STUDENT MATTERS;
EVERY MOMENT COUNTS!**

Board Approved 12.9.25

Meriwether County Board of Education Schools
2100 Gaston Street
Greenville, Georgia 30222
Phone: 706-441-0601 Fax: 706-672-1618

MOUNTAIN VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (PK-5)

2600 Judson Bulloch Road
Manchester, Georgia 31816
Principal: Dr. Gina Bartlett
Assistant Principal: Mr. Bert Toney
Assistant Principal: Ms. Allison Hale
Phone: (706) 655-3969
Fax: (706) 655-3962

UNITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (PK-5)

172 North Main Street
Luthersville, Georgia 30251
Principal: Mr. Eric Alston
Assistant Principal: Mr. Todd Holloway
Phone: (770) 927-6488
Fax: (770) 927-1358

MANCHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL (6-8)

231 West Perry Street
Manchester, Georgia 31816
Principal: Ms. Erica Short
Assistant Principal: Ms. Krystal Johnson
Phone: (706) 846-2846
Fax: (706) 846-8242

GREENVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL (6-8)

17656 Roosevelt Highway
Greenville, Georgia 30222
Principal: Mr. Michael Perry
Assistant Principal: Ms. Yvette Nathan - Jones
Phone: (706) 672-4930
Fax: (706) 672-1424

MANCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL (9-12)

405 Fifth Avenue
Manchester, Georgia 31816
Principal: Dr. Melanie Smith
Assistant Principal: Mr. Demonta Prather
Phone: (706) 846-8445
Fax: (706) 846-2082

GREENVILLE HIGH SCHOOL (9-12)

17656 Roosevelt Highway
Greenville, Georgia 30222
Principal: Mr. Thaddeus Jackson
Assistant Principal: Mr. Eric Poythress
Phone: (706) 672-4930
Fax: (706) 672-1424

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING CENTER

2100 Gaston Street
Greenville, Georgia 30222
Director: Mr. Lee Riley
Phone: (706) 441-0613 or (706) 441-0612
Mobile – Mr. Lee Riley (706) 977-8108

School Day Start Times: A Guide for Parents

What Does "Instructional Start Time" Mean?

Instructional start time is the time when teaching and learning officially begin each school day. Students should be in their classrooms, seated, and ready to learn by this time.

Please note:

- Instructional start times are not the same as the time students may arrive at school.
- Each school may allow students to arrive before the instructional start time for breakfast, transportation, and morning procedures.
- Students arriving after the school's designated tardy time will be marked tardy and will need to check in through the front office.
- Parents should refer to their child's school for specific arrival and dismissal procedures.

Being on time helps students start their day successfully and ensures they do not miss important instruction.

Elementary School: 8:10am start time to 2:40 end time

Middle School: 7:45 start time to 2:15 end time

High School: 7:20 start time to 2:15 end time

- Homeroom starts at 7:20
- 1st block starts at 8:00

MOUNTAIN VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL and UNITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Morning Car Rider Drop-Off: 7:45 a.m. – 8:05 a.m.

Afternoon Car Rider Pick-Up: 2:40 p.m. – 3:10 p.m.

Bus Doors Open: 7:45 a.m.

Instructional Day: 8:10 a.m. – 2:40 p.m.

Students Will Be Marked Tardy Beginning at 8:05 a.m.

Important Information for Parents:

- The car rider line closes promptly at 8:05 a.m. Students arriving after 8:05 a.m. must be escorted into the front office by an adult and checked in through the computer system.
- For student safety, parents may not drop students off in the parking lot and allow them to walk into the building unsupervised. All car riders must be dropped off through the designated car rider line.
- Student checkouts will not be permitted after 2:15 p.m.
- When checking out a student, a valid photo ID is required. The person checking out the student must be listed as an approved contact in Infinite Campus.
- Transportation changes cannot be accepted by phone call, text message, or email. A written note containing the student's full name, date, and parent/guardian signature must be sent to school with the student that morning. Parents may also come to the school and complete a transportation change form in person no later than 12:15 p.m.

Thank you for helping us maintain a safe and efficient school environment for all students.

Manchester Middle School and Greenville Middle School

Doors open at 7:30

Instructional Time: 7:45 - 2:15

Tardy 8:05

Manchester High School and Greenville High School

Doors open at 7:20

Instructional Time: 7:20 - 2:15

- Homeroom starts at 7:20
- Tardy - 7:50
- 1st block starts at 8:00

MERIWETHER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM HANDBOOK 2026-2027

MOMENT OF REFLECTION

In compliance with Georgia law, each school will begin with a moment of silent reflection. This moment of quiet reflection is not intended to be a religious service or exercise but shall be considered as an opportunity for a moment of silent reflection on the anticipated activities of the day. The teachers and administrators shall not suggest or imply prayer, nor shall they deny any student the right to use it for a moment of quiet reflection for prayer. Students and/or staff may not under any circumstances use the moment of silent reflection to audibly pray or sing.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

The State of Georgia requires public educators to give students an opportunity to say the pledge to the flag. No student will be required to say the pledge, but at the same time, no student will be allowed to disrespect our flag or disturb others during the pledge.

STUDENT/PARENT CONTACT INFORMATION

- A change in telephone number, e-mail address, mailing address, and/or street address must be reported to the school within 48 hours. A working phone number must be on file for another adult who can be reached in case of an emergency.
- All transportation changes need to be in writing and received at the school by 12:00 P.M. Schools cannot accept a phone call to change a child's transportation plans. Schools will accept a transportation change by fax. Please include a copy of the parent's driver's license with each request.
- The office telephones are for business use and may only be used by students in case of an emergency. No exceptions will be permitted.
- A copy of a Court Order must be provided to the school within 24 hours of issue. School administration will be in full compliance of the orders of the court.

VISITORS' POLICY

We welcome visitors and hope everyone will feel free to come and see all the great things happening in our schools. To ensure that we are doing all that we can to ensure the safety of each child and staff member, please be advised that visitors are not allowed on school campus during school hours unless they have checked in at the main office and received a visitor's pass to be on campus. All teacher conferences **MUST** be scheduled through the office and/or guidance counselor. Exceptions must be approved by administration. No Parents/Guardians allowed in the classroom during instructional time without the principal's approval.

Students may not be called to the office to visit with a parent unless it is a disclosed emergency. Visitation **MUST** be approved by the school's administration.

LEAVING SCHOOL

Students are required to remain at school always during school hours unless permission to leave is granted by the principal or his/her designee. A school principal should not release any student to any individual without specific request of the parent or guardian. Any individual checking a student out must provide a photo ID. No student can be checked out over the phone and/or through email.

Release of a student to an officer of the law will be made only pursuant to a warrant, an order of juvenile court, or when the officer states that a felony has been committed and makes an arrest of the student. The principal or designee will make a concerted effort to notify the parent or guardian of such release.

SCHOOL REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

1. Who Can Register a Child

Only the parent or legal guardian of the child may register the student for school.

In cases where a child is under the care of a relative or another adult, legal guardianship or custody papers must be provided before registration can occur.

2. Registration Process

To register a child for school, the parent or legal guardian should:

1. Visit the School Office during designated registration hours.
2. Complete the Online Registration process.
3. Submit Required Documentation (listed below).
4. Meet with School Staff (if necessary) for assessment or placement information.
5. Receive Confirmation that registration is complete, and the student is enrolled.

3. Required Documentation

The following documents are required to complete registration:

Proof of Identity and Guardianship

- Parent/guardian's government-issued photo ID
- Student's birth certificate
- Custody or guardianship documents (if applicable)

Proof of Residency

- A lease, mortgage statement, or property tax bill
- A current utility bill (gas, water, or electric) showing the same address

Health and Immunization Records

- Certificate of Immunization (as required by state law)
- Certificate of Vision, Hearing, Dental, and Nutrition Screening (if applicable)

Academic Records (if transferring from another school)

- Withdrawal form from previous school
- Transcript or last report card
- Special education or support service documentation (IEP, 504 Plan, etc.), if applicable.

4. Additional Notes

- Incomplete documentation may delay registration.
- Translation and assistance services are available upon request.
- A school official may conduct a residency verification check if needed.

Procedures for Kinship Caregiver Forms

1. Purpose

Kinship Caregiver Forms are used when a child is living with an adult who is not their parent or legal guardian, allowing the adult to enroll the child in school and make educational decisions on the child's behalf.

2. Who Qualifies as a Kinship Caregiver

A kinship caregiver is typically:

- A grandparent, aunt, uncle, older sibling, or other relative
- A non-relative adult who has taken responsibility for the child due to family circumstances (with parent/guardian permission)

3. Steps to Complete the Kinship Caregiver Process

Step 1: Obtain the Kinship Caregiver Form

- The form can be picked up at the school office or downloaded from the school/district website.

Step 2: Complete the Form

The form must include:

- Child's full name, date of birth, and grade
- Caregiver's full name, address, and relationship to the child
- Reason for kinship care (brief explanation)
- Parent/guardian's written consent (if available)
- Caregiver's signature affirming responsibility (must be notarized)

Step 3: Provide Supporting Documentation

The caregiver must provide the following:

- Photo ID of the caregiver
- Proof of residency (lease, utility bill, etc.)
- Documentation of parental consent, if available (a notarized letter is preferred)
- If no consent is available, the caregiver may need to sign an affidavit explaining the circumstances

Step 4: Submit the Form to the School Office

- The school administration will review and may consult district-level staff or legal services.
- In some cases, a home visit or additional documentation may be requested.

4. Limitations

- A Kinship Caregiver Form does not grant legal custody.
- It only authorizes the adult to make decisions related to the child's education and well-being while at school.
- For medical, legal, or other decisions, the caregiver may need to pursue temporary guardianship through the court.

Duration and Renewal

- The form is valid for one school year and must be updated annually or if the living arrangement changes.
- Schools may require verification of continued kinship care before the start of a new school year.

SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

A good school lunch is a vital phase of any successful program. The cafeteria program is planned with the welfare and health of each child in mind. Good food habits, as well as good manners are integral parts of our program. All students enrolled in our school will be allowed to eat both breakfast and lunch for free. Students are not allowed to carry food or drink out of the lunchroom. Adults must pay for items purchased for breakfast and lunch. These prices will be posted in the school cafeteria.

Students will be required to purchase additional items if they choose to do so. The costs are:

- Extra milk – \$0.60
- Extra Juice – \$0.50
- Adult Breakfast Price – \$2.00
- Adult Lunch Price – \$5.00

RETURNED CHECKS

There will be a \$35 charge for any check returned to the school, due to insufficient funds.

FEES

There will be a \$5.00 charge for a copy, \$2.00 for each additional copy, of a student's Birth Certificate, Social Security Number, Attendance Information, etc. This is to defray the cost of paper and ink for the copier.

PARENT/TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)/SCHOOL COUNCIL

Please join the school's Parent/Teacher Organization/School Council. We have an active program that supports the learning of students, serves the stakeholders at our schools, and links the school and home. Please contact your school for more information.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL

TARDIES AND EARLY RELEASES

A student is considered tardy if not present at the beginning of the school day or class. A student leaving school during the day is considered early released.

Any combination of three (3) tardies and/or early releases shall equal one (1) absence. Attendance procedures for absences apply equally to tardies and early releases.

Definitions

Tardy means not being present at the beginning of the school day or class, but the student has been in school for a total of three (3) hours.

Early Release means leaving school for any part of the school day provided the student has been present for a total of three (3) hours.

Excused Tardy:

Late arrival due to approved reasons, such as:

- Illness (with proper documentation)
- Medical emergencies
- Inclement weather
- Documented transportation delays
- Power outages
- Court orders

Unexcused Tardy:

Late arrival for reasons not listed above, such as:

- Oversleeping
- Running errands
- Without a valid excuse, even with parent knowledge

Note: After 15 unexcused tardies, the student will be referred to the school social worker.

Truant:

A student subject to the state's attendance law is considered truant after more than five unexcused absences in a school year.

Absent:

A student who is not present at school on a scheduled school day.

Excused Absences:

The following are considered valid reasons for absence:

- Student illness: A note must be submitted within 3 days of return. Medical documentation is preferred and may be required after 5 absences.
- Illness or death in the immediate family: Medical documentation is required for serious illness.
- Hospital/Homebound instruction: Available with proper documentation per State Board Rule 160-4-2-.31.
- Court order: Student is mandated to be absent.
- Religious holidays: Recognized by the student's faith.
- Hazardous weather/environmental conditions.
- Voting registration: One (1) day allowed.
- Other absences approved by the principal. Contact your school for specific cases.

Important: Only three (3) handwritten parent notes will be accepted per school year to excuse absences. All other absences must be verified with official documentation.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES AND COURSE CREDIT:

Students shall be allowed no more than five (5) unexcused absences (or equivalent in tardies/early releases) per school year and no more than three (3) per semester at the high school level.

Students exceeding ten (10) unexcused absences may be denied course credit unless the principal determines in the principal's discretion that credit should be awarded based on circumstances. Parents and students may appeal the principal's decision to the Superintendent.

School days missed due to out-of-school suspension shall not count as unexcused absences for truancy purposes.

A student's final course grade will not be penalized due to absences if all of the following conditions are met:

1. The absences are excused and properly documented.
2. Make-up work for excused absences is completed satisfactorily.
3. Make-up work for unexcused absences—if permitted—is also completed satisfactorily. (*Note: Schools are not required to provide make-up work for unexcused absences.*)
4. If any of the above conditions are not met, penalties and consequences may be imposed by the local school administration.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL

Each school follows specific procedures for identifying, reporting, investigating, and prosecuting possible violations of the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1). These procedures also guide how schools address tardiness and work with parents or guardians to improve student attendance.

A Student Attendance Protocol Committee—established by the chief judge of the superior court in each county under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.2—ensures that all agencies involved in student attendance work together. The committee's goal is to reduce unexcused absences and increase student participation in required state testing.

GEORGIA COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAW

Under Georgia law (GA Code § 20-2-690.1), school attendance is mandatory for children between the ages of 6 and 16. Attendance is not required if:

- The student has completed all high school graduation requirements, or
- The student is 17 or older and has officially withdrawn from school.

ADDITIONAL ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS BY GRADE LEVEL

Grades 9–12:

Students who accumulate more than ten (10) unexcused absences in any course during the academic year may not receive credit for that course, unless determined otherwise by the principal. A notice regarding denial of course credit will be submitted to the parents/guardians in writing following the tenth (10th) absence.

Parents/guardians and students must submit a written appeal of a notice of course credit denial with the principal at least four (4) weeks prior to the end of the school year in question. If the issuance of a notice of course credit denial occurs during the final four weeks of the school year, the appeal request must be completed immediately and no later than the last day of the student's school year.

The principal will issue a determination within ten (10) days of the date of the principal's receipt of the written appeal. Parents/guardians will have twenty (20) days from the date of the principal's determination to appeal that determination to the Superintendent by submitting a written appeal to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will issue a determination within ten (10) days of the Superintendent's receipt of the written appeal.

Students must be present for at least forty (40) minutes of a class period to be counted present. Students arriving more than ten (10) minutes late or leaving more than ten (10) minutes early may be marked tardy or early release for that class period.

Grades 6–8:

Parents or guardians must provide documentation for all absences. Students accumulating excessive unexcused absences, tardies or early dismissals shall be subject to school interventions and procedures as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Students accumulating more than ten (10) or more unexcused absences in a school year may be retained in the same grade level. Appeals must be submitted within four (4) weeks prior to the end of the school year.

Grades K–5:

Students accumulating more than ten (10) or more unexcused absences in a school year may be retained in the same grade level. Appeals must be submitted within four (4) weeks prior to the end of the school year.

PARENT/STUDENT NOTIFICATIONS

A. Annual Notification of Attendance Law

At the start of each school year, the Meriwether County School System will provide every student and their parent/guardian with:

- A copy of the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law, and
- A summary of possible consequences and penalties for non-compliance.

These materials are distributed through the Student Handbook and posted on the district website.

B. Acknowledgment of Receipt

By September 1st (or within 30 days of enrollment), the parent/guardian must sign the acknowledgment form in the back of the Student Handbook confirming receipt of the attendance policy.

- Students who are 10 years or older by September 1st must also sign a statement acknowledging receipt.

C. Notification After 3 Unexcused Absences

When a student accumulates 3 unexcused absences, school staff (teacher, counselor, attendance clerk, or administrator) will notify the parent/guardian by phone call, text, email, or automated message.

D. Notification After 5 Unexcused Absences

At 5 unexcused absences, the school system will send a formal letter by mail to the parent/guardian. This notice will include a copy of the Compulsory Attendance Law and will explain:

- Legal penalties and consequences, and
- That each additional unexcused absence will count as a separate offense.

E. Notification After 7 Unexcused Absences

At 7 unexcused absences, the school will attempt additional communication, including but not limited to:

- Phone calls
- Letters (via mail or sent home with the student)
- Home visits

A parent/guardian conference will be requested to discuss the absences and support strategies.

F. At 10 Unexcused Absences – School Social Worker Referral

When a student reaches 10 unexcused absences:

A referral to the school social worker will be made using the official referral form. This form must be signed by an administrator and include all relevant documentation.

The school social worker will:

- Advocate for regular attendance and support the student and family,
- Identify causes of absenteeism and collaborate on solutions,
- Provide home visits, counseling, and access to school and community resources,
- Monitor attendance weekly and send written updates to the family (Pre-legal, First Legal, and Final Legal Notices),
- Refer the student to the Attendance Intervention Team if attendance does not improve.

G. Attendance Intervention Team & Court Referral

Once a student has 10 unexcused absences, the parent/guardian will also receive a certified letter requesting attendance at an Attendance Intervention Team Meeting at the Board of Education on a specified date and time. This meeting is designed to provide support and a resolution plan.

If the parent/guardian does not attend the meeting or unexcused absences continue, the case will be referred to the Meriwether County Juvenile Court and/or the Meriwether County Magistrate Court, as appropriate, for legal action.

INTERVENTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

The Meriwether County School System is committed to helping students and families overcome barriers to school attendance. If these efforts are unsuccessful, the following actions may take place under the Georgia Compulsory School Attendance Law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1).

A. Juvenile Court Involvement

Referral to Juvenile Court

If attendance does not improve, the Meriwether County Attendance Officer may file a truancy or educational neglect petition in Juvenile Court.

