



# 2025-2026 Highland School

## Student-Parent Handbook

410 S. Hickory Street  
Stillman Valley, IL 61084

Office: (815) 645-2230 ext. 2100

Fax: (815) 645-8200

Transportation: (815) 645-2230 ext. 7010

Food Service: (815) 645-2230 ext. 4351

District Office: (815) 645-2230 ext. 7002

District Website:

[www.meridian223.org](http://www.meridian223.org)

Like us on Facebook at Meridian CUSD 223

Like us on Twitter at @MCUSD223 and @HESMCUSD

Mrs. Jacque Buchanan, Principal

[jbuchanan@mail.meridian223.org](mailto:jbuchanan@mail.meridian223.org)

Phone: (815)645-2230 ext. 2103

Cell: 815-312-8962

Dear Parents and Students,

First and foremost, I want to welcome you back to another great school year. Whether this is your student's first year or they are returning back again, we are hopeful that this will be the best year yet. We take great pride knowing that you entrust your students to us and we get the opportunity to start their educational career off on the right foot.

We wouldn't be able to do what we do without the support and partnership of our parents. I am looking forward to actively partnering with each of you as we work towards making this year the best year yet. There are a number of opportunities to be involved and partner in your student's education. Events like Family Literacy Nights, class musicals, and PTO events provide the opportunity for you to partner with your students and the opportunity to continue to build community.

Each new school year brings opportunities for academic growth and growth in all areas of development. Although children must be knowledgeable when they graduate, they must also be healthy, engaged, responsible, and caring people. We are excited to continue our journey as a Leader in Me School this year. The Leader in Me provides your school with the vision and language to lead the school in a way that addresses all areas of development. As each child discovers and develops his or her unique gifts and talents, they are given opportunities to lead. As leaders, they become active, engaged partners in their own education and their self confidence, responsibility, and initiative grows. The children quickly understand the benefits of different gifts and talents; they learn to listen to new ideas, work together to achieve results, and motivate one another to be the best. We hope your student enjoys sharing these new opportunities. Together, you will watch each and every child grow throughout the year. Watch for our future leaders to showcase the year at our Annual Leadership Day!

The Highland Handbook is posted online at <http://www.meridian223.org/> under Highland School News. If you would like a printed copy, one can be requested by calling the Meridian CUSD 223 main office or Highland Elementary office. The school handbook should give you a clear understanding of policies and general guidelines for Highland Elementary School.

Parents, I encourage you to contact me to share your praises and discuss your educational concerns. I look forward to a great year at Highland Elementary School and I thank you for your commitment and support.

Sincerely,

Jacque Buchanan



# Table of Contents

Section 1: General Information.....	5
2025-2026 School Personnel - Highland Teaching Staff.....	5
Meridian Elementary PTO.....	9
Section 2- Health Services.....	10
Section 3- School Fees Information.....	13
Section 4- School and Office Operations Information.....	14
Section 5-Attendance.....	19
Section 6- Breakfast & Lunch Program.....	22
Section 7- Academic/Enrollment Information.....	23
Section 8- Transportation.....	24
Section 9-Library Information.....	27
Section 10- Emergency Procedures.....	28
Section 11- Other Parent Information.....	29
Section 12 – Legal Notices.....	31

# Section 1: General Information

Mission Statement of Meridian CUSD #223: The mission of Meridian CUSD #223 is to educate students to be self directed learners, collaborative workers, complex thinkers, quality producers and community contributors.

## SCHOOL DISTRICT PHILOSOPHY

The School District, in an active partnership with parents and community, will promote excellence in a caring environment in which all students learn and grow. This partnership shall empower all students to develop strong self esteem and to become responsible learners and decision-makers. The School District is committed to developing and using a visionary and innovative curriculum and a knowledgeable and dedicated staff.

## Board of Education - Meridian Unit District #223

Mr. John Smith  
Mr. Matt Rhodes  
Mr. Time DeVries  
Mrs. Alyssa Behmer  
Mrs. Jill Huber  
Mr. Roger Morrow  
Mr. Dustin Collins

The Board of Education meets once each month on the first Thursday night at 6 P.M. in the District Boardroom at Meridian Junior High School. Check the district web page at <http://www.meridian223.org/> for specific dates and times.

## Administration

SUPERINTENDENT:..... Dr. Michael Plourde

[mplourde@mail.meridian223.org](mailto:mplourde@mail.meridian223.org)

PRINCIPAL: ..... Mrs. Jacque Buchanan

[jbuchanan@mail.meridian223.org](mailto:jbuchanan@mail.meridian223.org)

## 2025-2026 School Personnel - Highland Teaching Staff

Grade	Teacher	Email
Pre-kindergarten	Mrs. Joni Camling	<a href="mailto:jcamling@mail.meridian223.org">jcamling@mail.meridian223.org</a>
	Ms. Rebekah Fetherston	<a href="mailto:rfetherston@mail.meridian223.org">rfetherston@mail.meridian223.org</a>
Kindergarten	Mrs. Ellen Cook	<a href="mailto:ecook@mail.meridian223.org">ecook@mail.meridian223.org</a>
	Mrs. Anne Giddings	<a href="mailto:agiddings@mail.meridian223.org">agiddings@mail.meridian223.org</a>
	Mrs. Courtney Jones	<a href="mailto:cjones@mail.meridian223.org">cjones@mail.meridian223.org</a>
	Ms. Sarah McFatridge	<a href="mailto:smcfatridge@mail.meridian223.org">smcfatridge@mail.meridian223.org</a>
	Ms. Allison Stahler	<a href="mailto:astahler@mail.meridian223.org">astahler@mail.meridian223.org</a>

	Ms. Jeanie Yordy	jyordie@mail.meridian223.org
First Grade	Ms. Avery Baker	abaker@mail.meridian223.org
	Ms. Emma Burke	eburke@mail.meridian223.org
	Ms. Cali Carl	ccarl@mail.meridian223.org
	Ms. Kari Janoski	kjanoski@mail.meridian223.org
	Mrs. Ashley Riley	ariley@mail.meridian223.org
Second Grade	Mrs. Patricia Burke	pburke@mail.meridian223.org
	Mrs. Brittany Frisbie	bfrisbie@mail.meridian223.org
	Ms. Regan Larson	rlarson@mail.meridian223.org
	Mrs. Katrina Mudler	kmulder@mail.meridian223.org
	Ms. Michelle Wollney	mwollney@mail.meridian223.org
Resource	Ms. Elizabeth Faxon	efaxon@mail.meridian223.org
	Mrs. Jeneatte Mendoza	jmendoza@mail.meridian223.org
	Mrs. Melissa Ziller	mziller@mail.meridian223.org
School Counselor	Mrs. Riley Appino	rappino@mail.meridian223.org
Title 1 Reading Teacher	Mrs. Julie Foss	jfoss@mail.meridian223.org
Physical Education	Mr. John Vos	jvos@mail.meridian223.org
Music	Mrs. Rachel Zern	rzern@mail.meridian223.org
Art	Mrs. Monika Huhn	mhuhn@mail.meridian223.org
Librarian	Mrs. Michelle McDevitt	mmcdevitt@mail.meridian223.org
	Mrs. Tammy Weir	tweir@mail.meridian223.org
Instructional Coaches	Mrs. Angela Collins	acollins@mail.meridian223.org
	Mrs. Jaime Williams	jwilliams2@mail.meridian223.org

### **Education Support Personnel**

Office Manager - Mrs. Sue Grebener.....sgrebener@mail.meridian223.org  
Administrative Assistant – Mrs. Beth Drager.....edrager@mail.meridian223.org  
School Nurse - Mrs. Mackenzie Brink.....mbrink@mail.meridian223.org Head  
Custodian - Mrs. April Kubiszewski.....akubiszewski@mail.meridian223.org Night  
Custodians - Mrs. Lynette Simmons.....lsimmons@mail.meridian223.org