B. Referral to Magistrate Court

If non-compliance continues after Juvenile Court action:

- The school system may refer the parent/guardian to Magistrate Court under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1.
- Violating the Compulsory Attendance Law is a misdemeanor, punishable by:
 - A fine of \$25 to \$100,
 - Up to 30 days in jail,
 - Community service, or
 - A combination of the above

Each day of unexcused absence beyond five days—after notification—is considered a separate offense.

STUDENT WITHDRAWALS

1. Conditions for Withdrawal

The Meriwether County School System may withdraw a student who:

- Has missed more than 10 consecutive unexcused days, and
- Is not subject to compulsory attendance, or
- Is not receiving instructional services (e.g., homebound or IDEA services), or
- No longer resides in the school district.

2. Notification of Withdrawal

- For students under 18 who are not subject to compulsory attendance, the district will make reasonable efforts to notify parents or guardians prior to withdrawal.
- A student subject to compulsory attendance may only be withdrawn if:
 - The student is no longer a resident of the district, or
 - Is enrolled in a private school or home study program.

3. Withdrawal Date

Students will be withdrawn retroactively to the first day of consecutive absences.

4. Driver's License Impact

- Students under 18 must present a Certificate of School Enrollment to obtain a driver's license or permit.
- Students over 16 with more than 10 consecutive unexcused absences may be withdrawn.
- The school system may report a student's withdrawal to the Georgia Department of Driver Services, affecting eligibility for a permit or license.

SCHOOL CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

The Meriwether County School System is committed to maintaining a safe and secure learning environment for all students. One key part of this commitment is our check-out process, which ensures that only authorized individuals can check students out of school.

To help ensure student safety, we ask that parents and guardians carefully review the following procedures:

Authorized Individuals

- A student will only be released to someone listed on their official registration form, completed and signed by the parent or guardian at enrollment.
- These forms are kept in the school office and entered into Infinite Campus, where the student's primary guardian is clearly identified.
- Only those listed on the registration form are permitted to check out a student.

Dismissal Routine Changes

- Changes to a student's regular dismissal routine must be made in person and in writing by the parent or guardian listed on the registration form.
- Phone calls, emails, or texts will not be accepted for changes to dismissal plans.
- The written request must be completed, signed, and dated in person, in front of the principal or their designee.

Updating Authorized Pick-Up List

- To update the list of authorized individuals, the primary guardian must visit the school office in person and complete a new registration form.
- No updates will be made by phone, text, or email.

Court Orders & Custody Changes

- If a court order indicating a change in custody is received, notify the school principal immediately.
- The principal will inform the Superintendent and senior School Resource Officer.
- No student will be released in a custody situation without the Superintendent's permission.

Photo Identification Required

- Anyone checking a student out of school must present a valid photo ID.

Early Check-Out Deadline

- No student may be checked out within 30 minutes of the school's regular dismissal time.
- Please plan ahead if you need to pick your child up early.

Law Enforcement Check-Outs

- Students will only be released to law enforcement officers under the following conditions:
 - With a warrant,
 - An order from juvenile court,
 - Or when the officer confirms a felony has been committed and is making an arrest.

The school will make every effort to notify the parent or guardian in such cases.

EARLY RELEASE FOR ILLNESSES OR APPOINTMENTS

If a student needs to leave early for a medical appointment or other emergencies:

1. The student may be signed out without a written note, as long as an approved individual signs them out in person.
2. Students will remain in class until the authorized individual arrives to check them out.
3. If a student becomes ill at school, the school nurse or staff will contact the parent or guardian to arrange for pick-up.

STUDENT HEALTH HISTORY & TELEHEALTH

- **Health Forms:** Updated annually at registration or when re-enrolling after a 3+ month absence.
- **Telehealth:** Parents can enroll students in Telehealth services (see pp.).
- **Updates:** Notify the school of any changes to emergency contact or health information.

PRESCRIPTION & NONPRESCRIPTION MEDICATION

- **No Meds Carried by Students:** Medications must be kept in the school office unless authorized otherwise.
- **Administering Medication:**
 1. Written parent request required.
 2. Include medication name, dosage, and time.
 3. Forms available from nurse or office.
 4. Prescription meds must be in labeled bottle with student's name, drug info, and physician's name.
 5. Non-prescription meds (short-term only) must be in original container, labeled with student's name and directions.

6. Avoid sending medication on school buses, contact the school nurse if necessary.
7. Emergency meds (e.g. inhalers, EpiPens) may be carried with proper consent on file.

Note: Parents will be notified if medication guidelines are not followed.

STUDENT ILLNESS/INJURY

- Keep contagious students at home.
- During health advisories (e.g., COVID-19), the school will follow safety measures like temperature checks, masks, and sanitation protocols.
- Students or visitors failing health screenings will not be allowed entry. Parents will be contacted for pick-up.

CONCUSSIONS

- A concussion is a serious brain injury caused by a blow to the head or body.
- Adolescent athletes are especially vulnerable.
- Students showing signs of a concussion must be immediately removed from play.
- Coaches, officials, and staff are responsible for monitoring and ensuring student safety.

The Georgia High School Association offers this statement of concern:

“Concussions at all levels of sports have received a great deal of attention in the past few years. Attention has increased even more over the past year; culminating with the NFL, NCAA and National Federation of State High School Associations testifying before the United States Congress about what each organization is doing to protect athletes from concussion. At least four states have enacted legislation dealing with the issue of head injuries sustained in athletic competitions.

Adolescent athletes are particularly vulnerable to the effects of concussion. Once considered little more than a minor “ding” on the head, it is now understood that a concussion has the potential to result in death, or short-and-long-term changes in brain function. A concussion is a brain injury that results in a temporary disruption of normal brain function. A concussion occurs when the brain is violently rocked back and forth or twisted inside the skull because of a blow to the head or body. Continued participation in any sport following a concussion can lead to worsening concussion symptoms, as well as increased risk for further injury to the brain, and even death. The well-being of the athlete is of paramount concern during any athletic contest. Officials, coaches and administrators are being asked to make all efforts to ensure that concussed athletes do not continue to participate. Thus, coaches, players, officials, and administrators should also be looking for signs of concussion in all athletes and should immediately remove any suspected concussed athlete from play.”

SCHOOL’S RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING CONCUSSIONS

1. **Evaluation:** Any athlete suspected of having a concussion must be evaluated by a qualified health-care professional (MD, DO, or certified athletic trainer) on the same day.
2. **Return to Play:** No athlete should return to play or practice the same day after a concussion diagnosis.
3. **Medical Clearance:** Athletes must be cleared by a healthcare professional before resuming participation. A gradual return-to-play protocol should be followed.

Note: Athletes with ongoing concussion symptoms are at higher risk for severe injury and should not return to sports until fully recovered. These guidelines apply to both practices and scrimmages.

STAFF AND STUDENT TRAINING

Concussion Training

In response to state law, all coaches must complete the free “**Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know**” course at www.nfhslearn.com every two years.

Steps:

1. Go to the site
2. Click “Courses”
3. Select “Free Courses”

4. Choose the concussion course
Print the completion form for your Athletic Director.

CPR/AED Training

- All coaches, designated staff, and bus drivers are CPR/AED certified.
- High school Health/PE students are introduced to CPR and AED use.

Epinephrine Auto-Injectors

- Each school designates staff to be trained in administering epinephrine.
- CPR/AED-certified individuals will also receive this training.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

MTSS is a statewide framework for improving academic and behavioral outcomes for all students, especially those struggling. Georgia's model includes five core components:

- **Screening**
- **Progress Monitoring**
- **Multi-Level Prevention (3 tiers)**
- **Data-Based Decision Making**
- **Infrastructure** (Leadership, Teaming, Professional Learning, Family & Community Engagement)

Students receive support across tiers based on need. Research shows strong Tier I instruction meets the needs of 80% of students. Georgia's MTSS is a collaborative effort among departments like Special Education, Federal Programs, and PBIS.

WRAPAROUND MERIWETHER

Meriwether County Schools support the whole child through Wraparound Services Centers—school and community-based hubs that are student-centered, individualized, and family-focused.

Locations:

- Centers: Manchester High, Greenville Middle/High
- Care Closets: Manchester Middle, Unity Elementary, Mountain View Elementary

Services Provided:

- Clothing Closet
- Laundry Access
- Food Pantry
- Counseling
- On-site Health Clinics
- Academic Support
- College & Career Guidance

These centers strengthen connections between schools, families, and the community to support students' well-being and success in life beyond school.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

Notice to parents/guardians and eligible students, under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) (the "Act"), you have a right to:

- Inspect and review, within 45 days of a request, the education records of a student who is your child, or in the case of a student who is eighteen (18) years of age or older, or those who are emancipated, your own education records. Parents or eligible students should submit to the principal or his designee a written request identifying the records they wish to inspect. The principal or his designee will decide for access and provide notice of such arrangements.
- Request the amendment of the student's education records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. To request the school district to amend a record, parents or eligible students should write the school principal, specify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. If the district decides not to amend the record, it will notify the parents or eligible students of the decision and inform them of their right to a hearing. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided with the notification of the right to a hearing.

- Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that the Act and the regulations promulgated pursuant to the Act authorize disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent to school officials with legitimate educational interest. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member; a member of the school board; a person with whom the district has contracted to perform a specific task (such as an attorney, auditor, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee (such as a disciplinary or grievance committee). A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record to fulfill his/her professional responsibility.
- File with the United States Department of Education a complaint under 20 C.F.R. 99.64 concerning alleged failures by Meriwether County Board of Education to comply with the requirements of the Act or the regulations promulgated thereunder. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office

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

REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (Section 504)

Notice of Rights of Students and Parents under 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 educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students. Under 504, a person is considered to have a disability if that person:

- (1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities,
- (2) has a record of such impairment, or
- (3) is regarded as having such an impairment

Students eligible for protection under Section 504 may have accommodation plans written that specifically address their individual needs according to their handicapping conditions.

Examples of potential 504 handicapping conditions are: Caring for oneself, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, tuberculosis, asthma, allergies, heart disease, temporary medical conditions due to illness or accident, ADD, ADHD, behavioral difficulties, drug/alcohol addiction.

For more information regarding Section 504, or if you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact Meriwether County School District's Section 504 Coordinator at the following address:

Meriwether County Board of Education
Attn: Tonya Waller, 504 Program Administrators
2100 Gaston Street
Greenville, Georgia 30222
Phone: 706-441-0601

NOTICE OF RIGHTS OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS UNDER SECTION 504

The implementing regulations for Section 504 as set out in 34 CFR Part 104 provides parents and/or students with the following rights:

1. Your child has the right to an appropriate education designed to meet his or her individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.33.
2. Your child has the right to free educational services except for those fees that are imposed on non-disabled students or their parents. Insurers and similar third parties who provide services not operated by or provided by the recipient are not relieved from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or pay for services provided to a disabled student. 34 CFR 104.33.

3. Your child has a right to participate in an educational setting (academic and nonacademic) with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate to his or her needs. 34 CFR 104.34.
4. Your child has a right to facilities, services, and activities that are comparable to those provided for non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.34.
5. Your child has a right to an evaluation prior to Section 504 determination of eligibility. 34 CFR 104.35.
6. You have the right to not consent to the school system's request to evaluate your child. 34 CFR 104.35.
7. You have the right to ensure that evaluation procedures, which may include testing, conform to the requirements of 34 CFR 104.35.
8. You have the right to ensure that the school system will consider information from a variety of sources as appropriate, which may include aptitude and achievement tests, grades, teacher recommendations and observations, physical conditions, social or cultural background, medical records, and parental recommendations. 34 CFR 104.35. Meriwether County School District is committed to do whatever it takes for all students to aim high, achieve, graduate, and succeed.
9. You have the right to ensure that placement decisions are made by a group of people, including people knowledgeable about your child, the meaning of the evaluation data, the placement options, and the legal requirements for the least restrictive environment and comparable facilities. 34 CFR 104.35.
10. If your child is eligible under Section 504, your child has a right to periodic reevaluations, including prior to any subsequent significant change of placement. 34 CFR 104.35.
11. You have the right to notice prior to any actions by the school system regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child. 34 CFR 104.36.
12. You have the right to examine your child's educational records. 34 CFR 104.36.
13. You have the right to an impartial hearing with respect to the school system's actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, with opportunity for parental participation in the hearing and representation by an attorney. 34 CFR 104.36.
14. You have the right to receive a copy of this notice and a copy of the school system's impartial hearing procedure upon request. 34 CFR 104.36.
15. If you disagree with the decision of the impartial hearing officer (school board members and other district employees are not considered impartial hearing officers), you have a right to review that decision according to the school system's impartial hearing procedure. 34 CFR 104.36.
16. You have the right to, at any time file a complaint with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

SECTION 504 PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

1. **Overview:** Any student, parent, or guardian ("grievant") has the right to request an impartial hearing if they believe the Meriwether County School District has acted inappropriately—or failed to act—regarding a child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing must be submitted in writing to the school system's Section 504 Coordinator. However, if the grievant makes an oral request, the school system is still obligated to provide an impartial hearing. In such cases, the Section 504 Coordinator will assist the grievant in completing the written Request for Hearing.
2. **Hearing Request:** The Request for the Hearing must include the following:
 - a. The name of the student.
 - b. The address of the residence of the student.
 - c. The name of the school the student is attending.
 - d. The decision that is the subject of the hearing.
 - e. The requested reasons for review.
 - f. The proposed remedy sought by the grievant.
 - g. The name and contact information of the grievant.

Within 10 business days from receiving the grievant's Request for Hearing, the Section 504 Coordinator will acknowledge the Request for Hearing in writing and schedule a time and place for a hearing. If the written Request for Hearing does not contain the necessary information noted above, the Section 504 Coordinator will inform the grievant of the specific information needed to complete the request. All timelines and processes will be stayed until the Request for Hearing contains the necessary information noted above.

3. **Mediation:** The school system may offer mediation to resolve the issues detailed by the grievant in his or her Request for Hearing. Mediation is voluntary and both the grievant and school system must agree to participate. The grievant may terminate the mediation at any time. If the mediation is terminated without an agreement, the school system will follow the procedures for conducting an impartial hearing without an additional Request for Hearing.
4. **Hearing Procedures:**
 - a. The Section 504 Coordinator will obtain an impartial review official who will conduct a hearing within 45 calendar days from the receipt of the grievant's Request for Hearing unless agreed to otherwise by the grievant or a continuance is granted by the impartial review official.
 - b. Upon a showing of good cause by the grievant or school system, the impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may grant a continuance and set a new hearing date. The request for a continuance must be in writing and copied to the other party.
 - c. The grievant will have an opportunity to examine the child's educational records prior to the hearing.
 - d. The grievant will have the opportunity to be represented by legal counsel at his or her own expense at the hearing and participate, speak, examine witnesses, and present information at the hearing. If the grievant is to be represented by legal counsel at the hearing, he or she must inform the Section 504 Coordinator of that fact in writing at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. Failure to notify the Section 504 Coordinator in writing of representation by legal counsel shall constitute good cause for continuance of the hearing.
 - e. The grievant will have the burden of proving any claims he or she may assert. When warranted by circumstances or law, the impartial hearing officer may require the recipient to defend its position/decision regarding the claims (i.e. A recipient shall place a disabled student in the regular educational environment operated by the recipient unless it is demonstrated by the recipient that the education of the person in the regular environment with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. 34 C.F.R. §104.34). One or more representatives of the school system, who may be an attorney, will attend the hearing to present evidence and witnesses, respond to the grievant testimony, and answer questions posed by the review official.
 - f. The impartial review official shall not have the power to subpoena witnesses, and the strict rules of evidence shall not apply to hearings. The impartial review official shall have the authority to issue pre-hearing instructions, which may include requiring the parties to exchange documents and names of witnesses to be present.
 - g. The impartial review official shall determine the weight to be given any evidence based on its reliability and probative value.
 - h. The hearing shall be closed to the public.
 - i. The issues of the hearing will be limited to those raised in the written or oral request for the hearing.
 - j. Witnesses will be questioned directly by the party who calls them. Cross-examination of witnesses will be allowed. The impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may allow further examination of witnesses or ask questions of the witnesses.
 - k. Testimony shall be recorded by court reporting or audio recording at the expense of the recipient. All documentation related to the hearing shall be retained by the recipient.
 - l. Unless otherwise required by law, the impartial review official shall uphold the action of school system unless the grievant can prove that a preponderance of the evidence supports his or her claim.
 - m. Failure of the grievant to appear at a scheduled hearing unless prior notification of absence was provided and approved by the impartial review official or just cause is shown shall constitute a waiver of the right to a personal appearance before the impartial review official.
5. **Decision:** The impartial review official shall issue a written determination within 20 calendar days of the date the hearing concluded. The determination of the impartial review official shall not include any monetary damages or the award of any attorney's fees.

6. **Review:** If not satisfied with the decision of the impartial review official, any party may pursue any right of review, appeal, cause of action or claim available to them under the law or existing state or federal rules or regulations.

HOSPITAL HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

Hospital/Homebound (HHB) services are designed to provide continuity of educational services between the classroom and home or hospital for students in Meriwether County public schools whose medical needs, either physical or psychiatric, do not allow them to attend school for a limited period of time. HHB instruction may be used to supplement the classroom program for students with health impairments whose conditions may interfere with regular school attendance (e.g., students receiving dialysis or radiation/chemotherapy or students with other serious health conditions).

HHB services are not intended to supplant regular school services and are by design temporary. The student must anticipate being absent from school for a minimum of ten consecutive or intermittent school days due to a medical or psychiatric condition. The student's inability to attend school for medical or psychiatric reasons must be certified by a licensed physician or licensed psychiatrist who is currently treating the student for the diagnosis presented. The Meriwether County Board of Education shall provide hospital/homebound instructional services to students who meet the eligibility requirements as specified in the local policy. It is the intent of the district to ensure that students who are handicapped within the definition of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and students who are disabled within the definition of the Individuals with Disabilities Act are identified, evaluated, and provided with appropriate educational services.

Grievance Procedure for Students:

Students who believe that they are handicapped and who believe they have been discriminated against because of their handicap can file a grievance by contacting the 504 coordinators. An impartial committee will hear the grievance and the committee's findings can be appealed to the local Board of Education.

SYSTEM POLICY FOR HANDICAPPED/DISABLED STUDENTS

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 MCSS, 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. 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 students and guides the delivery of special education supports and services for that student.

DISCRIMINATION NOTICE

Federal law prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990); or disability (section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) in educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. Employees, students and the public are hereby notified that the Meriwether County Board of Education does not discriminate in any educational programs or activities or in employment policies. The following individuals have been designated as the employees responsible for coordinating the system's effort to implement this nondiscriminatory policy.

HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act was reauthorized in 2001 as Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act. The purpose of the Act is to provide immediate enrollment in school for children who lack required documents, a fixed, regular, or adequate nighttime residence.

Questions concerning enrollment of children in Meriwether County Schools should be addressed to:

TITLE VI & TITLE IX

Ms. Carrie Chambers
Federal Programs, CTAE Director
Meriwether County Schools
P.O. Box 70
Greenville, Georgia 30222
Telephone (706) 441-0601

SECTION 504 AND ADA

Mrs. Tonya Waller, EdS
Director of Special Education
Meriwether County Schools
P.O. Box 70
Greenville, GA 30222
Telephone (706) 441-0601

Inquiries concerning the application of the Perkins Act, Title VI, Title IX or Section 504 and ADA to the policies and practices of the system may be addressed to the persons listed above at the Meriwether County Board of Education, P.O. Box 70, 2100 Gaston Street, Greenville, GA 30222; or the Regional Office for Civil Rights, Atlanta, GA 30323; or to the Director, Office for Civil Rights, Education Department, Washington D.C.

INTERNET SAFETY

The Board of Education believes that the use of the Internet in the instructional program is an educational tool that facilitates communication, innovation, resource sharing, and access to information.

Due to the complexity of accessible networks and the potential information available, the Board believes comprehensive guidelines are necessary to serve students' educational needs. It is the policy of the Meriwether County Board of Education that all school system computers with Internet access will have:

1. A qualifying "technology protection measure" as defined in Section 1703(b)(1) of the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000.
2. Procedures or guidelines to monitor users' online activities and prevent access to obscene, child pornography, or harmful-to-minors content.

These guidelines will:

- Monitor online activities to prevent access to inappropriate material.
 - Ensure minors' safety in email, chat rooms, and other communications.
 - Prevent unauthorized access and disclosure of personal identification information.
 - Restrict minors' access to harmful content.
3. The school district will educate all students on appropriate online behavior, including interacting on social media and cyberbullying awareness.

INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Students in Grades 3 and above must have an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) signed by both the parent and student on file in the Media Center before using the Internet. A signed AUP remains valid unless revoked in writing by the parent. A student over 18 can sign their own AUP but must still follow the outlined rules. A student's Internet use may be revoked for repeated violations.

Note: A signed permission form is required for Internet usage, and students cannot visit chat rooms, use email, or alter computer settings.

STUDENT PHOTOS

Pictures of students without names or identifying information may be used on school and system websites unless parents send a written denial by September 15th.

BOOKS

All textbooks and media center books are property of the Meriwether County School System. Students are responsible for the care of these books and must pay for any damages or losses beyond normal wear and tear.

MEDIA CENTER

Students are encouraged to use the media center. Books must be returned on time. Parents are responsible for any lost, damaged, or stolen books.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

Video surveillance may occur on school property and transportation vehicles. Concerns about buses should be directed to the Director of Transportation at (706) 441-0601. Requests to view videos should be directed to the Chief School Resource Officer at (706) 441-0601.

SEARCH & SEIZURE

The principal or authorized representative may search personal belongings based on reasonable suspicion of law or rule violations. Handheld metal detectors may be used to detect prohibited items.

SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

Social media is used to engage with parents, students, and the community. Negative behavior or attacks on students or employees is disruptive and violates district policy. Social media is embraced for learning and communication. Please review the Acceptable Usage Policy and the district's Social Media Policy.

CELL PHONE/ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cell phones and electronic devices are allowed on school property but must not be visible or in use during school hours, especially during testing. Violations will result in disciplinary action. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices. Confiscated devices will be returned to the parent or guardian.

DISTRACTION-FREE EDUCATION PROCEDURE (COMPLIANCE WITH HB 340)

1. Purpose

In alignment with Georgia House Bill 340, the "Distraction-Free Education Act," this procedure aims to minimize distractions caused by personal electronic devices during school hours, enhancing the educational environment for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all students in grades Kindergarten through 12th Grade ("K-12") within the Meriwether County School System, including during the school day and at school-sponsored events during the school day.

3. Definitions

- **Personal Electronic Devices:** Includes, but is not limited to, smartphones, tablets, smartwatches, headphones, earbuds, Meta glasses, smart glasses, wearable technology, gaming devices, and any other personal communication, entertainment, recording, or internet-enabled device not assigned by the school for instructional purposes. This definition also includes any device capable of sending, receiving, accessing, storing, or transmitting communications, data, images, audio, or video.
- **School Day:** The time from the beginning of the first instructional period to the end of the last instructional period. This time includes assemblies and other school related activities occurring during this time.
- **Access:** The act of using, displaying, or having in his or her possession a personal electronic device turned on during the school day.

4. Procedure Overview

Students in grades K–12 are not permitted to access personal electronic devices during the school day. Devices must be turned off and securely stored as provided in this procedure upon arrival and may only be accessed after the school day ends.

5. Implementation Procedures

5.1 Storage of Devices

- Students must turn off all personal electronic devices upon entering the school building.
- All personal electronic devices, including but not limited to cell phones, smartwatches, Meta glasses, tablets, earbuds, headphones, and any other device capable of communication, recording, internet access, or entertainment, are not permitted for student use during the school day. These devices must be placed in a magnetic cell phone pouch upon arrival. The pouch will remain secured and stored in a designated location until the end of the school day.
- If headphones or earbuds are brought to school, they must remain stored throughout the school day. Each student's headphones or earbuds will be placed in an individual bag labeled with the student's name and stored in a designated storage tub until dismissal.
- Teachers and staff will verify device storage during the first instructional period.

5.2 Exceptions

The following are recognized exceptions to this procedure:

- Students with documented medical needs requiring the use of a device and then only to the extent necessary to satisfy the documented medical needs.
- Students with an IEP or 504 Plan that permits device use and then only to the extent necessary to fulfill the terms of the plan or program.
- Emergency situations as determined by school administration.

5.3 Communication During the School Day

Parents/guardians who need to reach their child during the school day should contact the front office. Emergency communication with the parents/guardians will be facilitated through the school's emergency management systems. Students needing to contact parents may use a school phone with staff permission.

5.4 Off-Site Events or Activities

- Off-site events and activities refer to any school-sponsored instructionally related experiences that take place away from the regular school campus. These include, but are not limited to, field trips, athletic competitions, club events, performances, and extended travel opportunities (e.g., overnight or out-of-state trips such as a trip to New York).
- Device use (e.g., cell phones, tablets, smartwatches) will be limited to appropriate times as determined by the teacher, coach, or event supervisor.
- During instructional activities, performances, or team preparation, students may be asked to silence or turn off personal devices to maintain focus.
- Inappropriate use of devices may result in confiscation for the duration of the event and follow-up disciplinary action as per school policy.

5.5 Response to Violations

Violations of this procedure will be handled as follows:

- First Offense: Verbal warning and parent notification.
- Second Offense: Confiscation of the device for the rest of the school day; parent contact required for return.
- Subsequent Offenses: Progressive discipline, such as detention, parent conferences, or other actions per the student code of conduct.

6. Responsibilities

Students: Must follow the procedure by properly storing and not accessing personal electronic devices during the school day.

- Parents/Guardians: Should support the school by reinforcing this procedure at home and using appropriate channels to communicate with their child.
- Teachers/Staff: Will monitor compliance, document violations, and support students in understanding the expectations.

- School Administration: Will oversee implementation, provide guidance on exceptions, and ensure consistent enforcement of the procedure.

7. Review

This procedure will be reviewed annually to ensure ongoing compliance with Georgia law and to evaluate its effectiveness. Adjustments may be made based on feedback from staff, students, and parents.

CHROMEBOOK PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS

1. Chromebook Assignment

Each student is assigned a school-issued Chromebook and charger at the beginning of the school year. Students are responsible for the care and upkeep of their assigned devices.

2. Chromebook Care Expectations

- Keep the device in a safe place when not in use.
- Do not leave it in vehicles or in extreme temperatures.
- Avoid food and drinks near the Chromebook.
- Report any issues or damages immediately to the Media Center.

3. Daily Chromebook Use

- Middle and High School Students:
Students will receive their Chromebook each morning in homeroom and must return it to homeroom every afternoon before dismissal.
- Elementary Students:
Chromebooks will be given out in homeroom each day and used as directed by the teacher.

4. Lost or Damaged Devices

Students and their families are financially responsible for the Chromebook and charger issued to them.

- Lost Chromebook: \$300 replacement fee
- Lost Charger: \$30 replacement fee
- Damaged Device: Fee will be determined based on the extent of the damage

5. Chromebook Return Information

At the end of the school year, all Chromebooks and chargers will be collected and checked off in homeroom.

Please note:

- Only school-issued chargers will be accepted.
- Personal or non-issued chargers will not be accepted and will not count toward return completion.
- All devices and chargers must be returned by the last day of school to avoid report card holds or diploma delays.

6. Questions or Concerns

If you have any questions regarding Chromebook returns, damage, or fees, please visit the Media Center for assistance.

MCSS GRADING PROCEDURES

Purpose: Grading communicates students' academic progress based on standards-based learning. Practices should be consistent across the district and reflect content mastery using the most recent and comprehensive evidence. Instructional feedback and effective teaching are key to improving performance.

Elementary Division

Pre-K:

- Teach/Assess using State Pre-K requirements.
- Tools: Work Sampling Checklist + Pre-K Progress Report.
- Two parent conferences per year.

Grading Scale:

- A = Outstanding (90–100)
- B = Excellent (80–89)
- C = Satisfactory (70–79)
- F = Not Passing (<70)

Kindergarten:

- Use GKIDS four times a year.
- Report on academics, learning approaches, emotional/social, motor skills.

Grades 1–5:

- Assess using State standards.
- Report on academics and specials.

Additional Info:

- No grades for district diagnostics.
- Equal grading weight for assignments.
- Minimum: 8 grades per 9 weeks (incl. 1 summative).

Secondary Division**Grading Scale:**

- A = 90–100
- B = 80–89
- C = 70–79
- F = Below 70

Grades 6–8 (Middle School):

- Summative: 40% (tests, major projects, etc.)
- Quizzes: 35% (quizzes, minor tasks)
- Daily: 25% (classwork, homework, participation)
- Feedback is specific and performance focused.

Minimum per 9 weeks:

- 9 daily grades, 4 quiz grades, 2 summatives.
- Semester = continuous 18-week grade.

Grades 9–12 (High School):

- Final Grade = 80% (daily avg.) + 20% (EOCT/Final)
- Summative: 50%
- Quizzes: 30%
- Daily: 20%

Minimum per 9 weeks:

- 9 daily, 4 quiz, 2 summative grades.
- Semester = continuous 18-week grade.

AP Courses:

Graded per teacher's College Board-approved syllabus.

Note:

All grades reflect academic achievement. No grades for district diagnostics. Grading structures aim to be consistent, clear, and equitable across all levels.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION POLICY

Promotion Guidelines:

Students in Meriwether County Schools must meet both state and local criteria for promotion. Promotion decisions are based on multiple factors, including:

- Kindergarten–3rd Grade: Progress in reading, English Language Arts (ELA), and math
- 3rd Grade: Students must demonstrate reading proficiency on or above grade level
- 5th and 8th Grades: Students must meet grade-level expectations in reading and math on the Georgia Milestones Assessments
- 9th-12th Grade: The graduation Policy IHF (6) outlines the required courses and/or core courses to be taken and the number of units required to receive a diploma from the Meriwether County School System.
- All Grades: Attendance, classroom performance, benchmark assessments, and teacher input are also considered.

Note: Students may be retained for excessive absenteeism if it significantly impacts academic progress.

Retention Guidelines:

A student may be retained if:

- They do not meet grade-level standards in core content areas
- They perform below grade level on state assessments
- They show limited progress even after academic interventions
- Excessive absenteeism has impacted their academic performance and progress

If retention is being considered, parents/guardians will be notified and included in the decision-making process.

Appeals Process:

Parents may submit a written appeal for a retention decision. A Placement Committee—which includes the parent/guardian, teacher(s), and school administrator—will review the student’s performance data and make a final decision based on the student’s best academic interest.

Support for Retained Students:

Students who are retained will receive targeted academic support through an Individualized Academic Plan and may participate in intervention programs such as summer learning, tutoring, or additional instructional time during the school day.

QUEST PROGRAM FOR GIFTED STUDENTS

The Quest Program serves K–12 students in Meriwether County who show high intellectual, academic, or creative abilities. Eligibility is determined by State Board of Education criteria, and referrals may come from teachers, parents, peers, or the student. To learn more you may contact the counselor at your local school or Mrs. Suze Neal at (706) 441-0601 or suze.neal@mcssga.org.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

This policy specifies graduation requirements for students enrolling in the ninth grade for the first time - Policy IHF (6).

The Meriwether County Board of Education (“the Board”) shall provide secondary school curriculum and instructional and support services that reflect the high school graduation and state assessment requirements and assist all students in developing their unique potential to function in society.

To be eligible for graduation with a secondary school credential as defined in the State Board of Education (SBOE) Rule 160-4-2-.48, High School Graduation Requirements for Students Enrolling in the Ninth Grade for the First Time in the 2016-2017 School Year and Subsequent Years, students must successfully complete selected courses specified in the SBOE rule and satisfy additional requirements specified in this policy.

To be eligible for participation in graduation ceremonies, students must have completed all requirements for a diploma, all state assessments and IEP requirements. Students who earn a high school certificate are not allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies.

Students who enroll from another state must meet the graduation requirements for the graduating class they enter and the state assessment requirements as referenced in State Board Rule 160-3-1-.07, Testing Programs - Student Assessment.

Students who enroll in the ninth grade for the first time and then withdraw, must meet the graduation requirements specified in this policy and the assessment requirements specified in State Board Rule 160-3-1-.07, Testing Programs - Student Assessment.

The Board shall make available to all students the required areas of study.

A course shall count only once for satisfying any unit of credit requirement for graduation. See the following chart that aligns with the year of entry into 9th Grade:

<u>Area of Study</u>	<u>Units Required</u>
English Language Arts*	4
Mathematics*	4
Science*	4
<i>NOTE: The 4th Science unit may be used to meet both the science and elective requirement.</i>	
Social Science*	4
CTAE Pathway	3
Health & Physical Education	1
Electives	8
Total Units	28

*Required courses and/or core courses

Graduation Notes & Honors

- **MCSS Diploma:** Requires completion of at least one **Career Pathway**.
- **Foreign Language:** Two units in the same language recommended for students planning to attend a 4-year college.
- **Valedictorian/Salutatorian:** Determined by the highest and second-highest **weighted 4-year GPA**, per Board Policy IHDA.
- **Distinguished Honor Graduate:** Weighted 4-year GPA of **95+**.
- **Honor Graduate:** Weighted 4-year GPA of **90+**.

Course Credit

1. Unit credit is awarded for courses based on Grades 9-12 GSE or SBOE-approved middle school courses that meet 9–12 standards.
2. No credit for K–8 GSE-based instruction.
3. Meeting diploma requirements does not guarantee HOPE Scholarship eligibility.

Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

May earn a regular diploma if:

- Completed integrated GSE-based curriculum (min. 28 units) including academics, career prep, life skills, etc.
- Participated in the GAA in middle and high school with proficient scores.
- Reached 22 years old or transitioned to a setting where supports are provided outside the school system.

Graduation Support Services

The district provides:

1. Guidance services beginning in 8th grade to support graduation planning and advisement.

2. Record keeping and reporting of student progress.
3. Diagnostic and ongoing evaluations to track academic performance.
4. Instructional support including course guides and remedial help.
5. Modified curriculum and assessments for students with disabilities, tailored to meet graduation competencies.

CREDIT RECOVERY/CREDIT REPAIR POLICY

Meriwether County high schools offer Credit Repair and Credit Recovery for students who fail courses required for graduation. These programs target specific academic deficits using standards-based instruction via approved computer software, without repeating the full course. Applications go through the school counselor.

Student Eligibility:

Credit Repair (Course Avg. 60–69):

- Course average must be 60 or higher.
- No excessive unexcused absences.
- Consent form signed by student and parent/guardian.
- Provide own transportation.
- Must complete program in the next session (semester or summer); extensions require principal approval and documentation in Infinite Campus.
- Must score 70%+ on coursework; final grade will be 70%.
- Georgia Milestones EOC (20% of 2nd semester grade) applies.

Credit Recovery (Course Avg. 59 or Below):

- Same as above, except:
 - Course average must be below 60
 - May be subject to a course fee (outside regular hours)

Program Availability

- Held before/after school, during the day, or summer.
- Limited by staff, space, and available course content.
- Not all graduation-required courses may be available.

Requirements to Earn Credit

- Complete all coursework on campus, with a proctor (extenuating circumstances need principal/superintendent approval).
- Attend 90% of sessions before mastery test.
- Finish within assigned timeframe.
- Complete 100% of modules.
- Adhere to zero-tolerance behavior policies.

Grades and Credit

Students who pass the mastery assessment receive a grade of **70%** and earn **1 Carnegie unit of credit**.

MERIWETHER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM'S DRESS CODE

Developed to ensure students dress for success while attending Meriwether County Schools.

Applies to Pre-K through 12th Grade:

- Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be to the length of the mid-thigh or longer.
- All tops must have a neckline no lower than the armpit.
 - *No halter-tops, tank tops, tube tops, strapless shirts, or spaghetti straps, etc.*
 - *Shirts cannot be see-through.*
- No bra straps showing at any time.
- No leggings, yoga pants, or joggers without adequate coverage in middle and high schools.
- No undergarments may be showing.
- No pajamas.