Prekindergarten Interventionist - Mrs. Kari DeRosso..... [kderosso@mail.meridian223.org](mailto:kderosso@mail.meridian223.org)  
Prekindergarten Interventionist - Mrs. Nicole Gorsinger... [ngorsinger@mail.meridian223.org](mailto:ngorsinger@mail.meridian223.org)  
Math Interventionist - Mrs. Kim Tomlitz..... [ktomlitz@mail.meridian223.org](mailto:ktomlitz@mail.meridian223.org) ESL  
Paraprofessional - Mrs. LucyBeth Sierra..... [lsierra@mail.meridian223.org](mailto:lsierra@mail.meridian223.org)

**Paraprofessionals**

Mrs. Heather Harrolle..... hharrolle@mail.meridian223.org  
Mrs. Kim Dougherty..... kdougherty@mail.meridian223.org  
Mrs. Eva Lester..... elester@mail.meridian223.org  
Ms. Autumn Hagemann..... ahagemann@mail.meridian223.org  
Mrs. Jenny Christenson..... jchristenson@mail.meridian223.org  
Mrs. Rebecca Leon..... rleon@mail.meridian223.org  
Mrs. Alisha Dennis..... adennis@mail.meridian223.org  
Mrs. Amy Thruman..... athruman@mail.meridian223.org  
Mrs. Kelsey Weems..... kweems@mail.meridian223.org  
Mrs. Dani Parisi..... dparisi@mail.meridian  
Ms. Nicole Quinn..... nquinn@mail.meridian223.org  
Ms. Kelly Kirby..... kkirby@mail.meridian223.org  
Ms. Megan Adler..... madler@mail.meridian223.org  
Ms. Meghan Palmer..... mpalmer@mail.meridian223.org  
Ms. Keri Cox..... kcox@mail.meridian223.org  
Ms. Kayla Thomas..... mthomas@mail.meridian223.org  
Ms. Donna Ellison..... dellison@mail.meridian223.org

# Highland Elementary School Calendar

**2025-2026**

*All Wednesdays (except Wed. August 13th, 2025) will be a late start. School will start at 8:30 am.*

Aug. 13- First day of student attendance: **NO LATE START**

Aug. 25- First day of Pre-K student attendance

Aug. 29- Early dismissal @ 11:10

Sept. 1- No School

Oct. 10- Early dismissal @ 11:10

Oct. 13- No School

Nov.10- No School

Nov 24-28- No School

Dec. 19- Early dismissal @ 11:10

De. 22-Jan 5- Winter Break

Jan. 6- School resumes

Jan. 19- No School

Feb. 13- Early dismissal @ 11:10

Feb. 16- No School

Mar. 27- Early dismissal @ 11:10

Mar. 30-Apr 6- No School- Spring Break

Apr.24- No School- Teacher Institute

May 22- Last day/Early dismissal @ 11:10

May 26- June 1- Possibly emergency day

\*Snow days will be made up as needed.



# **Meridian Elementary PTO**

The Meridian Elementary Parent Teacher Organization's objectives are to fundraise for resources that benefit students at Highland and Monroe Center Schools, to further parental involvement in the school system, provide events that promote family togetherness, and support our teachers. The Meridian PTO has been instrumental in providing our elementary students and teachers with valuable tools. Through the "Christmas in May" program the PTO provides "wish list" items to educators in areas such as technology, reading, special education and library programs to broaden the educational opportunities of our grade school students.

Your support is crucial to continue to fund the many educational experiences and resources for our classrooms. Last year the Meridian PTO funded \$30 - \$35,000 in resources for our students including guided reading materials, literacy materials, math and reading intervention materials and bilingual material and books. The PTO also funds time-honored traditions in our school district.

If you are a parent or guardian with a child in the elementary schools, you are already a member of the Meridian PTO. The PTO traditionally meets one Monday of every month at 6:00 pm and alternates the meetings between both elementary buildings. For a schedule of our meeting dates, visit us on Facebook at Meridian Elementary PTO. Please check us out on the PTO link on the Meridian School District website. All parents are welcomed to join us as our meetings are open and we seek parent and guardian input. There are no dues, but there are numerous ways to support our organization. Any person interested in joining the board should contact a member listed below. If you cannot make the time commitment to join the board but would still like to be involved, you can volunteer at any of our events or join a committee to help plan events.

The PTO will keep you up to date informed with numerous flyers, phone calls and social media. Any concerns, questions or feedback can be emailed to [meridianelempto@gmail.com](mailto:meridianelempto@gmail.com).

We thank you in advance for your interest and support!

Kristin Vincent – President

Emily Grugel – Vice President

Meghan Henry – Secretary

Sara Grobe– Treasurer

## Section 2- Health Services

### MERIDIAN COMMUNITY UNIT 223 STATE HEALTH REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS

Dear Parents:

The Illinois School Code requires that all pupils entering the grades below must have completed the following *before being admitted to school*:

#### **PRE-K HEALTH NEEDS:**

1. Proof of required physical exam.
2. Proof of the following vaccinations in accordance with IL Dept. of Public Health requirements:
  - a. DTP/DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis)
  - b. Polio
  - c. MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)
  - d. Varicella (Chickenpox)
  - e. Hepatitis B
  - f. Hib (Haemophilus influenza type b)
  - g. PCV (Invasive Pneumococcal Disease)

#### **KINDERGARTEN HEALTH NEEDS:**

1. Proof of required physical exam.
2. Proof of the following vaccinations in accordance with IL Dept. of Public Health requirements:
  - a. DTP/DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis)
  - b. Polio
  - c. MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)
  - d. Varicella (Chickenpox)
3. Proof of dental exam (or waiver) prior to May 15th of the school year.

#### **2ND GRADE HEALTH NEEDS:**

1. Proof of dental exam (or waiver) prior to May 15th of the school year.

#### **6TH GRADE HEALTH NEEDS:**

1. Proof of required physical exam (not a sports physical). This DOES fulfill the sports physical requirement for 6th grade.
2. Meningitis vaccine.
3. Tetanus (Tdap) booster.
4. All other required immunizations current in accordance with IL Dept. of Public Health requirements.
5. Proof of dental examination (or waiver) prior to May 15th of the school year.

#### **9TH GRADE HEALTH NEEDS:**

1. Proof of required physical exam (not a sports physical). This DOES fulfill the sports physical requirement for 9th grade.
2. All required immunizations current in accordance with IL Dept. of Public Health requirements.
3. Proof of dental exam (or waiver) prior to May 15th of the school year.

#### **12TH GRADE HEALTH NEEDS:**

1. Meningitis vaccine (2nd dose)

Please note: Physical exams must be completed in their entirety by a qualified medical professional on the State of Illinois Certificate of Child Health Exam form. If the above immunizations have not been completed at the time of the physical exam, a written schedule from your physician to complete the required doses must be presented with the physical exam. According to the Illinois School Code, students are subject to exclusion from school on and after October 15th if the physical examination and immunization requirements have not been completed and returned to the school.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael Plourde  
Superintendent

Kayla Richolson, RN, BSN  
Director of Health Services Revised 3/24

## **School Health Program**

**DOCTOR PHYSICALS:** According to Illinois State law, **all** students entering PreK, EC, K, 6th, and 9th grades as well as all new students are required to present evidence of a physical examination, a complete immunization record, and the required dental and vision exam. Students who do not fulfill these requirements will not be allowed to enroll. In case of transfer from another school/state, the student will be given one month to comply with any health needs. Please refer to the district website for required physical immunizations, dental, and vision exams.

**ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS:** If a circumstance exists where medication is necessary during school hours, a MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION form **must be** signed by the parent **and** the physician and kept on file in the nurse's office. This authorization is required to be renewed EACH school year. The medication must be in the original prescription or over the counter container and stored in the nurse's office unless otherwise directed by the physician and parents. All prescription and over-the-counter medications must be brought to the nursing office by a parent or guardian. No medications are allowed on the bus. During school field trips, all medication must be sent with the supervising teacher. No student shall possess or consume any prescription or non-prescription medication on school grounds or at a school-related function other than as provided for in the Administration of Medications policy and its implementing procedures. A student **MAY** possess **emergency** medications (i.e. Epipens, inhalers) provided a "Medication Authorization" form has been completed by the physician **AND** the parents/guardians. At the end of the school year, a parent or guardian must come pick up remaining doses of medications or consent for disposal.

An **occasional** acetaminophen may be taken by a student during school hours, in the absence of written doctor's orders, **ONLY** after evaluation **AND** direct telephone contact has been made with the parent/guardian for verbal consent. The school nurse will keep documentation of this administration.