- No body cleavage or midriff may be showing.
- No holes in jeans, shirts, dresses, or garments that expose bare skin above the knee.
- No hats or caps may be worn in the building.
- Sweatshirts, light sweaters, and light jackets are highly encouraged in colder months.
 - *No bulky jackets or jackets with more than two pockets (inside or outside).*
- The hood portion of any garment may not be worn on any part of the head inside any school facility.
- No ski masks.
- Clear book bags are required.
- Clothing with inappropriate (profane, vulgar, sexual, racial, ethical, alcohol, drug-related, tobacco-related, or gang-related) signs, words, slogans, or graphics is not allowed.
- No SAGGING. Pants must be worn up on the waist.
- No solid colors can be worn for an entire outfit (e.g., all red, blue, white, or black) as it may suggest gang affiliation.
- Appropriate footwear must be worn at all times (sandals, athletic shoes, dress shoes with heels 3 inches or less).
- No blankets.

Note:

The Meriwether County Board of Education reserves the right to amend this policy in response to emerging trends. Additionally, principals may enforce further restrictions if specific items cause a disruption.

CONSEQUENCES FOR DRESS CODE VIOLATIONS

Elementary Schools

- **1st Violation:**
Student changes clothes or calls parents.
Parents notified.
Recorded in Infinite Campus as a student conference.
- **2nd Violation:**
Same as 1st + Discipline letter sent.
Student serves 2 days of structured lunch.
- **3rd Violation:**
Same as 2nd + Student serves 3 days of structured lunch.
Parent conference required.
- **4th Violation:**
Same as 3rd + Student serves 5 days of structured lunch.
Behavioral Contract implemented at parent conference.
- **5th Violation:**
Same as 4th + Out-of-school suspension.
Behavioral Contract established or revised.

Middle/High Schools

- **1st Violation:**
Student changes clothes or calls parents.
Parents notified.
Recorded as student conference.
Student held in ISS or alternate location until proper clothing arrives.
If no clothing is provided, student remains in ISS and receives a 2nd violation.
- **2nd Violation:**
Same as 1st + Discipline letter sent.
Student serves 2 days of structured lunch.
- **3rd Violation:**
Same as 2nd + Student serves 1 day of ISS.
Parent conference required.

- **4th Violation:**
Same as 3rd + Student serves 3 days of ISS.
Behavioral Contract implemented at parent conference.

Meriwether County Code of Conduct and Discipline Procedures

It is the purpose of the Meriwether County Board of Education to operate the school system in a manner that will provide an orderly process of education and provide for the welfare and safety of all students who attend MCSS schools. In accordance with this purpose, the Meriwether County Board of Education has adopted a policy that requires schools to implement codes of conduct that focus on maintaining a good learning environment for all students. These standards for behavior require students to respect each other and school district employees, to obey student behavior policies adopted by the Board, and to obey student behavior rules established at each school within the district.

Each school's primary goal is to educate, not to punish; however, when the behavior of an individual student comes in conflict with the rights of others, corrective actions may be necessary for the benefit of that individual, other students, and the school as a whole. Accordingly, students shall be governed by the policies, regulations, and rules set forth in this Code of Conduct and Discipline Procedures (the/this "Code of Conduct"). This policy, and any additional governing rules shall be published and provided annually to all school personnel and students. Parents are encouraged to become familiar with these policies, regulations, and rules of the school system, and to be supportive of them in their daily communication with their children and others in the community.

AUTHORITY OF THE PRINCIPAL

The principal is the designated leader of the school and, in concert with the staff, is responsible for the orderly operation of the school. In cases of disruptive, disorderly, or dangerous conduct not covered in this Code, the principal may undertake corrective measures which he or she believes to be in the best interest of the student and the school, provided any such action does not violate school board policy or procedure or Georgia law.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The students of the Meriwether County School District are expected to maintain good order and discipline in the school environment. Good order and discipline may be described as the absence of distractions, frictions, and disturbances which interfere with the optimum functioning of the student, the class, and the school. Good order and discipline is also the presence of a friendly yet business-like rapport in which students and school personnel work cooperatively toward mutually recognized and mutually accepted goals.

This Code of Conduct is effective during the following times and in the following places:

- At school or on school property at any time.
- Off school grounds at any school activity, function, or event and while traveling to and from such events;
- On vehicles provided for student transportation by the school system and at bus stops.

Additionally, students may be disciplined for off-campus conduct including, but not limited to, behavior which could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and poses a potential danger or threat to the safety of students, staff, or property, or substantially disrupts the educational environment of the school. This includes conduct that occurs outside of school hours and off school grounds but still impacts the school community.

COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE LAW

Consequences and Penalties for Non-Compliance with Compulsory School Attendance Law:

Assuring that children attend school regularly is an important part of a parent's responsibility. Parents are responsible for providing school officials with verification of reasons (written absence notes) for each absence. When your child must be absent, it is important that you state the reason(s) for your child's absence(s) in writing and share these with the school as soon as possible. Any absence not certified by a parent/guardian, physician, or court/other agency (meeting the definition of an unexcused absence) is considered unexcused.

Please note: After three (3) repeated offenses of unexcused absences with parent-written notes, the school reserves the right to no longer accept parent notes as valid excuses. Further absences must then be verified by a medical professional, court, or other official documentation to be considered excused.

Failure to comply with compulsory school attendance as required under Code Section 20-2-690.1. Any parent, guardian, or other person residing in this state who has control or charge of a child or children shall enroll and send such child or children to a public school, a private school, or a home study program that meets state requirements. Any parent, guardian, or other person who has control of a child or children who is in violation of this Code section shall be subject to a fine not less than \$25.00 and not greater than \$100.00, or imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction. Each day's absence from school in violation of this part after the child's school system notifies the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a child of ten (10) unexcused days of absence for a child shall constitute a separate offense. School Board Policy JB: Student Attendance is specifically incorporated into this Code of Conduct. Each future absence after the tenth (10th) unexcused absence shall result in the commencement of proceedings before the Juvenile Court of Meriwether County, Georgia and/or the Magistrate Court of Meriwether County, Georgia.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

This Code of Conduct is based on the expectation that parents, guardians, teachers, and school administrators will work together to improve and enhance student behavior and academic performance and will communicate freely their concerns about, and act in response to, student behavior that detracts from the learning environment. School administrators recognize that two-way communication through personal contact is extremely valuable; therefore, they provide information to parents as well as on-going opportunities for school personnel to hear parents' concerns and comments.

The Code of Conduct specifies within its standards of behavior various violations of the Code which may result in a school staff member's request that a parent or guardian come to the school for a conference. Parents are encouraged to communicate with the schools regularly and are expected to be actively involved in the behavior support processes designed to promote positive choices and behavior amongst our students.

Georgia law provides a process in which a teacher or principal identifies a student as a chronic disciplinary problem: The principal shall notify by (telephone call and by mail) the student's parent or guardian of the disciplinary problem, invite the parent or guardian to observe the student in a classroom situation, and request at least one parent or guardian to attend a conference to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan.

Georgia law also states that before any chronic disciplinary problem student is permitted to return to school from a suspension or expulsion, the school shall request by telephone call and by mail at least one parent or guardian to schedule and attend a conference to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan.

The law allows a local board of education to petition the juvenile court to require a parent to attend a school conference. If the court finds that the parent or guardian has willfully and unreasonably failed to attend a conference requested by the principal pursuant to the laws cited above, the court may order the parent or guardian to attend such a conference, order the parent or guardian to participate in such programs or such treatment as the court deems appropriate to improve the student's behavior, or both. After notice and opportunity for hearing, the court may impose a fine, not to exceed \$500.00, on a parent or guardian who willfully disobeys an order of the court under this law.

GEORGIA CODE NOTICE

Georgia Code Section 20-2-735 requires us to advise parents that they should inform their children on the consequences, including potential criminal penalties, of underage sexual conduct and crimes for which a minor can be tried as an adult.

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

When it is necessary to impose discipline, school administrators and teachers will follow a progressive discipline process. Nothing in this Code of Conduct shall prevent school officials from deviating from this process where

circumstances may warrant. The degree of discipline to be imposed by each school official will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior of a particular student and will in consideration of other relevant factors. A major consideration in the application of the code is that the disciplinary action taken by school officials be the least extreme measure that can resolve the discipline problem. Circumstances to be considered include, but are not limited to, the following factors: age, health, maturity, academic placement of the student, prior conduct, attitude, cooperation of the parents, willingness to make restitution, and the seriousness of the offense. Such factors may be taken into account in determining the punishment to be imposed, including any decision to impose a punishment that is more or less severe than suggested in this Code of Conduct.

The Meriwether County School System's Student Code of Conduct provides a systematic process of behavioral correction in which inappropriate behaviors are followed by consequences. Disciplinary actions are designed to teach students self-discipline and to help them replace inappropriate behaviors with appropriate behaviors.

The following disciplinary actions may be imposed for any violation of this Code of Conduct:

- Notification of parents
- Warning and/or counseling with a school administrator or counselor
- Loss of privileges
- Time-out
- Temporary removal from a class or activity
- Parent conference
- After-school Detention
- Saturday school
- Temporary placement in an alternative education program
- Short-term suspension
- Referral to a tribunal hearing for long-term suspension or expulsion
- Suspension or expulsion from the school bus
- Referral to law enforcement or juvenile court officials: Georgia law requires that certain acts of misconduct be referred to the appropriate law enforcement officials. The school will refer any act of misconduct to law enforcement officials when school officials determine such a referral to be necessary or appropriate.

SUSPENSION, EXPULSION, AND REPEATED OFFENSES

Students may be suspended due to repeated violations of ANY rule. The MAXIMUM punishment for any offense is expulsion. Suspension for more than 10 days or expulsion may only be determined by a disciplinary tribunal hearing as outlined in the Meriwether County Board of Education Policy JCEB.

Parents or students may elect not to contest whether a student has violated the behavior code or received the appropriate discipline, and in such case, an agreement may be negotiated which would include the parents or students waiving a right to a hearing before a disciplinary tribunal or hearing officer in accordance with School Board policy.

A conference with the student must precede any immediate suspension from school for a period of ten (10) days or less. At this conference, the student may be informed of the offense for which the student is charged and allowed to explain his or her behavior. If immediate suspension is the action to be taken by school administrators, it must not exceed 10 school days and parents must be notified. 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.

School officials may search a student at any time there is reasonable suspicion the student is in possession of an unapproved or illegal item, or for the purpose of obtaining evidence of a violation of school rules. Personal property items (including personal electronic devices), school lockers, desks, and other school property are subject to inspection and search by school authorities at any time without further notice to students or parents. At the discretion of administrators, students are required to cooperate if asked to open book bags, lockers, etc. Metal detectors and drug or weapon-sniffing dogs may be utilized at school or at any school function, including activities which occur outside normal school hours or off the school campus.

STUDENT SUPPORT PROCESSES

The Meriwether County Board of Education provides a variety of resources. These resources are available at every school within the district to help address student behavioral problems. The school discipline process will include appropriate consideration of support processes to help students resolve such problems. These resources include, but are not limited to, student support teams, student behavior plans, mentor programs, and school counselors.

NON-EXCLUSIVE LIST OF BEHAVIOR THAT WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

- **Activating a fire alarm under false pretenses or making a bomb threat:** Immediate suspension, possible referral to disciplinary tribunal and referral to law enforcement officials.
- **Arson:** In-School Suspension, out of school suspension, restitution, report to law enforcement, or expulsion beyond the current school semester or year.
- **Assault (physical or verbal), including threatened violence upon another student, a teacher, or another school official:** Immediate suspension, automatic referral to the disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed an assault upon a teacher, other school official or employee; possible referral to law enforcement officials, and possible referral to the disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed an assault upon another student.
- **Attendance related offenses. Attendance as required under Code Section 20-2-690.1:** Any student or parent/guardian who is in violation of this Code section shall be subject to a referral to the court having jurisdiction. Each day's absence from school in violation of this part after the school system notifies the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a child of ten (10) unexcused days of absence for a child shall constitute a separate offense.
- **Battery, including sexual battery, upon another student, a teacher, another school official or persons attending school-related functions:** Immediate suspension, automatic referral to the disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed battery upon a teacher, other school official or employee, possible referral to law enforcement officials, and possible referral to the disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed a battery upon another student.
- **Breaking/Entering and Burglary:** Restitution, report to law enforcement, long-term suspension, or expulsion.
- **Bullying:** Discipline for any act of bullying, including cyber bullying, as defined under the bullying definition in this document, shall be within the discretion of the principal which may range from a reprimand to out-of-school suspension. However, upon a tribunal finding that a student in grades 6-12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student shall at a minimum be assigned to the Alternative Learning Center. Refer to the Meriwether County School Systems Bullying protocol on pages 40-42 of the student handbook.
- **Cheating on school assignments:** Zero grade for assignment, substitute assignment, detention, parent conference and/or in-school suspension.
- **Classroom and school disturbances:** Possible removal from class, activity, or situation, conference with teacher, parents, and counselor, detention, in-school suspension, suspension, and/or referral to disciplinary tribunal.
- **Criminal law violations:** Any behavior—whether on or off campus—that could result in a student being criminally charged with a felony or misdemeanor, and that poses a potential danger to people or property at school or disrupts the educational environment, may result in disciplinary action. This includes, but is not limited to, in-school suspension, short-term suspension, or referral to a disciplinary tribunal. Parents/guardians and/or students are required to report any criminal charges, arrests, or law enforcement involvement related to a student to the school administration within two weeks (14 calendar days) of the incident. This two-week period includes weekends, holidays, and summer break. Failure to report such incidents may lead to additional disciplinary consequences, which could include, but are not limited to, doubling the original consequences for the behavior in question.
- **Disrespectful conduct, including the use of vulgar or profane language, toward teachers, administrators, other school personnel, other students, or persons attending school-related functions:** Possible removal from class, activity, or situation, conference with teacher, parents, and counselor, detention, in-school suspension, suspension, and/or referral to disciplinary tribunal.

- **Driving violations (moving and non-moving):** Short-term or long-term revocation of on campus driving privileges, in-school suspension, and/or detention.
- **Extortion or attempted extortion:** Immediate suspension, possible referral to the disciplinary tribunal, and/or possible restitution.
- **Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting or erroneously reporting information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student:** Parent conference, detention, in-school suspension, and/or possible referral to a disciplinary tribunal. Any student (or parent or friend of the 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.
- **Fighting:** Possible out of school suspension, possible referral to a disciplinary tribunal hearing, possible referral to law enforcement officials.
- **Fireworks (possession and/or use of):** Parent conference, possible suspension, and possible referral to the disciplinary tribunal and to law enforcement officials.
- **Gambling or possession of gambling devices:** Parent conference, detention, in-school suspension, and/or suspension.
- **Gang Affiliation:** Report to law enforcement and/or expulsion beyond the current school semester or year.
- **Giving false information to school officials:** Parent conference, detention, in-school suspension, and/or suspension.
- **Inappropriate public displays of affection:** Parent conference, detention, in-school suspension, suspension, and/or referral to disciplinary tribunal.
- **Insubordination, disorderly conduct, disobeying school rules, regulations, or directives, disobeying directives given by teachers, administrators, or other school staff:** Possible removal from class, activity, or situation, conference with teacher, parents, and counselor, detention, in-school suspension, Saturday School, suspension, and/or referral to disciplinary tribunal.
- **Inciting, advising or counseling of others to engage in prohibited acts:** Possible removal from class, activity, or situation, conference with teacher, parents, and counselor, detention, in-school suspension, suspension, and/or referral to disciplinary tribunal.
- **Marking, defacing, or destroying school property during school or off-school hours:** Possible suspension, possible referral to the disciplinary tribunal, and/or possible restitution.
- **Possession or use of a weapon or dangerous instrument:** Any handgun, firearm, rifle, shotgun or similar weapon; any explosive compound or incendiary device; or, any other dangerous weapon as defined in O.C.G.A. § 16-11-121, including a rocket launcher, bazooka, recoilless rifle, mortar, or hand grenade. Immediate suspension pending a disciplinary tribunal and immediate referral to law enforcement officials. Such infractions require a minimum one calendar year expulsion. (O.C.G.A. 16-11-127.1 - A fine of not more than \$10,000; imprisonment for not less than two or more than ten years, or both.)
- **Possession of hazardous objects or other weapons:** Possible referral to disciplinary tribunal, out-of-school suspension, or in-school suspension.
- **Possession, sale, attempted sale, use, distribution or under the influence of any drug, including but not limited to narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, over the counter drug, unauthorized prescription drug or drug paraphernalia, alcoholic beverage or other intoxicant, or of any substance represented as drugs or alcohol.**
 - **ALCOHOL** - Immediate suspension pending a disciplinary tribunal, and immediate referral to law enforcement officials. Distribution, attempted sale or sale of these substances requires suspension for the remainder of the semester in which the incident occurred, plus expulsion for one full semester.
 - **DRUGS** - Immediate suspension pending a disciplinary tribunal, and immediate referral to law enforcement officials. Distribution, attempted sale or sale of these substances requires suspension for the remainder of the semester in which the incident occurred, plus expulsion for one full semester.
 - **OVER THE COUNTER DRUGS** - Immediate suspension and/or possible referral to disciplinary tribunal and/or referral to law enforcement officials. **Repeated Offenses:** Report to law enforcement, long term suspension (more than 10 days), or expulsion beyond the current school semester or year.

- **Robbery:** Restitution, report to law enforcement, long-term suspension, expulsion beyond the current school semester or year.
- **Sexual Battery:** Report to law enforcement and/or expulsion beyond the current school semester or year.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Detention, Saturday school, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, report to law enforcement, long term suspension (more than 10 days), or expulsion beyond the current school semester or year.
- **Sexual Offense:** Saturday school, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, report to law enforcement, long term suspension (more than 10 days), or expulsion beyond the current school semester or year.
- **Taunting:** Detention, in-school suspension, Saturday School, out-of-school suspension, and/or parent conference.
- **Theft:** In-school or out-of-school suspension, restitution, and possible referral to law enforcement officials.
- **Tobacco or nicotine (possession or use of any form of tobacco, nicotine, or tobacco use-related paraphernalia such as lighters, matches, electronic cigarettes or vapers):** Detention, in-school suspension, Saturday School, out-of-school suspension, and/or parent conference.
- **Trespassing:** Possible in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, restitution, report to law enforcement, or long-term suspension (more than 10 days).
- **Vaping device or vaping-related paraphernalia (possession and or):**
 - **First Offense:** Disciplinary action may include up to 3 days ISS with mandatory completion of *Consequences of Vaping online module*.
 - **Second Offense:** Disciplinary action may include up to 5 days of ISS or OSS and possible referral to disciplinary tribunal.
 - **Third Offense:** Disciplinary action may include up to 10 days OSS, student behavior contract, and possible referral to disciplinary tribunal.
- **Violence against a teacher, administrator, bus driver, or any other school employee:** A disciplinary tribunal hearing will be held following any alleged assault or intentional physical attack against a teacher with the intent to cause bodily harm, resulting in severe injuries or any physical attack against a teacher or any other school system employee, if such teacher, other school system employee, or the principal requests (O.C.G.A. 20-2-753). In cases involving an alleged intentional act of physical violence by a student against a teacher, school bus driver, or other school official or employee, the student shall be suspended pending a hearing by a tribunal (O.C.G.A. 20-2-751.6). A student found by a tribunal to have committed an intentional act of physical violence against a teacher, school bus driver, school official, or school employee that results in physical harm to that person shall be referred to juvenile court with a request for a petition alleging delinquent behavior, and shall be expelled from the public school system by the tribunal for the remainder of the student's eligibility to attend public school, subject to appeal to the Board of Education. The Board at its discretion: (1) may permit the student to attend an alternative education program for some or all of the period of expulsion; and, if recommended by a tribunal, (2) may permit a student in a grade K-8 to re-enroll in the regular public school program for grades 9-12; and/or (3) may also permit a student in a grade K-6 to re-enroll in the public school system. Ref. O.C.G.A. 20-2-751.6; 16-3-21 In addition, a disciplinary tribunal hearing will be held following any substantial damage intentionally caused by a student on school premises to the personal property of a teacher or any other school system employee, or at the discretion of the principal, to the property of another student.
- **Violation of the Meriwether County Schools Student Code of Conduct for personal electronic devices, computer hardware, software, network and internet access, to include any unauthorized entry into a computer network secured site:** Revocation of privilege, parent/guardian notification, detention, in-school suspension, and/or suspension, possible referral to the disciplinary tribunal and/or law enforcement. Warning statement: The act of entering or attempting to enter a computer network secured site (hacking) is a very serious offense that may include permanent expulsion from the school system.
- **Violation of school dress code:** Possible removal from class, activity, or situation, parent conference, detention, Saturday School, and/or in-school suspension.
- **Willful and malicious damage to real or personal property of the school or to personal property of any person legitimately at the school during school or off school hours:** Possible suspension, referral to disciplinary tribunal, possible referral to law enforcement officials, and/or possible restitution. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-753)

- **Willful and persistent violation of the Student Code of Conduct:** Student who chronically and/or habitually violate school rules or this Code of Conduct may be referred to the disciplinary tribunal, even if the offenses the student has committed do not include such a referral as a possible consequence.

NOTE:

The Meriwether County Board of Education, Superintendent, Principals and Administrators or Designee do reserve the right to deviate from the above discipline procedures and the following classification of offenses and punishments. All referrals are cumulative, so any discipline disposition will apply to the degree of the offense, followed by the number of referrals.

CRIMINAL LAW VIOLATIONS

- **Misdemeanors:** A student who is arrested for, charged with, or found guilty of a misdemeanor offense will be subject to disciplinary consequences as outlined by the school's code of conduct and administrative discretion. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, in-school suspension, short-term suspension, loss of privileges, or referral to a disciplinary tribunal, depending on the nature and severity of the offense. Minor misdemeanor offenses that result only in a fine and do not involve harm, threat, or disruption to the school environment may be treated as a school rule violation and addressed through appropriate administrative action.
 - **Drug/Alcohol/DUI:** Any student who is accused of a misdemeanor alcohol/drug offense or a misdemeanor DUI will receive consequences as outlined above.

If the student produces proof that the charges are completely dismissed or the student is found not guilty, these consequences may be lifted. If a student has been arrested or charged with an offense, but the matter has been expunged, sealed, removed from a student's record, treated as a "first offender" action, or the behavior has not been prosecuted (nolle prosequi), that student may present or obtain documentation as required by the school to determine the circumstances of the matter and appropriate eligibility consequences, as determined at the discretion of school administration. Such incidents will be reviewed on an individualized basis and a legal determination in the matter may not be sufficient to change the student's consequences.
- **Felony Conduct:** Any off-campus conduct of a student which could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school or at a school-sponsored event a potential danger to persons or property or which disrupts the educational process may be disciplined pursuant to Meriwether County School Board Policies including, but not limited to, JCDA and JCDA-E: Discipline may include, but is not limited to, change of placement, suspension or expulsion. Pursuant to state law including, but not limited to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-768, any student who has been suspended or expelled for being convicted of, being adjudicated to have committed, being indicted for, or having information filed for the commission of any felony or any delinquent act under Code Sections 15-11-602 and 15-11-707 which would be a felony if committed by an adult shall not be enrolled in the Meriwether County School System unless it is through the Alternative Learning Center. If a student is refused readmission or enrollment, the student or the student's parent or legal guardian has the right to request a hearing pursuant to the procedures if timely requested pursuant to OCGA 20-2-754.
- **Adjudication or Conviction of Certain Felonies:** The adjudication or conviction of an enrolled student or a student seeking enrollment that involves one or more of the following violent criminal offenses and which makes his/her continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process:
 - a. Murder (O.C.G.A. § 16-5-1);
 - b. Voluntary Manslaughter (O.C.G.A. § 16-5-2);
 - c. Rape (O.C.G.A. § 16-6-1);
 - d. Aggravated Sodomy (O.C.G.A. § 16-6-2);
 - e. Aggravated Child Molestation (O.C.G.A. § 16-6-4);
 - f. Aggravated Battery (O.C.G.A. § 16-5-24); and
 - g. Aggravated Armed Robbery (O.C.G.A. § 16-8-41)
 - h. Commission of any other felony or delinquent act under Code Sections 15-11-602 and 15-11-707 which would be a felony if committed by an adult.

If the Disciplinary Hearing Tribunal Panel finds that the student has committed any of these offenses, the student will receive a minimum one-year expulsion but may receive the punishment of permanent expulsion.

- **Adjudication or Conviction of Felony (All others):** The adjudication or conviction of a student of an offense that is designated as a felony under the laws of the State of Georgia or a felony under the laws of the United States of America and which makes his/her continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process.

Discipline may include, but is not limited to, change of placement, suspension or expulsion.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

ARSON – Unlawful and intentional damage or attempted damage to any real or personal property by fire or incendiary devices.

ASSAULT: Any threat or attempt to physically harm another person or any act which reasonably places another person in fear of physical harm. (Example: threatening or abusive language)

BATTERY: Actual and intentional touching or striking of another person against his or her will or intentionally causing bodily harm to an individual.

BREAKING/ENTERING AND BURGLARY: Unlawful or unauthorized forceful entry into a school building or vehicle (with or without intent to commit theft).

BULLYING: The bullying of a student by another student is prohibited. Any act of bullying should be reported to the school principal or his or her designee. In accordance with Georgia law, “bullying” means an act which occurs on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school related functions or activities, or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system, that is:

1. Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; or
2. Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or
3. Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that;
 - a. Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of Georgia Code Section 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harm as such term is defined in Code Section 16-5-23.1;
 - b. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s education;
 - c. Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
 - d. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

The term applies to acts which occur on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school-related functions or activities or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system. The term also applies to acts of cyberbullying which occur through the use of electronic communication, whether or not electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment, if the electronic communication (1) is directed specifically at students or school personnel, (2) is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, and (3) 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 purposes of this Code Section, 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 a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system.

DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL HEARINGS: Disciplinary tribunal hearings are held following any instance of an alleged violation of the student code of conduct if the principal recommends a suspension or expulsion of a student longer than ten days or following an alleged assault or battery upon any school system employee if that employee requests a hearing. The purpose of the hearing is to hear the charges and the evidence to determine if the Code of Conduct was violated; and if so, to determine appropriate disciplinary action. The student and parents/guardians have a right to this due process hearing before a long-term suspension (more than ten days) or expulsion can be administered. The maximum penalty that can be imposed by a tribunal is permanent expulsion. A third tribunal request during a student's school career may lead to permanent expulsion. In the event that a student chooses to admit guilt or chooses not to contest the charges before a tribunal; and if the school and a parent/guardian agree as to appropriate disciplinary action; and if the parent/guardian chooses to waive the opportunity to participate in a tribunal hearing, present evidence, subpoena and cross examine witnesses and be represented by an attorney at such hearing; a Tribunal Waiver Agreement may be written, co-signed and dated. If the tribunal chooses to adopt the agreement as its decision, the decision will be final and cannot be appealed by the school or the family. If the agreement is not adopted as the decision of the tribunal, the document becomes null and void, all parent/guardian rights will be restored and a new hearing date and time will be established.

DISORDERLY CONDUCT: Any act that substantially disrupts the orderly conduct of a school function, the learning environment, or poses a threat to the health, safety, and/or welfare of students, staff, or others.

DRESS CODE: The current dress code that is annually published to the students and parents/guardians in the student handbook, as may be amended by the Board of Education, and which is maintained in the principal's office.

EXTORTION: Obtaining money or goods from another student by violence, threats, or misuse of authority.

FIGHTING: The act of engaging in physical contact with another individual in a hostile or aggressive manner, with the intent to cause harm or in response to provocation. This includes hitting, punching, kicking, slapping, or any other physical aggression between two or more individuals. Mutual participation in such behavior, regardless of who initiated the conflict, will be considered fighting and is subject to disciplinary action. Does not include verbal confrontations, tussles, or other minor confrontations.

FIREWORKS: The term "fireworks" means any combustible or explosive composition or any substance or combination of substances or article prepared for the purpose of producing a visible or audible (large or small) effect by combustion, explosion, deflagration, or detonation, as well as articles containing any explosive or flammable compound and tablets and other devices containing an explosive substance. (Also includes stink bombs/smoke bombs.)

GANG AFFILIATION: Any act or exhibition, individual or collective, which communicates gang allegiance or affiliation; and/or would be a criminal act if committed by an adult and is deemed gang related by the principal. Gang related activity includes but is not limited to hand sign flashing; wearing of clothing articles in a certain way or color scheme typical of that worn by known gang members; jewelry, tattoos, graffiti on personal items; vandalism of public or private property; and acts of intimidation, threat, fighting and other forms of violence.

GAMBLING: Engaging in a game or contest in which the outcome is dependent upon chance even though accompanied by some skill, and in which a participant stands to win or lose something of value.

HARASSMENT: Behavior based on a student's race, national origin, sex, religion or disability that is unwelcomed, unwanted, and/or uninvited by the recipient. It can be verbal, non-verbal, and/or physical and includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature.

HAZARDOUS OBJECTS OR OTHER WEAPONS: 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 rigid 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 instrument of like kind, any

nonlethal air gun, and any stun gun or Taser. Such term shall not include any of these instruments used for classroom work authorized by the teacher.

HAZING: Bullying and intimidation in association with rituals to join an extracurricular group/activity or to raise a student's rank/status within the organization.

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE: Intentionally making physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature with the person of a school official; or intentionally making physical contact which causes physical harm to another unless such physical contacts or physical harms were in defense of himself or herself, as provided in GA Code Section 16-3-21.

PROBATIONARY STATUS: Students returning to their home school following an assignment to the Alternative Learning Center shall be on Probationary Status. Discipline offenses will be assigned 3 days OSS on first offense, 5 days OSS on second offense, and 10 days + Disciplinary Tribunal on the third offense.

ROBBERY: The taking of, or attempting to take, anything of value that is owned by another person or organization under confrontational circumstances by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: Sexual harassment can take many forms and it is not possible to define or itemize every aspect of the harassment forbidden by the School District. Sexual harassment may include conduct or speech that entails unwelcome sexual advances, requests or demands for sexual favors, taunts, threats, comments of a vulgar or demeaning nature, or physical contact that creates a hostile environment. There may be other speech or conduct which students experience as inappropriate or illegal harassment, all of which is forbidden.

Sexual harassment defined in the Federal Regulations implementing Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is defined as follows: **Sexual harassment** means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. An employee of the District conditioning the provision of a District aid, benefit, or service on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the District's education program or activity; or
3. "Sexual assault"- an offense classified as a forcible or nonforcible sex offense under the uniform crime reporting system of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; or "Dating Violence"- sex-based violence committed by a person-
 - a. who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and
 - b. where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:
 - i. The length of the relationship.
 - ii. The type of relationship.
 - iii. The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship; or

"Domestic Violence"- sex-based violence which includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies, or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction; or

"Sex-based Stalking" - engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to-

- a. fear for his or her safety or the safety of others; or
- b. suffer substantial emotional distress.

Students, parents, or other persons wishing to report alleged sexual harassment of a student should promptly notify the student's school principal, school counselor, or Title IX Coordinator. All reports or complaints regarding alleged sexual harassment of students will be handled in accordance with Board Policies JAA and/or JCAC, as applicable.

TAUNTING: Teasing, taunting, demeaning others, picking, emotional stress (not on a repeated basis).

THEFT: The offense of taking or, if in lawful possession thereof, appropriating any property, of another with the intention of depriving that person of the property, regardless of the manner in which the property is taken or appropriated.

TRESPASSING – Entering or remaining on a public-school campus or school board facility without authorization or invitation and with no lawful purpose for entry.

DEFINITIONS OF POSSIBLE DISCIPLINARY INTERVENTIONS

ADMINISTRATOR MANAGED PROCEDURES AND CONSEQUENCES

- **IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION:** Removal of a student from class(es) or regular school program and assignment of that student to an alternative program isolated from peers.
- **OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION:** Removal of a student from the regular school program for a period not to exceed the end of the semester. During the period of suspension, the student is excluded from all school-sponsored activities including practices, as well as competitive events, and/or activities sponsored by the school or its employees.
- **SATURDAY SCHOOL:** Principals may assign students in grades 6-12 to Saturday School for violations of the rules governing attire, tardiness, class cuts, leaving school without permission, cutting detention hall, tobacco, and unexcused absences.
- **DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL HEARING:** School officials appointed by the Board of Education to sit as fact finder and judge with respect to student disciplinary matters.
- **EXPULSION:** Removal of a student from school beyond the end of the semester. During the period of expulsion, the student is excluded from all school-sponsored activities including practices, as well as competitive events, and/or activities sponsored by the school or its employees.
- **WAIVER:** A waiver is a signed admission of guilt and/or acceptance of consequences in lieu of a formal disciplinary tribunal.

TEACHER MANAGED CONSEQUENCES: Teacher-managed consequences refer to disciplinary actions handled directly by the classroom teacher in response to minor behavioral infractions that do not require immediate administrative intervention. These consequences are designed to address and correct student behavior in the classroom setting and may include but not limited to after school detention, confiscation, redoing assignments, parent-teacher conferences, lunch detention, assigned seating, and written apologies. The goal of teacher-managed consequences is to promote a positive learning environment while encouraging students to take responsibility for their actions.

SCHOOL RELATED GEORGIA LAWS

- **Required Reporting:** Any teacher or other person employed at any public or private elementary or secondary school who has reasonable cause to believe that a student at that school has committed upon school property or at any school function any act prohibited by law relative to aggravated assault if a firearm is involved; aggravated battery; sexual offenses; carrying deadly weapons at public gatherings; carrying a weapon on school property, at school functions or in a school safety zone; or possession and other activities regarding marijuana and controlled substances, should immediately report the act and the name of the student to the principal or his/her designee. Any principal who receives a report or has knowledge of any acts prohibited by these laws and has reasonable cause to believe the validity of the act(s) should immediately notify the appropriate school system superintendent and law enforcement if a student possesses a firearm, incendiary device, or other dangerous weapon; or if the student is involved in an assault using a hazardous object. Ref. O.C.G.A. 20-2-1184
- **Weapon Possession:** Except as otherwise provided by Georgia law, possession of deadly weapons on school property is punishable by law “..... it shall be unlawful for any person to carry to or to possess or have under such person’s control while within a school safety zone or at a school building, school function, or school property or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the school any weapon or explosive compound Any person who violates this subsection shall be guilty of a felony and, upon conviction

thereof, be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000, by imprisonment for not less than two nor more than ten years, or both As used in this code section 'Weapon' means and includes 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, metal knucks, blackjack, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid 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, and any stun gun or taser. " Ref. O.C.G.A. 16-11-127.1

- **Drug Use is Prohibited:** "It shall be unlawful for any person to manufacture, distribute, dispense, or possess with intent to distribute a controlled substance or marijuana in, on, or within 1,000 feet of any real property owned by or leased to any public or private elementary school, secondary school, or School Board used for elementary or secondary education. Any person who violates or conspires to violate . . . this Code section shall be guilty of a felony. . ." Ref. O.C.G.A. 16-13-32.4
- **Loitering in School Safety Zone:** It is unlawful for any person to remain upon the premises or within the school safety zone of any public school when that person does not have a legitimate need or cause to be present. The principal has the authority to exercise control over the buildings and grounds to prohibit any person who does not have a legitimate need or cause to be present thereon from loitering on the premises. The principal should notify the appropriate law enforcement agency to prohibit loitering. If a person refuses to remove himself from the premises if requested to do so by the principal or designee, he shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature. Ref. O.C.G.A. 20-2-1180
- **Disrupting Public School:** It shall be unlawful for any person to disrupt or interfere with the operation of any public-school, public-school bus, or public school bus stop as designated by local school boards of education. Any person violating this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature. Ref. O.C.G.A. 20-2-118.1
- **Non-Student Conduct on School Premises and Buses:** Persons other than students who insult or abuse school teachers in presence of pupils may be ordered to leave school premises. Any parent, guardian, or person other than a student at the public school in question who has been advised that minor children are present and who continues to upbraid, insult, or abuse any public school teacher, public school administrator, or public school bus driver in the presence and hearing of a pupil while on the premises of any public school or public school bus may be ordered by any of the above designated personnel to leave the school premises or school bus, and upon failure to do so such person shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine not to exceed \$500.00. Ref. O.C.G.A. 20-2-1182

BULLYING/CYBER-BULLYING PROTOCOL

The District expressly prohibits the bullying/harassment/hazing of any student, by any means or method, at school, on school property, or at school-related functions; while traveling to or from school on a school bus; off-campus when the behavior results in a disruption to the school environment; or by use of data or software that is accessed through a District computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of the District.