**UNDESIGNATED MEDICATIONS** The school may maintain the following undesignated prescription medications for emergency use: (1) Asthma medication; (2) Epinephrine injectors; (3) Opioid antagonists; and (4) Glucagon. No one, including without limitation, parents/guardians of students, should rely on the school or district for the availability of undesignated medication. This procedure does not guarantee the availability of undesignated medications. Students and their parents/guardians should consult their own physician regarding these medication(s). "

**WHEN SHOULD I KEEP MY CHILD HOME?** Students should not return to school until they have been "fever-free" (any temperature over 100) for at least 24 hours (without medication) and until symptoms (vomiting, diarrhea, etc.) subside. Also, if your child has vomited, they should not return to school until they have not vomited for at least 24 hours and are able to keep a light meal down without feeling nauseated. Additionally, if your child has been prescribed an antibiotic for any contagious illness, they must be on the antibiotic for 24 hours prior to returning. Students with a temperature over 100 will be sent home.

**SCHOOL OPERATIONS DURING A PANDEMIC OR OTHER HEALTH EMERGENCY:** A pandemic is a global outbreak of disease. Pandemics happen when a new virus emerges to infect individuals and, because there is little to no pre-existing immunity against the new virus, it spreads sustainably. Your child's school and district play an essential role, along with the local health department and emergency management agencies, in protecting the public's health and safety during a pandemic or other health emergency.

During a pandemic or other health emergency, you will be notified in a timely manner of all changes to the school environment and schedule that impact your child. Please be assured that even if school is not physically in session, it is the goal of the school and district to provide your child with the best educational opportunities possible.

Additionally, please note the following:

1. All decisions regarding changes to the school environment and schedule, including a possible interruption of in-person learning, will be made by the superintendent in consultation with and, if necessary, at the direction of the Governor, Illinois Department of Public Health, local health department, emergency management agencies, and/or Regional Office of Education.
2. Available learning opportunities may include remote and/or blended learning. Blended learning may require your child to attend school on a modified schedule.
3. Students will be expected to participate in blended and remote instruction as required by the school and district. Parents are responsible for assuring the participation of their child. Students who do not participate in blended or remote learning will be considered truant.
4. All school disciplinary rules remain in effect during the interruption of in-person learning. Students are subject to discipline for disrupting the remote learning environment to the same extent that discipline would be imposed for disruption of the traditional classroom.
5. Students and parents will be required to observe all public health and safety measures implemented by the school and district in conjunction with state and local requirements.
6. During a pandemic or other health emergency, the school and district will ensure that educational opportunities are available to all students.
7. School personnel will work closely with students with disabilities and other vulnerable student populations to minimize the impact of any educational disruption.
8. Students who have a compromised immune system, live with an individual with a compromised immune system, or have a medical condition that may impact their ability to attend school during a pandemic or other public health emergency should contact school officials.
9. During a pandemic or other health emergency, teachers and school staff will receive additional training on health and safety measures.
10. In accordance with school district or state mandates, the school may need to conduct a daily health assessment of your child. Parents and students will be notified of the exact assessment procedures if this becomes necessary.
11. Parents should not send their child to school if their child exhibits any symptoms consistent with the pandemic or other health emergency.
12. Please do not hesitate to contact school or district officials if you have any concerns regarding your child's education, health or safety.

**HEAD LICE:** Meridian CUSD has a **no-nit** policy. A student with evidence of head lice and/or nits will be sent home for treatment. Upon their return to school, they must be brought in by a parent or guardian to be checked by the school nurse, or designee, to verify their hair is free of lice and nits before being permitted to attend class.

**PINK EYE:** Students with pink eye are to be excluded from school until 24 hours after treatment begins or the child is examined by a physician and approved for readmission to school.

**SCREENING:** The school nurse conducts vision and hearing tests. Vision screening is not a substitute for a complete eye and vision evaluation by an eye doctor. Your child is not required to undergo this vision screening if an optometrist or ophthalmologist has completed and signed a report form indicating that an examination has been administered within the previous 12 months. Parents of those students who do not pass these screenings are urged to comply with the recommendations made by the nurse.

**EMERGENCY INFORMATION: INJURY:** If a student incurs serious injury requiring medical attention, parents will be notified immediately. Parents are asked to supply the name and phone number of a responsible adult to be notified when the parent cannot be reached. In the event that the parent or

designated person cannot be reached students will be transported to the hospital for emergency treatment.

**ILLNESS:** In the event a student becomes ill at school, a parent will be notified concerning action to be taken. Students will **not** be sent home unless a parent is there to care for them. Students will **only** be released to individuals who are on the emergency contact list within Skyward. Children should be fever and symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school. This will help keep the student from picking up another illness with an already weakened immune system and will decrease the likelihood of them sharing their illness with others. Illinois Department of Public Health guidelines regarding communicable illness will be used by the school nurse to determine when students may not be in attendance.

**ALLERGIES:** State law requires our school district to annually inform parents of students with life-threatening allergies or life-threatening chronic illnesses of the applicable provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and other applicable federal statutes, state statutes, federal regulations and state rules. If your student has a life-threatening allergy or life-threatening chronic illness, please notify the building Principal or Nurse at (815) 645-2230.

Federal law protects students from discrimination due to a disability that substantially limits a major life activity. If your student has a qualifying disability, an individualized Section 504 Plan will be developed and implemented to provide the needed support so that your student can access his or her education as effectively as students without disabilities.

**PERSONAL HYGIENE:** All students will make every effort to be neat and clean. Routine personal hygiene should be taken care of at home. This includes daily bathing, brushing of teeth and hair, etc. If the need arises, parents will be notified of any problems. ***Please ensure your student has a spare set of season-appropriate clothing to be kept in their locker.***

**HIGHLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICES:** Counseling services provide students with an opportunity to increase their self-awareness, self-esteem, and social/emotional growth. Maximizing these areas helps students develop the ability to excel at academic tasks as well. The school counselor provides individual and group counseling, classroom presentations, parent education programs, consults with classroom teachers and parents, makes referrals to outside agencies when appropriate, increases student awareness of career opportunities, and assists students with life transitions. Every student will have the opportunity to interact with a counselor through classroom presentations and individual and/or group settings. Parents will be notified and permission must be granted before children can participate in individual or group counseling services. Parents/guardians, students, or school staff may request counseling services. Our school counselor is Mrs. Riley Appino. She can be reached by calling 645-2230 ext2003.

### **Section 3- School Fees Information**

#### **THE MERIDIAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT #223 IS A NON-DISCRIMINATING SCHOOL DISTRICT.**

**SCHOOL FEES:** Parents frequently ask why we have a book fee and what the fee supplies. State law forbids school boards from distributing textbooks to students without charge unless the voters have

approved a special enabling referendum. Voters in District #223 have not been asked to approve such a referendum. School fees are due at registration. These fees defray the cost of the hard and soft covered books used by the students.

**Kindergarten fees are \$140.00.**

**First Grade and Second Grade fees are \$145.00.**

Checks should be made payable to the **Meridian Community Unit District #223**. **NOTICE TO PARENTS:** This is to advise you that you may be eligible for a waiver of student fees if you receive public aid; if your gross household income is under that set out in federal guidelines for free lunches; or if you are otherwise able to establish that you cannot afford to pay these fees. Applications requesting waiver of fees will be available at the district office. Forms for submission of such requests are available in each principal's office. The use of false information to obtain such waiver is a felony under Illinois law. Any inquiries should be directed to the principal of the building in which your child is enrolled.

**INSURANCE:** Accident insurance is offered for grades K-5. This covers your child from the time he or she leaves home until he or she returns, provided the student goes directly to and from school. While the carrying of this insurance is optional, we strongly recommend that each student, especially those in athletics, have this coverage. This will aid in expenses incurred in the case of an accident. Insurance applications are available at the district office or at each school at the beginning of the school year. Emphasize to your child that reporting to the supervisor any injury is important in collection of insurance.

**BOOK REFUND POLICY:** Any student entering Highland Elementary School shall pay the full year's price for books. A student leaving will not receive a refund for books. All partially used books will be returned to the office so they may be used for new students entering school.

## **Section 4- School and Office Operations Information**

**ADDRESS CHANGE:** It is important that at all times we have your address and telephone number. This information is especially important in cases of emergency. **Please notify Mrs. Nicholson at the district office with three proofs of residency immediately upon changing your address.**

### **SCHOOL HOURS**

Prekindergarten 8:00 A.M. – 10:30 A.M. **or** 12:00 P.M. – 2:30 P.M.

K-5 (M, T, Th, F) 8:00 A.M. – 2:30 P.M.

***K-5 (Wed.) 8:30 A.M. – 2:30 P.M.***

**OFFICE HOURS AND POLICIES:** The school office is officially open from 7:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. each day, Monday through Friday. Your principal plans an "Open Door Policy." This means that all may feel free to come in to discuss matters with the principal at any time. Many times a school administrator is required to be out of the office for different reasons. For your convenience, it might be wise to call to make an appointment prior to visiting. If you do not mind taking a chance on waiting to see the principal, you may come at your convenience.

**USE OF SCHOOL PHONE:** Messages will be taken for students and teachers, but it is not always possible to deliver these immediately. Parents wishing to confer with teachers on the phone are requested to limit their calls to before school and after school. **Students are not allowed to use the school phones except in cases of emergencies. Student cell phones are to remain off and in backpacks during school hours, this also includes smart devices such as smart watches, Kindles,**

iPads, etc. The consequence for a student using his or her cell phone during school hours may be up to an After-School Detention. If a student's cell phone is on during the day, it will be confiscated and kept in the office until a parent or guardian can pick it up.

**ARRIVAL TIME:** Every parent should see that the children do not arrive at school *before 7:30 A.M.* We do not have available play areas inside the building nor adequate supervision to permit children to come to school long before school starts. Bus students will be admitted upon their arrival to school.

***First bell rings at 7:50 a.m. and classes begin at 8:00 a.m.***

**PICK-UP TIME:** After school pick-up occurs at 2:30 PM. Please understand school ends at 2:30, therefore students will not arrive until closer to 2:35 PM. Doors will remain locked and closed. School staff will facilitate the after school dismissal process. Car riders will be dismissed first to help clear traffic. Others will be dismissed AFTER that. Students should be picked up no later than 2:45 PM.

### **BEFORE SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS**

1. Once children are under the supervision of school personnel, expectations outlined in the **School Behavior Policy** are in effect.
2. After the bell rings, students will walk quietly and in an orderly manner to their classrooms.

### **The School Code of Illinois: 10.22.6.**

The building principal has authority over all students in District #223.

### **Highland Behavior Policy**

Highland Elementary uses *The Leader in Me* character education program as a foundation for their behavior intervention policies. The goal of all behavioral interventions at these age levels is to ensure students are learning, correcting behaviors, and that the opportunity for restoration is provided between students and/or staff. More information about *Leader in Me* can be found at [www.leaderinme.org](http://www.leaderinme.org)

At Highland Elementary School, we are committed to creating a learning environment that will encourage positive behavior and interactions, while discouraging problem behaviors. This approach is based on directly teaching students the behaviors we expect to see, reminding them to use those behaviors, acknowledging them when they do, correcting them when they do not and celebrating their successes. We ask parents to support their child and the school in guiding children to make good choices.

Staff will acknowledge the student by stating what positive choice has been made. School-wide *Leader in Me* assemblies will be held at the end of each quarter to promote positive character, have the drawings and celebrate the school's success.

Behavior interventions are necessary when the behavior matrix is not followed. Some examples of Minor Behavior Offenses that will be documented by staff are: throwing small objects, lying noncompliance, minor disruptions, cheating, put downs, attitude, inappropriate language, inappropriate dress code, etc. Parents will not be called after the minor behavior offense unless a lunch detention is assigned. More serious offenses are considered Major Behavior Offenses. These offenses are dealt with immediately by the administration and will result in a greater consequence, including up to an in-school or out- of-school suspension. Some examples of major behavior offenses that will be documented by staff are: physical aggression, fighting, bullying, vandalism, discriminatory/inflammatory/inappropriate

language, severe insubordination, verbal threats, etc. Parents will be contacted on any major behavior offenses. Board of Education Policy will direct more serious disciplinary issues.

As we continue to work to instill good values and positive character in all of our students, we cannot make progress without the support of our families. It is very important that you talk with your child about making positive choices. Parents are asked to support the mission of our school, along with our behavior expectations and any disciplinary actions taken at school.

**RECESS:** Children are expected to play outside during the morning recess, if they arrive prior to 7:50 AM, and lunch recess, except in inclement weather. If for any health reasons, a child is to stay inside during recess, a note is required for each day he/she remains inside.

**CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY:** Any damage done to school property must be repaired or replaced at the expense of the offender. Parent cooperation is requested in helping us teach children to respect school property, material, furnishings, equipment and the building itself.

### **CHROMEBOOK RESPONSIBILITIES/DAMAGED FEES**

Students are expected to bring their chromebooks fully charged and their chargers with them daily; the office does not loan out chargers. Students who visit the office to borrow a chromebook will be given one to borrow for the day.

Damaged Chromebook Fees (prices subject to change): \$5 per key; headphone jack \$30; LCD screen \$45; keyboard \$65; touchpad \$15; USB port \$30; body/hinge \$25; charger \$30; replacement of chromebook \$359.00.

Nick Belmonte, director of technology, [nbelmonte@mail.meridian223.org](mailto:nbelmonte@mail.meridian223.org).

**STUDENT BEHAVIORS/DISCIPLINE:** The principal maintains the authority to assign discipline for student infractions that he/she deems developmentally and behaviorally appropriate.

### **Isolated Time Out, Time Out and Physical Restraint**

Isolated time out, time out, and physical restraint shall only be used if the student's behavior presents an imminent danger of serious physical harm to the student or others and other less restrictive and intrusive measures were tried and proven ineffective in stopping it. The school may not use isolated time out, time out, and physical restraint as discipline or punishment, convenience for staff, retaliation, a substitute for appropriate educational or behavioral support, a routine safety matter, or to prevent property damage in the absence of imminent danger of serious physical harm to the student or others. At no time is the use of prone restraint used.

### **Corporal Punishment**

Corporal punishment is illegal and will not be used. Corporal punishment is defined as slapping, paddling, or prolonged maintenance of students in physically painful positions, or intentional infliction of bodily harm. Corporal punishment does not include reasonable force as needed to maintain safety for students, staff, or other persons, or for the purpose of self-defense or defense of property.

### **Preventing Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment**

**Protocol:**



Tier 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meeting with counselor (both parties)</li> <li>● Student/Counselor mediation (if okay with victim)</li> <li>● Counseling</li> <li>● Parent contact</li> <li>● Potential referral to administration</li> </ul>
Tier 2: 2nd or subsequent incident with same people or same “bully”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meeting with counselor and administrator</li> <li>● Parent contact</li> <li>● Administrator/Counselor led mediation</li> <li>● Increased likelihood of student discipline</li> <li>● Bullying screening</li> </ul>
Tier 3: 3rd & future incidents with same people or same “bully”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Immediate administrator contact</li> <li>● Parent contact &amp; possible meeting</li> <li>● Increased likelihood of student discipline</li> <li>● Administrator/Counselor medication</li> <li>● Bullying screening</li> </ul>

### **Definitions:**

**Bullying:** *Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.*

*In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:*

- *An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.*
- *Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.*

*Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.*

**Harassment:** *Unwelcome conduct or communication that either substantially interferes with a student’s school performance or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment at school. This includes the use of ethnic or racial slurs.*

### **Meridian School District 223 Board of Education Policies in regard to Bullying:**

- 7:20, Harassment of Students Prohibited. This policy prohibits any person from harassing, intimidating, or bullying a student based on actual or perceived characteristics is also identified in this policy’s second paragraph.
- 7:190, Student Discipline. This policy prohibits students from engaging in hazing, bullying, or any kind of aggressive behavior that does physical or psychological harm to another or any urgings of other students to engage in such conduct; prohibited conduct includes any use of violence, force, noise, coercion, threats, intimidation, fear, harassment, or other comparable conduct.
- 7:310, Restrictions on Publications and Written or Electronic Material. This policy prohibits students from: (i) accessing and/or distributing at school any written, printed, or electronic material, including material from the internet, that will cause substantial disruption of the proper and orderly operation and discipline of the school or school activities, and (ii) creating and/or distributing written, printed, or electronic material, including photographs and

internet material and blogs, that causes substantial disruption to school operations or interferes with the rights of other students or staff members.