A. Prohibited Behaviors

Examples of bullying/harassment/hazing include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal assaults, teasing, or name-calling
- Rumors or spreading of falsehoods
- Threats, taunts, and intimidation
- Public humiliation
- Social isolation
- Harassment/stalking
- Physical contact (hitting/shoving)
- Physical violence or attacks
- Theft or extortion
- Destruction of property
- Any form of cyberbullying using school tech or committed at school

- Using cameras to embarrass and distribute/post images
- Sending abusive or threatening messages
- Gossip/rumor-spreading via websites
- Cyberbullying through digital platforms (email, blogs, social media, chat rooms, etc.)
- Cyberstalking causing substantial emotional distress

The policy applies to behavior at school, on school property or vehicles, at school bus stops, at school events, or off-campus when it disrupts the school environment.

Cyberbullying and State Law

The policy also covers cyberbullying if the electronic communication:

1. Is directed at students or school personnel
2. Is intended to threaten or disrupt school operations
3. Creates reasonable fear of harm or has a high chance of doing so

Electronic communication includes any transfer of signs, signals, writings, images, sounds, or data by wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or optical systems.

B. Reporting Incidents

Reports may be made by students, parents, or stakeholders to school staff. Reports may be made:

- Verbally or in writing
- By name or anonymously
- Using the District Alert Line at 1-888-475-0482
- Through the GA Dept. of Education's School Safety Hotline at 1-877-SAY-STOP

Employees are responsible for documenting and forwarding reports to the principal within 1 day. Witnessing employees should report in writing. Parent/guardian of the alleged victim should be notified immediately upon a report.

If dissatisfied, parents may contact the Superintendent or designee.

Retaliation is prohibited and should be reported.

Confidentiality will be maintained consistent with the District's obligations.

Failure of employees to comply may result in disciplinary action up to termination.

C. Responding to Incidents

Students in grades 6–12 found to have committed bullying/harassment/hazing three times in one school year may be assigned to an alternative program through proper due process.

Response Process:

1. Investigation – Administrators are advised to investigate allegations of bullying/harassment/hazing promptly. Administrators shall use their personal judgment and discretion as to how such an investigation should proceed and what steps should be implemented to address the allegations. Support staff may be used as needed.
2. Notification – Parents of all parties should be informed no later than three days after the investigation is completed unless the Administrators have justifiable reasons to not do so.
3. Interim Measures – Immediate steps may be taken to protect the complainant.
4. Disciplinary Action – Based on age and severity; may include:
 - Loss of privileges
 - Seat/class reassignment
 - Detention
 - In-school/out-of-school suspension
 - Expulsion
 - Assignment to an alternative program

5. Follow-Up & Aftercare – Includes counseling, interventions, school climate assessment, and reiteration of anti-retaliation policy.

BOARD BUS DISCIPLINE POLICY

The transportation of students is an important function in our school system. Every precaution should be taken to see that students are transported safely. The same behavior is expected on the school bus as is expected in the classroom. The Code of Conduct and Discipline Procedures that apply for the school also apply while students are being transported by any vehicle provided for the transportation of students. In addition, it is important that students abide by the bus discipline policies as outlined herein.

Fighting on the bus and abusive language or profanity toward the bus driver will result in a minimum of five days' suspension from the bus. A student whose behavior warrants that the bus return to the school will be suspended from riding the bus for a minimum of twenty (20) days.

Bus Drivers will report specific disciplinary problems to the principal or assistant principal in writing on the Bus Conduct Report Form. If the driver is uncertain about who was unruly or who caused the disturbance, the driver will report the incident to the principal for investigation. After the principal administers the proper disciplinary action, a copy of the Bus Conduct Report Form will be forwarded to the parent, the bus driver, and the Transportation Supervisor that day or the following school day. This form will indicate the action taken by the principal. The principal will maintain a file of the Bus Conduct Report Form.

As required by Georgia law, a student found to have engaged in physical acts of violence shall be subject to the penalties determined by a tribunal. If a student is found to have engaged in bullying or in physical assault or battery of another person on the school bus, a meeting involving the parent/guardian and appropriate school district officials shall be held to develop a school bus behavior contract. This contract should provide for progressive age-appropriate discipline, penalties, and restrictions for student misconduct on the bus. Contract provisions may include but shall not be limited to assigned seating, ongoing parental involvement, and suspension from riding the bus.

The following procedures should be instructive to principals in applying and enforcing the bus conduct policy:

- **First Offense:** The principal may take proper disciplinary action, which may include suspension from riding the bus, based on the nature or severity of the offense.
- **Second Offense:** The principal may suspend the student from riding the bus for at least five (5) school days.
- **Third Offense:** The principal may suspend the student from riding the bus for at least ten (10) school days.
- **Fourth Offense:** The principal may suspend the student from riding the bus for at least twenty (20) school days.
- **Fifth Offense:** The principal may suspend the student from riding the bus for sixty (60) school days.
- **Sixth Offense:** The principal may suspend the student from riding the bus for one hundred eighty (180) school days.

School bus transportation is a privilege afforded pupils by the Board of Education; it is not a right. The purpose of the policies herein is to help create a safe and wholesome atmosphere for the students who ride the bus. Note: Students who are suspended from the bus are suspended from all buses. Unserved suspension will carry over to the next school year.

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE PROHIBITED

Students shall be prohibited from acts of physical violence, bullying, physical assault or battery, verbal assault, and disrespectful conduct toward the driver or other persons on the school bus. Georgia law defines physical violence as:

1. Intentionally making physical contact with another that is of an insulting or provoking nature.
2. Intentionally making physical contact that causes physical harm to another.

Georgia law mandates that students found by a tribunal to have committed an act of physical violence against a teacher, bus driver, school official, or school employee involving intentional physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature may be disciplined by expulsion, long-term suspension, or short-term suspension. If physical violence against one of the above employees causes physical harm (unless in self-defense), the student shall be

expelled from the public school system for the remainder of the student's eligibility to attend public school and referred to juvenile court. Students in kindergarten through grade eight who commit the above acts may, on the recommendation of the tribunal and at the discretion of the school system, be permitted to re-enroll in the regular public school program for grades nine through twelve.

THE FOLLOWING ARE RESTRICTED ON THE BUS:

- A. Eating is not permitted on the bus during the school day.
- B. No glass container of any kind will be transported.
- C. Beverages will not be permitted regardless of the type of container used. Exceptions may be made during particularly hot weather.
- D. The use of tobacco, electronic cigarettes, and vapers is forbidden.
- E. Gum is also forbidden.
- F. Students will be permitted to carry only books and other items related to school work that can be held in the student's lap. Large musical instruments, sports equipment, snakes, and live animals will not be transported. Band instruments may be transported if they can be held in the student's lap and do not take up seat space.
- G. Use of electronic devices, including but not limited to cell phones, audible radios, or any other electronic device that might interfere with the school bus communications equipment or the school bus driver's safe operation of the bus are prohibited.
- H. Students are prohibited from using mirrors, lasers, cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's safe operation of the school bus.
- I. Use of electronic devices, including but not limited to cell phones, audible radios, or any other electronic device that might interfere with the school bus communications equipment or the school bus driver's safe operation of the bus are prohibited.
- J. Students are prohibited from using mirrors, lasers, cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's safe operation of the school bus.

SCHOOL BUS ELIGIBILITY POLICY

Students are eligible for transportation by school bus provided they live within the attendance area of the school they attend. Bus routes are established under the direction of the Superintendent and in accord with recommendations of the Division of Pupil Transportation, Georgia Department of Education.

Additions to existing routes are based upon the following guidelines:

- 1. The student must live at least 3/10 miles from the present bus route.
- 2. The student must live on a state or county-maintained road with adequate space for the bus to turn around.
- 3. The road must be wide enough for the bus and another vehicle to pass.

Students are assigned to a particular bus route and can only change buses with the approval of the Principal and the Transportation Department. Students must get on and get off from their assigned bus at selected bus stops unless written permission is granted to let off at a stop other than the designated stop. This request from the parent must be made in writing to the principal. Parents will assume the responsibility of the child when such a request is granted.

SCHOOL BUS GUIDE

A public school transportation program has but one purpose - to safely transport the students. Therefore, it is extremely important that each student be aware of his/her role and responsibility in seeing that the entire operation works smoothly and efficiently. Several areas in which students are asked to cooperate are:

SAFE RIDING - 10 SAFETY RULES

- 1. Arrive at bus stop 5 minutes before scheduled pick-up time.
- 2. Dress for the weather - umbrella and raincoat for rain; coat and gloves when cold.
- 3. Never stand or play in the road. Wait for the bus at least 15 feet from the road in a safe location.
- 4. Always use the handrail when boarding or leaving the bus. Do not wear clothing or carry bags that have strings or straps that could get caught in the handrail.
- 5. Remain seated when the bus is moving. Students' seats are designed to protect students in the event of an accident.

6. Never try to reach anything under or beside the bus. If students drop something while crossing in front of the bus, do not return to pick it up. The bus driver cannot see students. After crossing safely, ask the driver for help.
7. Observe silence when approaching and while stopped for railroad crossings so the driver can hear if a train is coming.
8. Look carefully before crossing the road. Do not assume that a car will stop for students - wait to be sure it is stopped before crossing. Watch for driver's signal before crossing the road.
9. Always cross in front of the bus - never behind it!
10. Talk quietly. Do not "horseplay." The driver should give full attention to driving to ensure students' safety.

BUS STOP CONDUCT

- Students and parents are responsible for students' conduct at the bus stop, from home to the bus stop, and from the bus stop to students' home.
- If students must cross a street or road to get to the bus stop on the opposite side, wait until the bus arrives and cross in front of the bus only after the stop sign on the bus is activated and only when signaled by the bus driver.
- Be at the bus stop 5 minutes early, but not too early. The bus driver is responsible for the maintenance of his schedule and cannot wait for tardy pupils. Each student should have books in hand and be ready to board the bus by the time the driver opens the door.
- Any student who leaves the school grounds while waiting for a bus to arrive will not be allowed to ride a bus home after returning to the school grounds. Individuals who leave the school grounds will be reported to the principal.

ENTERING AND LEAVING THE BUS

- A. Wait until the bus has come to a complete stop before attempting to board or leave the bus.
- B. Load starting at the rear of the bus, sitting three to a seat, unless otherwise directed by the driver.
- C. Enter and leave the bus in an orderly and quiet manner.
- D. Enter and leave the bus only at the front door, except in case of an emergency.
- E. After leaving the bus, if students must cross the highway, walk at least twelve feet in front of the bus, then:
 - Make certain the bus is stationary, the door is still open, and the stop signal is extended.
 - Upon signal from the driver, proceed across the roadway in the following manner: Walk (don't run) in front of the bus within sight and hearing of the driver, look both ways, and stay out of the line of traffic until the path across the roadway is free of any danger.
 - The danger signal is a blast of the horn. Stop immediately and look at the bus driver.
 - If you drop something after exiting the bus, do not return to retrieve it. The bus driver might not see you.
- F. A student will not be put off a bus for misconduct at any place other than his home or school.

CONDUCT ON THE BUS

- A. Obey the bus driver.
- B. Do not disturb the bus driver while he/she is driving.
- C. Boys and girls will be seated separately.
- D. Stay in seat and do not change seats unless so directed by the driver—and then only if the bus is stopped.
- E. Sit down while the bus is in motion.
- F. Keep voices low. Avoid shouting or whistling.
- G. No bullying, "rough housing," pushing, fighting, throwing things, or profane or abusive language.
- H. Do not open or close windows of the bus without the driver's permission.
- I. Keep all body parts inside the bus.
- J. Keep the bus clean, sanitary, and orderly. Never tamper with the bus or any of its equipment.
- K. Willful damage or destruction of any part of the bus is prohibited, and any such damage must be paid for by the student or parent.
- L. A student shall not operate the door nor stand in the driver's compartment.

Parents/Guardians,

Meriwether County Transportation is excited about the new school year. We would like to cover some rules and expectations that are for the safety of **ALL** students. Having your help as a parent/guardian will make things run a lot easier. Remember that riding the bus is a privilege and all rules must be followed to continue riding the bus.

1. Make sure ALL students are at the bus stop 5 minutes before the scheduled pickup time. The bus can be 5 minutes before the scheduled pickup or 5 minutes after the scheduled pickup. So that is why it is very important to have your child/children at their assigned stop 5 minutes early.
THIS IS A MAJOR SAFETY ISSUE AND MUST BE FOLLOWED!
Students **MUST** stand 12ft from the bus stop and wait till the bus comes to a complete stop, door opens and driver signals for them to approach the bus.
2. If your child/children miss the bus, **PLEASE** call the transportation office (706)441-0610. They will give you a safe place to get on the bus.
NEVER CHASE THE BUS DOWN! THIS IS FOR THE SAFETY OF YOUR CHILD/CHILDREN! Buses have a danger zone of 12ft around the whole bus and if the driver doesn't see your child/children they could be in harm's way.
3. **NO CHECKING THE MAILBOX WHEN EXITING THE BUS IS ALLOWED. STUDENTS MUST MOVE 12FT FROM THE BUS IN ANY DIRECTION. NEVER GO BEHIND THE SCHOOL BUS**
4. ALL students will have assigned seats and will be required to sit there without arguments with the driver. * Students must remain in their seats unless they have permission to move from the driver.
5. Students will be expected to maintain a respectable noise level on the bus.
6. There will be ABSOLUTELY NO EATING ON THE BUS! This is a safety issue due to choking hazards.
7. NO FIGHTING!
8. NO hanging out in the aisle from seat
9. NO spraying perfumes or any flammable sprays. NO NAIL POLISH ALLOWED.
10. Keep ALL body parts inside bus at all times. **NO HANGING OUT WINDOWS** or throwing objects out of bus windows.
11. ABSOLUTELY NO WEAPONS (Knives, guns, etc.) This also includes ammunition, explosives, flammable materials, and dangerous chemicals. No Device by which any materials may be projected or propelled.
12. No smoking or vaping allowed on the bus
13. Profane or vulgar language is not permitted on the bus
14. The possession, sale, or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs on the bus is **PROHIBITED**.
15. Threats, intimidation, or violence towards drivers, monitors or other students will NOT be tolerated.
16. Students are NOT allowed to tamper with emergency doors, exits, any controls or devices on the bus.
17. **DO NOT DAMAGE SCHOOL BUS PROPERTY!** Parents will be required to pay for the damage and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken with the student.
18. Commit no act that jeopardizes safety of ANY passenger, driver, monitor or student on the bus.
19. Students are NOT allowed to change buses or get off at a different stop without advance written permission from the parents and approved by the school administrators.
20. **NO PARENT OR UNAUTHORIZED PERSONNEL SHALL BOARD ANY SCHOOL BUS. THIS IS TRESPASSING AND WARRENTS WILL BE FILED FOR VIOLATIONS.**
21. **THE SCHOOL BUS DRIVER IS IN CONTROL AT ALL TIMES**

PARENTS, PLEASE MAKE SURE TO BE AT THE BUS STOP OR WHERE YOU CAN BE SEEN FROM THE BUS FOR **ALL ELEMENTARY STUDENTS**. If your child/children are in 3rd, 4th or 5th and can be let off the bus without an adult being seen, you **MUST** write a letter and have it approved through the school. Grades Pre-K, K, 1st and 2nd **MUST** have an adult seen or get off the bus with an older sibling. We look forward to working with you all for an amazing school year.

MERIWETHER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Grounds for a Complaint:

Any person, organization, or agency ("complainant") may submit a complaint to the Meriwether County School System (MCSS) if they believe MCSS is violating a federal law or regulation related to a program under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA).

Complaints must address violations that occurred within one (1) year of the complaint date, unless a longer timeframe is reasonable due to ongoing or systemic issues.

Federal Programs for Which Complaints Can be Filed:

Complaints may be filed for violations related to the following federal programs:

- Title I, Part A – Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies
- Title I, Part C – Education of Migratory Children
- Title I, Part D – Prevention and Intervention for At-Risk Youth
- Title II, Part A – Teacher and Principal Training and Recruitment
- Title II, Part D – Technology in Education
- Title III, Part A – English Language Acquisition
- Title IV, Part B – 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- Title VI, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 6111 – State Assessment Program
- Title VI, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 6112 – Competitive Grant Program for Assessment Instruments
- Title VI, Part B, Subpart 2 – Rural and Low-Income Schools
- Title IX, Part E, Subpart 1, Section 9503 – Private School Participation

Complaint Process:

If the complaint originates at the local level, the complainant must first attempt to resolve the issue using MCSS's local written complaint procedures before contacting the Georgia Department of Education.

If unresolved, the complainant must submit written proof of this attempt when escalating the issue to the Georgia Department of Education. For forms and more details on how to file a complaint, visit www.mcssga.org.

PARENTS RIGHT TO KNOW: *Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Paraprofessionals*

In compliance with the requirements of the elementary and Secondary Education Act the Meriwether County School System would like to inform you that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teacher(s). The following information may be requested:

- Whether the teacher has met the Georgia Professional Standards Commission's requirements for certification for the grade level and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or other provisional status through which Georgia qualifications or certification criteria have been waived;
- The college major and any graduate certification or degree held by the teacher;
- Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.

If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher's qualification, please contact Superintendent Dr. Al Griffin, PO Box 70, Greenville, GA 30222, (706) 441-0601.

PARENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

A parent of a minor child at any school within the district may exercise his or her parental rights using the following procedures:

1. A parent may review records relating to his or her minor child by contacting the office at his or her child's school and requesting the same. A mutually agreeable time for parent record review will be scheduled during regular business hours.
2. A parent may learn about his or her minor child's courses of study, including, but not limited to, parental access to instructional materials intended for use in the child's classroom, by contacting the instructional leader at the school and requesting the same. Such instructional materials will be made available for parental review during the first two weeks of each grading period, either online or on site upon a parent's request made during the review period.

3. A parent may object to instructional materials intended for use in his or her minor child's classroom or recommended by his or her minor child's teacher by contacting the instructional leader at the school.
4. A parent may withdraw his or her minor child from the school's prescribed course of study in sex education if the parent provides a written objection to his or her child's participation. Parents will be notified in advance of the sex education course content and parents will be given the opportunity to opt his or her minor child out of participation by notifying the minor child's teacher in writing.
5. A parent may provide written notice that photographs or video or voice recordings of his or her minor child are not permitted, subject to applicable public safety and security exceptions, by notifying the minor child's school in writing upon the child's enrollment.