- d. 6:234, Access to Electronic Networks. This policy states that the use of the District's electronic networks is limited to (1) support of education and/or research, or (2) a legitimate business use. It subjects any individual to the loss of privileges, disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action for violating the District's Authorization of Electronic Network Access.

School officials shall limit the number and duration of expulsions and out-of-school suspensions to the greatest extent practicable, and, where practicable and reasonable, shall consider forms of non-exclusionary discipline before using out-of-school suspensions or expulsions. School personnel shall not advise or encourage students to drop out of school voluntarily due to behavioral or academic difficulties. Potential disciplinary measures include, without limitation, any of the following measures:

1. Notifying parents/guardians.
2. Disciplinary conference.
3. Withholding of privileges.
4. Temporary removal from the classroom.
5. Return of property or restitution for lost, stolen or damaged property.
6. In-school suspension.
7. After-school study or Saturday study provided the student's parent/guardian has been notified. (If transportation arrangements cannot be made in advance, an alternative disciplinary measure will be assigned to the student.)
8. Community service.
9. Seizure of contraband; confiscation and temporary retention of the personal property that was used to violate school rules.
10. Suspension of bus riding privileges.
11. Suspension from school and all school activities for up to 10 days. A suspended student is prohibited from being on school grounds.
12. Expulsion from school and all school activities for a definite time period not to exceed 2 calendar years. An expelled student is prohibited from being on school grounds.
13. Transfer to an alternative program if the student is expelled or otherwise qualifies for transfer under State law.
14. Notifying juvenile authorities or other law enforcement whenever the conduct involves criminal activity, such as, illegal drugs (controlled substances), "look-alikes," alcohol or weapons or in other circumstances as authorized by the reciprocal reporting agreement between the District and local law enforcement agencies.

The above list of disciplinary measures is a range of options that will not always be applicable in every case. In some circumstances, it may not be possible to avoid suspending or expelling a student because behavioral interventions, other than a suspension or expulsion, will not be appropriate and available, and the only reasonable and practical way to resolve the threat and/or address the disruption is a suspension or expulsion.

**ARTICLES PROHIBITED IN SCHOOL** : Problems arise each year because children bring articles to school that are hazards to the safety of others or interfere in some way with school procedures. Such items as play guns, caps for cap guns, water guns, knives, matches, hard balls, bullets, lighters, and cigarettes brought to school will be confiscated and disciplinary measures will be taken. **All electronic devices, including cell phones, smart watches, radios, iPads, and iPods, must be turned off and kept in a student's backpack during the school day. If a student is found using an electronic device during the school day, it may result in an After-School Detention and a parent or guardian will be required to pick up the electronic item from the school office. Students may use electronic games, tablets, or cell phones while waiting for the bus in the afternoon.** Heelies, or similar shoes with wheels, as well as skateboards, scooters, etc. are also not allowed at school. All types of toys are discouraged, including trading cards. When a student has such items at school, they are subject to being broken, lost or stolen. **The school cannot be responsible for such items.** There are no locks on the students' lockers and students are not permitted to bring locks from home. The lockers are the property of Meridian District 223 and must be accessible by a building principal. Parents are requested to help children keep these items at home. Check backpacks at night and in the morning to reduce the presence of these items at school.

**DRESS CODE:** Students are expected to wear clothing in a neat, clean, and well-fitting manner while on school property and/or in attendance at school sponsored activities. Students are to use discretion in their dress and are not permitted to wear apparel that causes a substantial disruption in the school environment. Our behavior patterns are affected by what we wear. There are very few restrictions concerning dress because the school believes if a student is “neat and clean” then he or she will usually meet the standards of school dress. The weather during the beginning and ending of the school year contributes to some rather warm classrooms. Consequently, lighter dress for students is necessary to be comfortable. **The following types of dress are NOT acceptable; baseball-style caps/hats, any clothing with alcohol or tobacco logos, short shorts, spaghetti strap tank tops, halter tops, flip-flops/open toe shoes for PE or recess, and any clothing with wording considered inappropriate by the staff.** During the fall, winter, and spring months, children will need to have winter coats when the temperature is below 45°F in order to participate in outdoor recess. On days when the temperature is below 60°F, children will need at least a sweatshirt or jacket for outdoor activities. No shorts will be allowed outside when temperatures are below 60 °F. **Also, snow pants and winter boots are required for any student planning to play in the snow during recess (this includes all recess areas other than the blacktop). Please contact our School Counselor if your child is in need of these items.** Obviously, these are general guidelines and there can always be some situations that are not covered by generalities. Should any questions arise regarding a student's dress, the building principal will determine the acceptability of the attire. The district feels that parents have the responsibility of having their children dress in an appropriate manner. Your impression upon others and their impression of the entire school are influenced by what you wear. If students have pride in their school, they will dress accordingly.

## **Section 5-Attendance**

**ATTENDANCE:** Subject to specific requirements in State law, the following children are not required to attend public school: (1) any child attending a private school (including a home school) or parochial school, (2) any child who is physically or mentally unable to attend school (including a pregnant student suffering medical complications as certified by her physician), (3) any child lawfully and necessarily employed, (4) any child over 12 and under 14 years of age while in confirmation classes, (5) any child absent because of religious reasons, including to observe a religious holiday, for religious instruction, or because his or her religion forbids secular activity on a particular day(s) or time of day, and (6) any child 16 years of age or older who is employed and is enrolled in a graduation incentives program.

For students who are required to attend school there are two types of absences: excused and unexcused. Excused absences include: illness (including up to 5 days per school year for mental or behavioral health of the student), observance of a religious holiday or event, death in the immediate family, family emergency, situations beyond the control of the student as determined by the school board, circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's mental, emotional, or physical health or safety, attending a military honors funeral to sound TAPS, attend a civic event, or other reason as approved by the building principal. Students eligible to vote are also excused for up to two hours to vote in a primary, special, or general election.

Additionally, a student will be excused for up to 5 days in cases where the student's parent/guardian is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat-support postings. The Board of Education, in its discretion, may excuse a student for additional days relative to such leave or deployment. A student and the student's parent/guardian are responsible for obtaining assignments from the student's teachers prior to any excused absences and for ensuring that such assignments are

completed by the student prior to his or her return to school. Students who are excused from school will be given a reasonable timeframe to make up missed homework and classwork assignments. All other absences are considered unexcused. Pre-arranged excused absences must be approved by the building principal.

**Parents should provide documentation explaining the reason for the student's absence.**

In the event of any absence, the student's parent or guardian is required to call the school **before 9:00 a.m.** to explain the reason for the absence. If a call has not been made to the school by 10:00 a.m. on the day of a student's absence, a school official will call the home to inquire why the student is not at school. While notifying the teacher can be helpful, please make sure to also call the school office in the event of any absence. If the parent or guardian cannot be contacted, the student will be required to submit a signed note from the parent or guardian explaining the reason for the absence. Failure to do so shall result in an unexcused absence. Upon request of the parent or guardian, the reason for an absence will be kept confidential. Also, please call the transportation department to let them know of your child's absence by pickup time if your child rides a bus.

**HOME & HOSPITAL INSTRUCTION:** A student who is absent from school, or whose physician, physician assistant or licensed advanced practice registered nurse anticipates his or her absence from school, because of a medical condition may be eligible for instruction in the student's home or hospital.

Appropriate educational services from qualified staff will begin no later than five school days after receiving a written statement from a physician, physician assistant, or licensed advanced practice registered nurse. Instructional or related services for a student receiving special education services will be determined by the student's individualized education program.

For more information on home or hospital instruction, contact Mrs. Buchanan at [jbuchanan@mail.meridian223.org](mailto:jbuchanan@mail.meridian223.org)

**TRUANCY:** Student attendance is critical to the learning process. Truancy is therefore a serious issue and will be dealt with in a serious manner by the school and district.

Students who miss more than 1% but less than 5% of the prior 180 regular school days without valid cause (a recognized excuse) are truant. Students who miss 5% or more of the prior 180 regular school days without valid cause are chronic truants. Students who are chronic truants will be offered support services and resources aimed at correcting the truancy issue.. District policy indicates that letters to attend will be sent home after 5 absences, 7 absences, and 10 absences, to ensure that communication about potential truancy cases have been exhausted.

If chronic truancy persists after support services and other resources are made available, the school and district will take further action, including:

- Referral to the truancy officer
- Reporting to officials under the Juvenile Court Act
- Referral to the State's Attorney
- Appropriate school discipline

A parent or guardian who knowingly and willfully permits a child to be truant is in violation of State law. A referral may be made to the Lee/Ogle Regional Office of Education NEXUS Truancy Intervention/prevention Program after (5) five unexcused absences during the previous 180 days of school attendance.

### **NOTES REQUIRED:**

The school requires notes from parents or guardians for the following reasons:

1. Absence
2. Requests for special dismissals
3. Field Trips (permission slips will be supplied)

**LEAVING SCHOOL GROUNDS:** No child will be allowed to leave the school grounds without the permission of the parent and the principal or a teacher. In the event the parents must remove a child from school before the close of the day, a note should be sent to school in advance to inform the teachers of this change from the normal routine. Students will **only** be allowed to leave early with a guardian and/or an emergency contact, as listed in Skyward.

**EARLY DISMISSAL:** Teachers have been instructed not to excuse any child without a written or personal request from parent or guardian, nor to permit any child to go from the school premises with an unidentified person. This has been done in order to help protect your child. The exception to this will be for scheduled events. When a child leaves early the office should be notified when that child is leaving the building. Two early dismissals shall count as ½ day unexcused absence. Students will **only** be allowed to leave early with a guardian and/or an emergency contact, as listed in Skyward.

**WEDNESDAY LATE START:** Each Wednesday, school will start at 8:30 AM rather than 8:00 AM. This time will be utilized to allow for teachers to collaborate on instruction, assessment, and student learning. Highland will be staffed at normal hours and students will be able to be dropped off as normal. Students riding busses will be picked up 30 minutes later on Wednesdays.

**EMERGENCY LATE START:** A late start time may be used due to inclement weather or other emergencies. If an emergency late start is utilized, all schools would start two hours later than usual, and all morning bus pickups would occur two hours later than usual. Dismissal times would remain the same. The schedule within the building will be accommodated in order to ensure that students miss as little instructional time as possible, while also allowing us to keep students safe coming to school.

### **WEATHER/EMERGENCY CANCELLATION OR EARLY DISMISSAL** **MERIDIAN CUSD #223**

#### **WEATHER RELATED/EMERGENCY RELATED SCHOOL CANCELLATION/EARLY DISMISSAL**

As a general rule, Meridian C.U.S.D. #223 believes it is best to transport students to and from school at the regular times because area drivers are accustomed to our busses on the roads at these times and statistics prove fewer bus/traffic problems occur at these times. Under unusual circumstances, approaching winter storm advisories, we will make the decision to close schools early. We plan to make this decision by noon and to notify parents via our Time Sensitive Mass Communication Calling System and the below listed media. Early dismissal means the students will be dismissed one hour early at 1:30 PM.

The decision to cancel school because of weather/other emergency will be made by 6:00 AM if possible with the below listed media notified immediately. Every attempt will be made to follow this 6:00 AM time line. The decision to cancel school is made in consultation with national/state weather radar, township road commissioners, and school district personnel. The philosophy of the district is to cancel school rather than transport students to school and have to send them home. While this is the general rule, occasionally storms develop during the day and an early dismissal is warranted. We only have 175 days of school each year. Making up missed school days is done in the spring when weather is not an issue. The district also may choose to use remote learning days as a learning day due to a possible cancellation. This will also be communicated to families.

### **GENERAL weather guidelines for cancellation/early dismissal due to weather:**

A heat index of approximately 100 degrees for an extended number of days will generally warrant early dismissal or a wind chill Index approximately -30 to -35 degrees will generally warrant school cancellation. While these are general guidelines used by the district, we understand parents are the final authority for their children. Only parents know the specific health concerns and transportation concerns of their children. Therefore, parents should feel comfortable in determining whether or not their children should attend school due to weather conditions. If you determine your children should not attend school due to weather, please call the school and notify the office of your child's absence as early as possible.

<b>Media Notified: School Cancellation/Early Dismissal</b>	
Radio	Rochelle: WRHL Rockford: WZOK, WROK, WXRX, WRRR, & WKMQ
Television	Rockford: WIFR-23, WREX-13, & WTVO-17
Facebook	Meridian CUSD223

If you have any questions about our policy related to school cancellation or early dismissal, please feel free to contact your building principal or superintendent of schools.

## **Section 6- Breakfast & Lunch Program**

**LUNCH PROGRAM:** Checks for payment of lunch fees should be made payable to **Meridian Community Unit #223**.

### **Lunch Program - (From the School District Office) Prices subject to change.**

Meridian Community School District #223 uses a food service payor account program. The payor needs to be the same person listed as guardian on the registration form. All students are given a lunch card with a barcode. The lunch card is scanned and items purchased are then subtracted from the payor account. This system is used like a debit card, not a credit card. Therefore, money needs to be in your account. This is a prepaid program. Meridian C.U.S.D. #223 realizes that for families with more than one student, it may be easy to lose track of how much may be left in your payor account. Payor balance notices are distributed to your student(s) at each school about twice a month. Remember to ask your student(s) to give you your payor balance sheet when they get it. If you would ever want more detailed account information, please contact Food Service at 815-645-2230 X4351. Money can be deposited into your payor account at any of the schools your student(s) attend or e-pay on the main Meridian223.org web page.

**BREAKFAST:** Highland Elementary food services offers many great grab-and-go style meals for breakfast. When your student arrives at school breakfast will be available for them at the cost for your child normal price \$1.80 Reduced student \$0.30 cents, and free student at no cost. Breakfast is served from 7:10am to 8am in the cafeteria area. Please have money in your account to cost of the meal.

**LUNCH:** Hot lunch is served daily in the school cafeteria. Lunch prices Monroe Center & Highland \$3.05 Meridian Jr. High & High School \$3.15 Reduced Students \$0.40 and free student at no cost. Milk is 45¢ each. All hot lunches must be paid for in advance. Checks for payment of lunch fees should be made payable to Meridian Community Unit #223.

**FREE LUNCH PROGRAM:** Free/Reduced breakfast/lunch applications are available during the on-line registration process or may be picked up in any of the school offices. The Superintendent of Schools follows established federal guidelines for the free and reduced lunch program in determining a family's eligibility for the program. Applications will be available after July 18th for the 2025-2026 school year.

**PREPAYMENTS** All schools have a computerized point of sale (POS) system. Parents are able to prepay a sum of money to a student's account, which will then be debited for daily purchases. Funds can be added to a student lunch account with a credit/debit card through E-PAY system found on the Meridian School District webpage under the Food Service Department. You can also send money with your student to be turned into the office, please remember to have your students first and last name on the envelope along with where teachers name.

### **LUNCH ACCOUNT BALANCES**

- All negative account balances are the parent/guardian's responsibility to bring up to, at least, a \$0.00 balance.
- "Negative Balance Alerts" are sent to the parent/guardian email of record with the district every Wednesday.
- "Low Balance Alerts" are sent to the parent/guardian email of record with the district every day their student's account balance falls below positive \$5.00. Parents/guardians have the option to toggle this alert notification on or off in Skyward Family Access.
- Parents can monitor their child's accounts 24/7 in Skyward Family Access.

## **Section 7- Academic/Enrollment Information**

**Must start at the district office to verify residency.**

**KINDERGARTEN ADMISSION:** Requirements for entering Kindergarten:

1. Verification of birth date (Birth certificate)
2. Submission of a completed physical and dental examination
3. Five (5) years old on or before September 1 of the current school year
4. Requirements for entering first grade: same as above if entering school for the first time, except that the child must be six (6) years old on or before September 1 of the current school year.