* Pursuant to Georgia Code 20-2-786 (f)



Dear Parents/Guardians,

The journey of learning to read and write stands as one of life's most foundational achievements. Literacy mastery fosters a passion for learning and bolsters proficiency across all subject areas, laying a solid foundation for future success. At Meriwether County Schools, we are dedicated to providing a high-quality curriculum, fostering supportive relationships, and implementing differentiated instruction to ensure that every child realizes their full potential in literacy.

Senate Bill 48 mandates that local school systems commence screening all students from kindergarten through third grade for characteristics of dyslexia. Dyslexia encompasses a specific set of learning challenges that can impede the acquisition of reading and spelling skills.

Individuals with dyslexia often encounter difficulty associating the letters they see on a page with the sounds those letters and combinations of letters represent.

Furthermore, **House Bill 538**, known as the "Georgia Early Literacy Act," underscores the importance of early intervention by requiring local school systems to employ a universal screener to identify students performing below grade level in reading. This bill mandates the adoption of consistent standards for measuring literacy, utilizing high-quality instructional materials, providing teacher training, and implementing intervention plans for students reading below grade-level expectations.

In alignment with these legislative directives, students in grades K-3 will take the I-Ready Diagnostic and other assessments to evaluate their fundamental reading skills. This process aims to assess students' readiness for the current grade level and determine appropriate instructional pathways. Early intervention may be warranted to support students' learning journeys. Our objective is to identify students exhibiting characteristics of dyslexia or other reading difficulties and to furnish them with the requisite support at the earliest juncture to ensure they attain and sustain grade-level proficiency.

Following the results of these screenings, your child may qualify for further assessment of their reading abilities and potential risk for dyslexia. It's imperative to note that these assessments/screenings are not intended or designed to diagnose dyslexia; rather, they aim to pinpoint children experiencing reading difficulties that may necessitate additional support, enabling us to tailor interventions to address each student's specific needs.

If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to reach out to:
Daffanee Ledbetter, MTSS Coordinator - 706-441-0601 Ext 1010
April Underwood, RTI Specialist - 706-441-0601 Ext 1014

Warm regards,

Meriwether County School System Literacy Team

**Meriwether County School System
Parent/Guardian ~ OPT-IN / OPT-OUT for Technology Use**

Student Legal Name (please print):

School: _____ **Grade:** _____

Internet Access:

_____ **I DO** give permission for my student to have Internet access at school for instructional purposes.

_____ **I DO NOT** give permission for my student to have Internet access at school for instructional purposes.

Parent/Legal Guardian's Signature

Date

Student Photography / Videotaping:

_____ **I DO** give permission for my student to be photographed/videotaped and photos/videos or voice recordings used for editorial /recognition purposes

_____ **I DO NOT** give permission for my student to be photographed/videotaped and photos/videos or voice recordings used for editorial/recognition purposes.

Parent/Legal Guardian's Signature

Date

Meriwether County School-Based TeleHealth



TeleHealth Services

We would like to remind you of the TeleHealth Services that are available to our students. This is a unique opportunity to bring healthcare to your child while he/she is at school.

The TeleHealth clinics are open Monday-Friday from 8:00 AM to 2 PM and are closed during school holidays. All appointments are done on site at the school. Your child must be at school on the day of the appointment in order to participate in the TeleHealth services.

The process is simple. If your child is seen by the school nurse or counselor and is identified as needing a doctor's appointment, we will then contact you for permission for your child to be seen via the TeleHealth Clinic. You may also request an appointment for your child by contacting the school nurse. Follow-up ADHD/ADD appointments are also available from providers located across the state if your physician is not listed. Patients do not have to change providers or see their assigned provider with TeleHealth. They can keep their Primary Care Provider and use TeleHealth to connect with other providers like they would for an urgent care or walk-in clinic.

No student will be treated without parental consent. Except for specialty care appointments, parents do not have to be present for students to receive services; however, parents are welcome to be present. TeleHealth staff will call parents before and after all appointments.

For your child to participate in any Meriwether County School-Based TeleHealth services, you must complete an Enrollment Packet. This packet includes medical insurance coverage information, health history information, and consent forms. For billing purposes, the student's insurance on file will be used for any appointments. Usual and customary charges will apply. The school will not be responsible for any fees incurred during the TeleHealth appointment.

If your child was enrolled in the TeleHealth program during the previous school year, he/she will automatically be enrolled in the TeleHealth Program for the next school year; however, you will be required to complete a "Medical Update Form" to verify correct information on file from the previous year.

Consults with Specialists are available

Child's Name _____ Teacher _____

_____ **My child is already enrolled please send me an update form.**



Telehealth Update Packet

(For Previous Enrolled Students Only)

Please Complete Pages 51 and 52

Please be sure to fill out all information in the packet, signing and dating all required areas. This enrollment update packet is only required to be filled for students that was previously enrolled. If the student is enrolling in Telehealth for the first time, please fill out pages 78-82.

Meriwether County Health Services

MEDICAL UPDATE FORM

To ensure your child receives services from Meriwether County Schools, this consent form must be completed annually.

Date: _____ **Grade:** _____ **Age:** _____ **Homeroom:** _____ **School Year:** _____

Student Information

Student Name: _____ **Date of Birth:** _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip Code:** _____ **County:** _____

Student Resides With: _____

Guardian Information

Name: _____

Address (if different from above): _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip Code:** _____ **County:** _____

Employer: _____ **Work Phone/Extension:** _____

Home Phone: _____ **Cell Phone:** _____ **Other:** _____

Medical Information

Primary Physician: _____

Preferred Pharmacy: _____

Medication Allergies: _____

Current Medications (include dosage and times):

Medical Conditions/Problems:

Previous Surgeries:

Insurance Information

Insurance Provider: _____ **Group #:** _____ **Policy #:** _____

An updated copy of your insurance card is required with this form.

****Form continued next page**

TELEHEALTH CONSENT

I hereby voluntarily give my consent for my child listed below to receive telehealth services through Meriwether County Schools for the purpose of healthcare service(s) and/or procedure(s). I authorize any physician or designated health/mental health professional working with Meriwether County Schools to provide care. I understand that additional consent will be obtained prior to each appointment. I understand that during the telehealth consult, details of my child's medical history, examinations, x-rays, and tests will be discussed with other health professionals through the use of interactive video, audio, and telecommunication technology. I understand that a physical examination may take place. I understand that a non-medical technician may be present in the telemedicine studio to aid in the video transmission. I understand that video, audio and/or photo recordings may be taken of the patient during the procedure(s) or service(s). I understand that all existing laws regarding access to my child's medical records apply to these telehealth consultations. Not all telecommunications are recorded and stored. Additionally, dissemination of any patient identifiable images or information for telemedicine interactions to researchers or other entities shall not occur without my consent. Reasonable and appropriate efforts have been made to eliminate any confidentiality risks associated with the telemedicine consultation, and all existing confidentiality protections under federal and Georgia state law apply to information disclosed during a telemedicine consultation. It is my right to withhold or withdraw consent to the telemedicine consultation at any time without effecting my child's right to future care or treatment or risking the loss or withdrawal of any program benefits to which my child would otherwise be entitled. I agree that any dispute arising from a telemedicine consult will be resolved in Georgia, and that Georgia law shall apply to all disputes. I have been advised and understand all potential risks, benefits, and consequences of telemedicine. My child's healthcare provider has discussed with me the information provided above. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the information presented in this consent and about the telemedicine consultation. All my questions have been answered, and I understand the written information provided above.

I agree for my child to participate in telemedicine consultations for the procedure(s) and/or service(s) described above.

Patient Name: _____ **Date of Birth:** _____

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



Telehealth Enrollment Packet

(New Students Only)

Please Complete All Pages

Please be sure to fill out all information in the packet, signing and dating all required areas.

This enrollment packet is only required to be filled out once. Each school year, you will receive a short information update form to complete and return. If you wish to withdraw your child from the Telehealth Service, please provide written notice of such request. Thank you for your interest in this program.

Meriwether County Health Services

**MERIWETHER COUNTY SCHOOLS
STUDENT INFORMATION PACKET**

Date: _____ **Grade:** _____ **Homeroom:** _____ **School Year:** _____

Patient Information

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____ Sex: ☐ M ☐ F

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____ County: _____

Social Security Number: _____ Primary Language: _____

Race:

☐ African American/Black ☐ Asian ☐ Caucasian/White ☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐ Other: _____

Student Resides With:

☐ Both Parents ☐ Mother ☐ Father ☐ Stepparent ☐ Grandparent(s) ☐ Other: _____

Mother's/Guardian's Information

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Race: _____ Social Security Number: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____ County: _____

Employer: _____ Work Number/Ext: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Other: _____

Email Address: _____

Father's/Guardian's Information

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Race: _____ Social Security Number: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____ County: _____

Employer: _____ Work Number/Ext: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Other: _____

Email Address: _____

Emergency Contact (Other than Parent/Guardian)

Name: _____

Relationship to Student: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Other: _____

TELEHEALTH CONSENT

I hereby voluntarily give my consent for my child listed below to receive telehealth services through Meriwether County School System for the purpose of healthcare service(s) and/or procedure(s). I authorize any physician or designated health/mental health professional working with MCSS to provide care. I understand that additional consent will be obtained prior to each appointment. I understand that during the telehealth consult, details of my child's medical history, examinations, x-rays, and tests will be discussed with other health professionals through the use of interactive video, audio, and telecommunication technology. I understand that a physical examination may take place. I understand that a non-medical technician may be present in the telemedicine studio to aid in the video transmission. I understand that video, audio and/or photo recordings may be taken of the patient during the procedure(s) or service(s). I understand that all existing laws regarding access to my child's medical records apply to these telehealth consultations. Not all telecommunications are recorded and stored. Additionally, dissemination of any patient identifiable images or information for telemedicine interactions to researchers or other entities shall not occur without your consent. Reasonable and appropriate efforts have been made to eliminate any confidentiality risks associated with the telemedicine consultation, and all existing confidentiality protections under federal and Georgia state law apply to information disclosed during a telemedicine consultation. It is my right to withhold or withdraw consent to the telemedicine consultation at any time without affecting my right to future care or treatment or risking the loss or withdrawal of any program benefits to which I would otherwise be entitled. I agree that any dispute arising from a telemedicine consult will be resolved in Georgia, and that Georgia law shall apply to all disputes. I have been advised and understand all potential risks, benefits, and consequences of telemedicine. My healthcare provider has discussed with me the information provided above. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the information presented in this consent and about the telemedicine consultation. All my questions have been answered, and I understand the written information provided above.

Patient Name: _____ **Date of Birth:** _____
Parent/Guardian Signature _____ **Date** _____

Please list any adult(s), other than parents/ guardians, over the age of 18 who has permission to give consent for your child to participate in a telehealth visit if parents/guardians cannot be reached.

Name: _____ Relationship to Patient: _____

Home Number: _____ Cell Number: _____ Other: _____

Name: _____ Relationship to Patient: _____

Home Number: _____ Cell Number: _____ Other: _____

Name: _____ Relationship to Patient: _____

Home Number: _____ Cell Number: _____ Other: _____

I hereby voluntarily give my consent for the above listed person(s) to approve a school-based telehealth visit in the event that I cannot be reached. I understand that I may withdraw my consent for any of the above persons at any time by submitting a written statement to the school nurse or telehealth coordinator. I understand that any person(s) listed above will continue to have my consent to approve a telehealth visit until such signed and dated written statement is received.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ **Date** _____

MEDICAL HISTORY

Name of Primary Care Physician _____
Address _____ Phone Number _____

Name of Dentist _____
Address _____ Phone Number _____

Name of any other Health Care Provider _____
Address _____ Phone Number _____

Name of Pharmacy _____
Address _____ Phone Number _____

List Medication Allergies

1) _____ 2) _____
3) _____ 4) _____

List All Medical Problems (Ex: Asthma, ADD/ADHD, Autism, Hypertension, etc.)

1) _____ 2) _____
3) _____ 4) _____

List all Previous Surgeries

1) _____ 2) _____
3) _____ 4) _____

Current Medication List (Include dosage and time)

1) _____ 2) _____
3) _____ 4) _____

Family History (Ex: Hypertension, Cancer, etc.)

Mother _____ Father _____

Please list any religious/personal beliefs that may affect your care:

Medical History Checklist
Please mark all that apply to the patient

ENDOCRINE ☐ Swelling under arms or neck ☐ Weakness and tiredness ☐ Always hungry ☐ Increased thirst ☐ Increased urination ☐ Tends to be too hot ☐ Tends to be too cold ☐ Frequent fever and chills ☐ Night sweats ☐ Problems going to sleep ☐ Problems waking up after falling asleep ☐ Recent weight gain ☐ Recent weight loss ☐ Diabetes ☐ Goiter/thyroid problems ☐ Neck pain or lumps ☐ Other: _____	EARS, NOSE & THROAT ☐ Wears glasses or contacts ☐ Eye drainage ☐ Blurry vision ☐ Recent changes in vision ☐ Decreased hearing ☐ Earache or drainage ☐ Ringing in ears ☐ Allergies (seasonal) ☐ Sinus problems ☐ Frequent nosebleeds ☐ Frequent sore throat ☐ Tongue/mouth sores ☐ Any change in voice ☐ Dental problems ☐ Other: _____	CARDIOVASCULAR ☐ Chest pain ☐ Heart palpitations ☐ Dizziness upon standing ☐ Swelling in feet/hands ☐ High blood pressure ☐ High cholesterol ☐ Fainting spells ☐ Shortness of breath with exercise ☐ Heart murmur ☐ Other: _____ BEHAVIORAL / MENTAL ☐ Nightmares ☐ Bedwetting ☐ Eating problems ☐ Thumb sucking ☐ Discipline problems ☐ Other: _____
GASTROINTESTINAL ☐ Frequent heartburn ☐ Decreased appetite ☐ Frequent nausea or vomiting ☐ Liver disease ☐ Jaundice or hepatitis ☐ Difficulty swallowing ☐ Stomach pain ☐ Recent change in bowel habits ☐ Frequent diarrhea ☐ Frequent constipation ☐ Incontinence ☐ Bloody stools ☐ Rectal pain ☐ Hemorrhoids ☐ Rectal fissure ☐ Parasites or worms ☐ Pancreatitis	INFECTIONS ☐ Chickenpox ☐ Hepatitis B ☐ Hepatitis C ☐ HIV/AIDS ☐ Strep throat ☐ Jaundice ☐ Other: _____ PULMONARY ☐ Chronic snoring ☐ Persistent cough ☐ Coughing up blood ☐ TB (or exposure to TB) ☐ Sleep apnea ☐ COPD, emphysema, or chronic bronchitis ☐ Asthma ☐ Other: _____	HEMATOLOGY ☐ Anemia / low blood count ☐ Sickle cell disease ☐ Bleeding / bruising easily ☐ Cancer (Please list): _____ ☐ Chemo/Radiation exposure ☐ Other: _____ MUSCULOSKELETAL ☐ Frequent pain in fingers or hands ☐ Muscle or joint pain ☐ Leg cramps with exercise ☐ Leg cramps at night ☐ Arthritis ☐ Other: _____

☐ Other: _____		
NEUROLOGY ☐ Frequent headaches ☐ Migraines ☐ Seizures ☐ Stroke or paralysis ☐ Memory problems ☐ Meningitis ☐ Nerve damage to feet/hands ☐ Other: _____ MALE ONLY ☐ Weak urine stream ☐ Prostate problems ☐ Lump on testicle ☐ Sexual difficulty ☐ STD – Explain below: _____	GENITOURINARY ☐ Frequent urination ☐ Burning on urination ☐ Difficulty starting urination ☐ Incontinence ☐ Kidney stones ☐ Kidney disease ☐ Other: _____ FEMALE ONLY ☐ Pregnancies (How many?): _____ ☐ Miscarriages (How many?): _____ ☐ Cesarean section ☐ Hysterectomy ☐ High blood pressure while pregnant ☐ Gestational diabetes ☐ Lump in breast ☐ Menstrual problems ☐ Sexual difficulty ☐ STD – Explain below: _____	BEHAVIORAL / MENTAL HEALTH ☐ Overactive / Hyperactive ☐ Shyness / Social avoidance ☐ Sleeping problems ☐ Developmental delays ☐ Learning disabilities ☐ Depression ☐ Anxiety ☐ Cries often ☐ Feels sad ☐ Hears voices ☐ Anger ☐ Diagnosed behavioral / mental disorder If yes, please list: _____ ☐ Drug use ☐ Mental disorder – please explain: _____

Explain any checked above:

OTHERS

Please explain any other conditions that may not have been listed:

All Medical History Provided Is True And Accurate To The Best Of My Knowledge.

My signature indicates that all medical history is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

AUTHORIZATION TO BILL INSURANCE

Please note that Meriwether County School System is not responsible for billing or for the collection of any associated fees for the services provided. Your insurance will be billed by the physician's office, and you will be responsible for copays, deductibles, or any other charges not covered by your insurance.

Patient Information

Patient's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____
Social Security Number: _____

Primary Insurance Company

Insurance Company: _____
Person Insured: _____ Insured's Date of Birth: _____
Insured's Social Security Number: _____
Policy or Member Number: _____
Group Number: _____

Secondary Insurance Company (if applicable)

Insurance Company: _____
Person Insured: _____ Insured's Date of Birth: _____
Insured's Social Security Number: _____
Policy or Member Number: _____
Group Number: _____

Responsible Party

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____
Employer: _____

A COPY OF YOUR INSURANCE CARD IS REQUIRED

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Information on this form is protected health information (PHI) and is to be treated as confidential under HIPAA rules, privacy & security. All services are charged directly to the patient or the patient's representative and/or insurance company by the provider. I consent to the use of PHI for purposes of treatment, payment, and operations. I authorize the entity to use the PHI as needed. I authorize that payment of benefits be made on my behalf directly to the provider. I understand that I am financially responsible for all charges not covered by insurance.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

HIPAA AND OUR PATIENTS

The HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) Privacy Rule became law in 1996. The Office for Civil Rights enforces the HIPAA Privacy Rule, which protects the privacy of identifiable health information. This rule essentially controls the use and disclosure of what is known as Protected Health Information.

We are required to provide you with the attached notice. We encourage you to read the information concerning our privacy practices. It is your copy to keep.