**TRANSFERS:** When a child is to be transferred from Highland Elementary School to another district, please notify the school office at least one week in advance. This will enable the teacher to complete necessary records. A transfer slip will be prepared which the parent or child may pick up the last day of the child's attendance. School records will be forwarded upon request by the receiving school.

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES:** All students are required to participate in organized physical education classes. This year, students will be required to participate in physical education five days a week. The policies pertaining to these requirements follow:

1. All students are required to have tennis shoes for physical education classes. They should be marked with the student's name.

2. If a student is physically unable to participate in physical education class or if certain restrictions are required due to poor health, a note from the student's doctor should be presented to the physical education teacher as soon as this condition is evident. The doctor's note should indicate the restriction specifically.
3. A daily excuse from gym must be accompanied by a parent's note and presented to the gym teacher before gym class. It is strongly urged that parents use discretion in providing this type of excuse. Often, physical activity serves a therapeutic purpose for students who don't feel up to par or who are returning to school after an illness. In such cases, the parent's request will be honored.

**HOMEWORK:** Our policy is limited or controlled homework. The purpose of homework is to strengthen or increase skills. Homework is in the nature of enrichment activity, such as specific practice or drill, i.e. the multiplication tables, etc. Children in grades 1 and 2 may have some homework.

**CHEATING:** Cheating on tests, plagiarism, or any other type of deception to get credit without effort is universally recognized as improper conduct. This type of violation of classroom standards will be dealt with very severely by the classroom teacher. Students found cheating on homework/daily work will earn a Minor Discipline form. Students found cheating on formal assessments (Tests, Quizzes, Projects, Essays, etc.) will earn a Major Discipline Referral. Parents will be notified by the teacher and/or principal.

**REPORT CARDS AND REPORTS TO PARENTS:** The report card in grade Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> consists of two distinct sections. One section is intended to record the progress of the child, based upon the student's ability, effort, cooperation, interest, and social habits. The other section, academic progress, compares student growth with that of his or her classmates and other students in this grade. Conduct, effort, cooperation, etc., are taken into consideration by the teacher in grading the student.

**PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES:** A conference day will be scheduled in the fall. A conference of approximately 15 minutes will be held between the teacher and a parent of his/her pupils. Teachers will schedule before or after school conferences to accommodate parent schedules *if the teacher is able*. Parents should arrange additional conferences directly with the classroom teacher. Occasionally, teachers will request that parents come in for special conferences.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS:** The Meridian Community Unit Schools are members of the Ogle County Education Cooperative. As a member of the co-op, Highland School has the services of a school psychologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, teacher of the visually impaired, teacher of the hearing impaired, and a school social worker.

**REQUEST FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION EVALUATION:** As part of the district responsibility for Special Education Child Find, the district requires all requests for special education evaluations be put in writing and addressed to the building Principal where your child attends.

**TITLE I ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** The committee supports the development and implementation of the District's Title I plan. At the Superintendent's directive, its activities may include: 1. Facilitating the active involvement of parents/guardians in their children's academic success by such activities as coordinating Title I parent-teacher conferences, providing information to help parents/guardians assist their children, coordinating volunteer or paid participation by parents/guardians in school activities, and establishing a process to respond to parents/guardians' inquiries and recommendations. 2. Distributing Title I informational materials. 3. Preparing and monitoring revised School Improvement Plan(s).



4. Supporting the implementation of Board of Education policy 6:170, Title I Programs. Committee members include parents/guardians and teachers of Title I children.

## **Section 8- Transportation**

**PARKING AREAS:** Parents are prohibited from parking in front of Highland School at morning arrival or evening dismissal times. The buses take up a large segment of the available space and these buses will be given priority on parking space. **During morning arrival or evening dismissal times please park your car in a stall when dropping off or picking up your child. Parking along the sidewalk is unsafe for students.**

Parents are also prohibited from parking in the rear of the building. Children walking may leave from these exits. Visitor parking is also provided at the east end of the building. Please exit the parking lot immediately after picking up your children to avoid traffic/pedestrian congestion.

**SCHOOL BUSES:** For the safety of your child and all the children on the bus, please stress the importance of obeying the rules established by the bus driver. Children should be reminded of the following rules: Cross in front of the bus when boarding or leaving the bus. Students that cannot adhere to bus riding regulations risk losing their bus riding privileges. Parents will be made aware of their child's behavior on the bus when it occurs. Second offenses generally result in removal of bus riding privileges for a period of time. Our district can no longer accommodate transportation of students on alternate buses to get students to a friend's house. Please make those arrangements outside of school.

**A 48-HOUR NOTICE FOR A PERMANENT BUS CHANGE IS REQUIRED.**

## **PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE BY 2:00 PM FOR ANY LAST MINUTE CHANGES**

**TRANSPORTATION POLICY:** All eligible students will be provided transportation to school from their homes or a designated location such as a baby-sitter, grandparent, etc. If a student is to be transported from a location other than the home where he/she resides, the school must be aware of that at the time of registration. Any changes made after that will only be accommodated if it does not interfere with the initial routing system. If a change does require any adjustment on the part of the school district, the parent will be responsible for the transportation of their child. Day to day changes in pick-up and drop-off locations are the direct responsibility of the parent.

*Dear Parents/Guardians,*

*To ensure efficiency and safety in student transportation, all students are required to use their bus scan cards when entering and exiting route buses.*

*If a student does not have their bus card for three consecutive days, parents will be contacted, and a \$2 replacement fee will be added to your Skyward account. Fees are for the current school year and subject to change.*

*Please help remind your student to bring their bus card daily. If a replacement is needed, please reach out to the Transportation Department 815-645-2230 ext 7011 or ext 7013 or your student's Bus driver.*

**SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION – Rules and Discipline:** Rules for Students Riding Meridian Community Unit #223 Buses

Many Meridian C.U.S.D. #223 students are transported each day to school on buses provided by the school district. Since bus drivers must follow a rigid schedule, there is a set of rules, which applies

to those who ride buses.

1. Students should be at the bus stop and ready to enter when it arrives. If the driver were required to wait for tardy pupils, it would be unfair to other families, prolong the duration of the trip, and possibly contribute to unsafe practices. Help keep the bus on schedule.
2. When pupils must cross the road to be picked up in the morning, the driver, after looking for approaching cars, will signal when it is safe to cross. Children should be instructed to wait for a proper signal and to cross promptly. They should wait completely back off the street or road.
3. Students who live on the left side of the road always cross 10-15 feet in front of the bus when getting off the bus in the afternoon. The student should be instructed to walk to a point 10-15 feet in front of the bus on the right shoulder of the road and remain there until a signal is given by the driver to cross.
4. All students must remain in their seats at all times while the bus is in motion. Please get on or off the bus without pushing or shoving.
5. Students should refrain from marking, defacing, or in any way damaging school buses on the inside or outside. The parents' of the students' will pay for any such damage. School buses are very expensive new and are very expensive to maintain. Please help your child to see the importance of maintaining school property. Pupils must refrain from unnecessary conversation with the driver. Drivers are very busy with the job of safe driving. Shouting and screaming is not a part of bus riding. Students or driver should use no profanity. Students should be absolutely quiet at all railroad crossings or dangerous roadway intersections.
6. Students should be a safe distance from a moving bus for the safety of everyone. Students, not on the bus, should not touch the bus when it is moving.
7. School buses are required to travel public roads only to pick up school children. One and one-half miles is the legal distance a child may be required to walk to meet transportation or to the school building.
8. In case of school being dismissed early during the day (hot weather, snow, etc.) parents should have a plan whereby their child may stay at a neighbor's home if the parent is not at home on such a day.
9. Conditions regarding bus schedules due to bad weather:
  - a. We will utilize our calling system. Make sure that we have your preferred notification number on file.
  - b. Bad weather (snow): When it is decided that buses will not run, radio and television stations will be informed. This information is to be broadcast no later than 7:00 A.M. We will do our best to broadcast the information over Rockford radio stations WRRR, WXXR, WROK, WZOK and Rochelle radio. TV channels 13, 17, and 23 will also be informed. An all call will also be made.
  - c. Please remember these stations are very hard to contact on mornings such as this and all cannot be informed at once.
10. It will be the parents' responsibility to bring children to or from school if portions of the routes are impassable.
11. Students are not to eat, chew gum, or drink on the bus.
12. If the bus driver and school officials have difficulty with a student's behavior, after he/she has been warned, a school official will contact the parents of the child. If the call or letter does not correct the behavior problem, the student will be removed from the bus. Parents will then supply the transportation.
13. Problems or complaints concerning the transportation of your child should be of concern to all of us. Safe transportation is made possible by cooperative efforts of many people. If you have a concern or a question, please contact your child's building principal or call the Superintendent at (815) 645-2230 X7002.
14. All students must remain in their seats facing forward at all times while the bus is in motion.
15. Be courteous to the driver. Use a whisper voice to talk to your friend in your seat.
16. Keep head, hands, and feet inside the bus.