I acknowledge receipt of the HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices from Meriwether County Schools.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

NOTICE OF INFORMATION PRACTICES

This notice describes how information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.

Understand your Health Record/Information

Each time you visit a hospital, physician, or other healthcare provider, a record of your visit is made. Typically, this record contains your symptoms, examination and test results, diagnoses, treatment, and a plan for future care or treatment. This information, often referred to as your health or medical record, serves as a:

- Basis for planning your care and treatment
- Means of communication among the many health professionals who contribute to your care
- Legal document describing the care you received
- Means by which you or a third-party payer can verify that services billed were actually provided
- A tool in education health professionals
- A source of data for medical research
- A source of information for public health officials charged with improving the health of the nation
- A source of data for facility planning and marketing
- A tool with which we can assess and continually work to improve the care we render and the outcomes we achieve

Understand what is in your record and how your health information is used helps you to:

- Ensure its accuracy
- Better understand who, what when, where, and why others may access your health information
- Make more informed decisions when authorizing disclosure to others

Your Health Information Rights

Although your health record is the physical property of the healthcare practitioner or facility that compiled it, the information belongs to you. You have the right to:

- Request a restriction on certain uses and disclosures of your information as provided by 45 CFR 164.522
- Obtain a paper copy of the notice of information practices upon request
- Inspect and copy your health record as provided in 45 CFR 164.528
- Obtain an accounting of disclosures of your health information as provided in 45 CFR 164.528
- Request communications of your health information by alternative means or at alternative locations
- Revoke your authorization to use or disclosed health information except to the extent that action has already been taken.

Our Responsibilities

This organization is required to:

- maintain the privacy of your health information
- Provide you with a notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to information we collect and maintain about you
- abide by the terms of this notice
- notify you if we are unable to agree to a requested restriction
- accommodate reasonable request you may have to communicate health information by alternative means or at alternative locations

We reserve the right to change our practices and to make the new provisions effective for all protected health information we maintain. Should our information practices change, we will mail a revised notice to the address you've supplied us.

We will not use or disclose your health information without your authorization except as described in this notice.

For More Information or to report a Problem

If you have questions and would like additional information, you may contact the director of health information managed at 367-9841 extension 1530

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you can file a complaint with the director of health information management or with the health and Human Services. There will be no retaliation for filing a complaint.

Examples of Disclosures for Treatment, Payment and Health Operations

We will use your health information for treatment.

For example: Information obtained by a nurse, physician, or other member of your healthcare team will be recorded in your record and used to determine the course of treatment that should work best for you. Your physician will document in your record his or her expectations of the members of your healthcare team. Members of your healthcare team will then record the actions they took and their observations. In that way, the physician will know how you are responding to treatment.

We will use our health information for payment.

For example: A bill may be sent to your or a third- party payer. The information on or accompanying the bill may include information that identifies you, as well as your diagnosis, procedures, and supplies used.

We will use your health information for regular health operations.

For Example: Members of the medical staff, the risk or quality improvement manager, or members of the quality improvement team may use information in your health record to assess the outcomes in your case and others like it. This information will then be used in an effort to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of the healthcare and service to provide.

- *Business associates:* There are some services provided in our organization through contracts with business associates. Examples include physician services in the emergency department and radiology, certain laboratory tests, and anesthesiology services. When these services are contracted, we may disclose your health information to our business associate so that they can perform the job we've asked them to do and bill you or your third- party payer for services rendered. To protect your health information, however, we require the business associate to appropriate safeguard your information.
- *Patient Satisfaction Survey:* We may disclose minimal information in order to complete patient satisfaction surveys, which are conducted to improve services provided by the system.
- *Directory:* Unless you notify us that you object, we will use your name, location in the facility, general condition, and religious affiliation for directory purposes. This information may be provided to members of the clergy and, except for religious affiliation, to other people who ask for you by name.
- *Notification:* We may use or disclose information to notify or assist in notifying a family member, personal representative, or another person responsible for your care, your location and general condition.
- *Communication with family:* Health professionals, using their best judgement, may disclose to a family member, other relative, close personal friend or any other person you identify, health information relevant to that person's involvement in your care or payment related to your care.
- *Research:* We may disclose information to researchers when their research has been approved

- by an institutional review board that has reviewed the research proposal and established protocols to ensure the privacy of your health information.
- *Coroner, medical examiners, and funeral directors:* We may disclose health information for the purpose of identifying a deceased person, determining a cause of death, or duties as authorized by law.
- *Appointments:* We may use your information to provide appointment reminders or information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to the individual.
- *Organ procurement organizations:* consistent with applicable law, we may disclose health information to organ procurement organizations or other entities engaged in the procurement, banking, or transplantation of cadaveric organs, eyes, or tissue for the purpose of facilitating donation and transplantation.
- *Marketing:* We may contact you to provide appointment reminders or information about treatment alternative or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you.
- *Fund raising:* We may contact you as part of a fund-raising effort.
- *Food and Drug Administration (FDA):* We may disclose to the FDA health information relative to adverse events with respect to food, supplements, product and product defects, or post marketing surveillance information to enable product recalls, repairs, or replacement.
- *Workers Compensation:* We may disclose health information to the extent authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to workers compensation or other similar programs established by law.
- *Public Health:* As required by law, we may disclose your health information to public health or legal authorities charged with preventing or controlling disease, injury, disability, or recording vital events such as birth or death.

For example: Information may be disclosed for use in reports of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence or as required by laws that require the reporting of certain types of wounds or other physical injuries. Furthermore, we may disclose information in compliance with requirements of a valid court order, warrant, subpoena, or summons, as well as in response to a law enforcement official's request for such information for the purpose of identifying or locating a suspect, fugitive, material witness, or missing person or about an individual who is or is suspected to a victim of crime.

- *Correctional institution:* Should you be an inmate of a correctional institution; we may disclose to the institution or agents thereof health information necessary for your health and the health and safety of other individuals.
- *Law enforcement:* We may disclose health information for law enforcement purposes as required by law or in response to a valid subpoena.

Federal law makes provision for your health information to be released to an appropriate health oversight agency, public health authority or attorney, provided that a work force member or business associate believes in good faith that we have engaged in unlawful conduct or have otherwise violated professional or clinical standards and are potentially endangering one or more patients, workers or the public.

Effective Date: 04 14 03



Has your school asked for permission to bill Georgia Medicaid for services provided in your child's IEP?

Children's Intervention School Services (CISS) is a program of Georgia Medicaid. Its purpose is to provide reimbursement for medically necessary services that are received in schools and provided by a school system for Medicaid-eligible students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). School systems must obtain written consent from parents of Medicaid-eligible students prior to billing Medicaid. The consent form must be fully explained to the parent. Consent must be obtained at least annually and/or when IEP services are changed. Parents can withdraw consent at any time by informing the school system, in writing, that they no longer wish to allow Medicaid to be billed.

Will my child's IEP services be affected if I refuse to give consent?

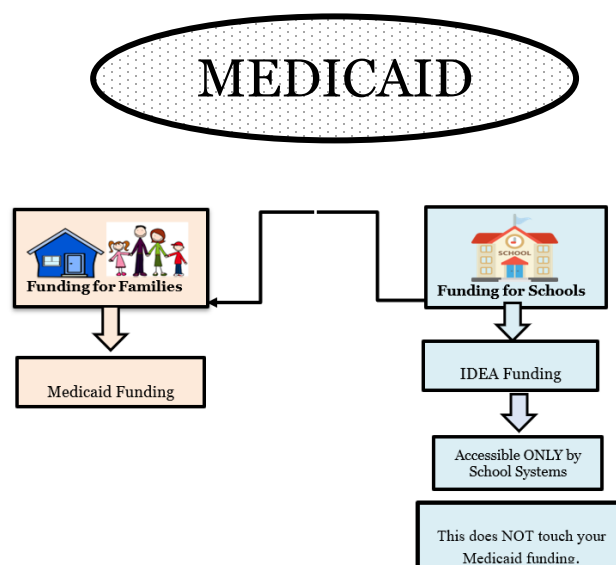
Schools are required under federal law to provide a free appropriate public education to all children who are eligible to receive services. Special education and related services that are written in an IEP are to be provided at no cost to the parent. The parent's refusal to allow access to Medicaid funds does not relieve the school system of its responsibility to ensure that all IEP services are provided at no cost to the parent.

Will giving consent affect outside-of-school, Medicaid covered services my child receives? No. The CISS program is separated from the Children Intervention Service Program (CIS). CIS is the program that out-of-school services such as physical, occupational and speech therapy are billed under. As of April 1, 2003, students can receive medical services in both programs without impacting service limitations. (See CISS Manual).

My child has private insurance as the primary provider. Will the school bill private insurance thereby affecting service limitations and lifetime caps?

No, the school system will only bill Medicaid. Medicaid is the payor of first resort for IEP related health services (603.15/CISS Manual). Liable third party insurers will be pursued for reimbursement by Medicaid. This may affect the service limitations and lifetime caps provided through a private insurer.

Parent to Parent of Georgia provides a wide array of services to help parents advocate for their children with disabilities. If you have questions about your child's special education services, call us at 800-229-2038 or visit us at: www.parenttoparentofga.org - Parent to Parent of Georgia is the Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) for Georgia, funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs.



◆ PLEASE PRINT ALL FIELDS ◆

**MERIWETHER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM
SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
PARENTAL/GUARDIAN
MEDICAID AND OR PEACHCARE CONSENT FORM**

STUDENT: _____ DOB: _____
SSN: _____ IEP DATE: _____
STREET ADDRESS: _____
CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

DR. NAME (student's physician): _____
DR. PHONE NUMBER: _____
DR. ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____

Reimbursement for services does require that your child's physician complete a form. Once you provide the contact information requested on this consent form, a document will be sent to the physician for completion. Your selection and signature gives or denies your permission for the School System to provide pertinent information pertaining to services provided in the student's IEP to their physician as required by Medicaid.

The School System is providing the health-related services to your child in accordance with his/her Individual Education Program or Individual Family Service Plan. Medicaid and/or PeachCare is required to cover some of the cost of certain services.

The School System cannot bill Medicaid/PeachCare without your consent. If you allow the school system to bill Medicaid or PeachCare for the health-related services that your child is receiving in accordance with his/her Individual Education Program or Individual Family Service Plan, check the "Yes" box and sign below.

- ☐ **YES** I authorize the School System to bill Medicaid and/or PeachCare for the health related services listed in my child's IEP or IFSP.
- ☐ **NO** I do not want Medicaid and/or PeachCare billed for health related services my child is receiving.
- ☐ My child does not currently receive Medicaid, however, if they were in the future, I give The MERIWETHER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM permission to bill for services.

**◆ CONSENT TO
BILL MEDICAID ◆**

During the COVID-19 medical emergency, the school system may utilize Telemedicine/Teletherapy to deliver services to your student for any services/therapies in their IEP/IFSP and you understand the following:

1. During the teletherapy session:
 - a. Details of your therapy and/or services provided will be discussed through the use of interactive video, audio, and telecommunication technology.
 - b. Video, audio and/or photo recordings may be taken of you during the procedure(s) or service(s).
2. Reasonable and appropriate efforts have been made to eliminate any confidentiality risks associated with the teletherapy session, and all existing confidentiality protections under federal and Georgia state law apply to information disclosed during the teletherapy sessions.
3. You have been advised of all the potential risks, consequences and benefits of teletherapy. Your health care practitioner has discussed with you the information provided above. You have had the opportunity to ask questions about the information presented on this form and the teletherapy sessions. All your questions have been answered, and you understand the written information provided above.

- ☐ **YES** I agree to participate in teletherapy for the purpose of evaluating and/or delivery of my child's services in their IEP or IFSP. *I agree to maintain the privacy of my child's sessions and, in the case of group therapy sessions, the privacy of other students' therapy and information that I may gain during the process.*
- ☐ **NO** I do not agree to participate in teletherapy.

◆ CONSENT FOR TELETHERAPY ◆

Parent/Guardian Name (PLEASE PRINT): _____
Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

It is my responsibility as a parent to notify the school system's Special Education Department in writing if I ever decide to withdraw this consent allowing the school to seek reimbursement from Medicaid/PeachCare.

NOTE: As of April 1, 2003, the Children Intervention Services Program (CIS) and the Children Intervention Schools Service Program (CISS) have been separated. Students can receive medical services in both programs without impacting service limitations.

If you have any questions, please call: Tonya Waller @ (706) 441-0601

Name _____ Grade _____



Meriwether County School System

Technology/Telecommunication Fair Use Contract/Acceptable Use Policy

Internet access is available to qualifying students and staff. The Meriwether County School System strongly believes in the educational value of our technology resources and recognizes their potential to support our curriculum and student learning by facilitating resources, sharing, innovation, and communication. Users have the responsibility to treat the equipment with respect and to practice internationally accepted telecommunication etiquette and safety precautions.

The Meriwether County School System will make every effort to protect students and staff from objectionable materials through supervision and internet filtering. However, the Internet is constantly changing and students can be extremely inventive. It must be understood by staff, students, and parents that the possibility of exposure to inappropriate material exists but we believe the benefits of the Internet resources far outweigh the risks. Parents should discuss the items below with their students.

Please read the provision of this contract carefully. If any user violates these provisions, Internet privileges will be revoked and the user may be subject to other disciplinary action. We must have the parent and student initials where indicated and the student's signature and, if the student is under 18, the signature of their parent/guardian before we can provide technology device use and Internet access. Staff members need only to print and sign their name at the end of this document.

Terms and Conditions

1. **Personal Responsibility.** As a representative of this school, I will accept personal responsibility of inappropriate use of all resources, assist in keeping equipment free of damaging dust, take reasonable precautions against stolen, lost, damage and/or negligence, and I will report any misuse of technology hardware, software, network and Internet resources to a school administrator. I understand I am responsible for the replacement cost of stolen, lost, or damaged equipment as a result of negligence.
2. **ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE INTERNET AND OTHER INFORMATION SERVICES.** Use of resources must be in support of the educational goals and objectives of the Meriwether County School System. Misuse may come in many forms and is commonly viewed as any message(s) sent or received that indicate or suggest:
 - a. Inappropriate language, racism, sexism, pornography
 - b. Unethical or illegal activities of any kind
 - c. Commercial, purchasing, or for-profit activities.
 - d. Transmission of copyrighted, trade secret, threatening, and/or obscene material, etc.
 - e. I understand that I am not permitted (unless informed otherwise) to install any software and the only software permitted on the device or equipment is that which is pre-loaded by the MCSS technology Department and software/applications which has been permitted to be added by staff. If I have a need for additional software/applications, I will contact the MCSS Technology Department.
3. **INTERNET GUIDELINES.** Remember that you are a representative of your school, state, and country on a worldwide network! You may be alone at the computer or technology device, but anything you input may be read by millions of technology devices anywhere on the planet. You are expected to abide by generally accepted guidelines which include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Be a receiver of information long before you become a sender of information. Out of the millions of people using the Internet, a few just might know more about a subject than you do. The freedom of exchange of opinions is a primary objective of the Internet, but read the opinions of others before you give your own.
 - b. Do not type messages in all capital letters. This is considered "Shouting" in telecommunication. Remember that humor and satire are often misinterpreted through the visual and auditory clues of face to face communication. Use "emotions" to convey your meaning: :-> :-< (read sideways). You will see many more.

- c. Use your best grammar and spelling in messages so that your ideas are evaluated on their content rather than on their manner of presentation but be forgiving of the errors of others.
- d. When you find a particularly interesting site on the Internet, tell your media specialist and/or teacher.
I have read and understand this provision. S. Initials ____ P Initials ____
4. **PRIVACY.** NEVER give your name, home address, phone number or any other personal information on the Internet or any other information service!!! Never give out this type of information for any other person. NEVER use or share anyone else's name, password, or account.
5. **SECURITY.** On all networks, security is of the highest priority. If you identify a security problem, notify a school administrator immediately. Never demonstrate a security flaw to other users.
I have read and understand this provision. S. Initials ____ P Initials ____
6. **VANDALISM.** Causing damage to any equipment or the data of another person or agency, including uploading or creating a computer virus, will result in the loss of technology privileges, disciplinary action, and/or legal referral.
I have read and understand this provision. S. Initials ____ P Initials ____
7. **DISCLAIMER.** The Meriwether County School System makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. The Meriwether County School System will not be responsible for any damages suffered while using this system. These damages include loss of data, mis-deliveries, service interruptions, and /or exposure to offensive material. The Meriwether County School System specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy of information obtained through these services.
I have read and understand this provision. S. Initials ____ P Initials ____
8. **REVOCATION OF TECHNOLOGY PRIVILEGES.** For the first offense, revocation of technology privileges lasts for the remainder of the current school year. At the beginning of the next school year, a new Technology/Telecommunication Fair Use Contract/Acceptable Use Policy must be signed by student and parent/guardian. After the second offense, the revocation of privileges may last for the remainder of the time that the student is at that school level-elementary, middle grades, high school.
I have read and understand this provision. S. Initials ____ P Initials ____

I understand and will abide by the provisions and conditions of this contract. I understand that any violations may result in disciplinary and /or legal actions. I also agree to immediately report any misuse of technology resources to a school administrator.

Print Name (Print) _____
Signature of User _____ **Date** _____

Students under age eighteen must have the signature of the parent/guardian below. This signature is valid as long as or whenever this student is enrolled in the Meriwether County School System unless revoked in writing by the parent/guardian. As the parent/guardian of this student, I have read this contract and understand that the Meriwether County School System is providing advanced technology resources and INTERNET information services for educational purposes. I understand that reasonable precautions will be taken but the complete prevention of exposure of offensive materials may not be possible. I will not hold the Meriwether County School System responsible for materials acquired on the Internet.

Parent/Guardian (Print) _____
Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ **Date** _____

After reviewing and discussing the information in this handbook with your child, please complete the form below and return it to the school.

Acknowledgment Statement:

I have received a copy of the Student Handbook. My parent(s)/guardian(s) and I have reviewed, discussed, and understand the information contained in the handbook.

Student's Signature

Date

Parent's Signature

Date

Please Note:

By signing this form, parents acknowledge that it is their responsibility to review the Student Handbook with their child. Parents also acknowledge that they may request a hard copy of the handbook from the front office of their child's school or access it online at the Meriwether County Schools website: www.mcssga.org.