17. Be alert to traffic, look both ways, and always walk in front of bus when boarding or leaving the bus.
18. No throwing of any type of article on the bus.
19. Students should be a safe distance from a moving bus for the safety of everyone.
20. Students should get the driver's permission before opening or closing windows. It is also very important that students not lean or reach out of bus windows at any time.

**The driver has the authority and responsibility to maintain proper conduct on his/her bus.**

**\*\*The bus driver has the authority to assign seats on his/her bus for as long a period as he or she considers it necessary.\*\***

***Regular bus students must ride the bus unless a note from the parent is given to the teacher, or they are attending a scheduled activity.***

## BUS CODE

Expectations	Bus Stop	Entering /Exiting Bus	While Riding
<b>Respect Everyone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Arrive at the bus stop 5 minutes early</li> <li>* Line up oldest student first youngest last</li> <li>* Keep hands/feet body parts to self</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Be prompt</li> <li>*Wait your turn to enter / exit</li> <li>*Keep / hands feet body parts to self</li> <li>*Feet on the floor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Listen to your driver</li> <li>*Respect others</li> <li>*Eliminate driver distractions</li> <li>*Use appropriate language / voice volume</li> <li>*Ask Permission before opening windows</li> <li>*Keep all items inside bus</li> <li>*Refrain from littering</li> </ul>
<b>Respect Safety Educations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Follow directions and procedures</li> <li>*Report unsafe situations and behavior</li> <li>*Stand 5 giant steps away from edge of road or curb</li> <li>*Keep balls and games at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Wait for driver to completely stop before walking toward the bus</li> <li>*Wait for your drivers signal to come to the bus or cross in front of the bus</li> <li>*Use the handrail when entering / exiting the bus</li> <li>*<b>WALK</b> up and down the steps</li> <li>*Immediately walk away from the bus, do <b>NOT</b> stop and get mail from mailbox</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Talk quietly</li> <li>* Remain seated while bus is moving, seat to seat and back to back feet on the floor until completely stopped</li> <li>*Keep arms and legs inside your own seat area and out of the aisle</li> <li>*Book bags on lap or under the seat</li> <li>*Maintain a food, gum, and candy free environment due to students with food allergies as well as a choking hazard</li> </ul>

<b>Respect Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Keep area clean</li> <li>*Stay out of roadway</li> <li>*Respect others, people, property and lawns</li> <li>*Dress appropriately for the weather while following school dress code</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Stay 10 feet away from the bus, all the way around</li> <li>*<b>ALWAYS</b> cross in front of the bus</li> <li>*Keep hands to self</li> <li>*Emergency exit you must leave everything on the bus and listen for instructions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Throw away garbage in proper container</li> <li>*Report any damage or issues to the driver</li> <li>*Do Not stand on the seats</li> <li>*Quiet at RR tracks is signaled by interior lights coming on</li> <li>*Low volume and earphones when using electronics</li> <li>* Keep all body parts inside the bus</li> <li>*Refrain from throwing items</li> <li>*No Spraying perfume, hairspray, glitter etc.</li> <li>*<b>NO</b> recording or picture taking of other students at any time</li> </ul>
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**ARRIVAL BY CAR:** Parents driving children to Highland School should drop off their students on the east side of the building. Parking is available in the east parking lot (lot closest to the high school). *Prekindergarten and early childhood students must be escorted into the building by an adult.*

**SAFETY PATROL:** There will not be any safety patrol students on duty. It will be the responsibility of parents to see to it that their child gets to school safely. Children living in town north of Rt. 72 may ride a designated bus to Highland in the morning from the Jr. High School. They may ride a bus back to the Jr. High in the afternoon.

## **Section 9-Library Information**

### **CIRCULATION POLICY**

**Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten:** Students may check out one book at a time. If a book is overdue, the student may not check out another book until the first book is returned.

**First and Second Grade:** Students are allowed to check out two books at a time. A student may not check out any other books until all overdue books are returned.

### **POLICY FOR LOST OR DAMAGED BOOKS**

#### **Lost Books:**

Fine: Replacement cost plus \$3 processing fee

\*Note: Please do not purchase replacement books for the library. We order from special companies who use library binding.

#### **Lost/Found/Returned Books:**

Book returned before replacement ordered: No fine

Book returned after replacement ordered: No refund

#### **Damaged Books:**

\$3 Repair fee if book can be salvaged

Replacement fines go into effect if the book cannot be salvaged.

(Please note that wet books, even slightly wet, become brittle and can develop mold. Wet books will usually need to be replaced.)

## **Section 10- Emergency Procedures**

### **DISASTER PROCEDURES**

#### **FIRE (Steady horn sound)**

1. Students leave their room according to the designated route, quickly, and orderly.
2. Extra rooms and washrooms are checked.
3. Children will proceed to the High School in case of fire. Parents may be reunited with their child at the high school if necessary.

## **TORNADO**

### **(P.A. announcement, intercom buzzer, and/or air horn)**

1. Teachers are notified if a tornado watch is in effect. They are later notified if the watch is lifted.
2. In case of a warning, classes report to their assigned locations in the basement. They sit on the floor, backs to a wall, knees up, and hands covering their heads.
3. Classes outdoors will try to reach the inside location or lie flat on the ground.

## **EARTHQUAKE**

During the shaking:

1. If indoors, stay indoors. Hide under sturdy furniture. Stay near the center of the building.
2. Stay away from glass.
3. If outside, stay away from building and utility wires.

## **NUCLEAR EMERGENCY OR HAZARDOUS SPILL:**

In the event of a nuclear emergency or a hazard spill, our students will be evacuated by bus to Jefferson High School in Rockford, IL, where parents may pick them up. If students were to be evacuated to another location, parents would be notified by the district messaging/calling system, radio, and television.

**We also practice additional emergency drills such as; Lockdowns and Reverse Evacuations.**

**Parents reserve the right to opt their child out of any lockdown drills. If you choose to do so, please contact the office prior to the lockdown drill.**

## **Section 11- Other Parent Information**

**VISITORS IN OUR SCHOOL:** All visitors, including parents and siblings, are required to enter through the front door of the building and proceed immediately to the main office. Visitors should identify themselves and inform office personnel of their reason for being at school. **If you need to visit a teacher *before, during, or after* school, you must have an appointment with that teacher.** Parents will not be allowed to visit with a teacher without an appointment. All visitors must sign in through the LobbyGuard system in the office at Highland. **A photo ID or driver's license should be brought to help facilitate this process.**

Visitors must sign in, identifying their name, the date and time of arrival, and the classroom or location they are visiting. Approved visitors must take a tag identifying themselves as a guest and place the tag to their outer clothing in a clearly visible location. Visitors are required to proceed immediately to their location in a quiet manner. All visitors must return to the main office and sign out before leaving the school. Any person wishing to confer with a staff member should contact that staff member to make an appointment. Conferences with teachers are held, to the extent possible, outside school hours or during the teacher's conference/preparation period.

The School Visitation Rights Act permits employed parents/guardians, who are unable to meet with educators because of a work conflict, the right to time off from work under certain conditions to attend necessary school functions such as parent-teacher conferences, academic meetings and behavioral meetings. Letters verifying participation in this program are available from the school office upon request.

Visitors are expected to abide by all school rules during their time on school property. A visitor who fails to conduct himself or herself in a manner that is appropriate will be asked to leave and may be subject to criminal penalties for trespass and/or disruptive behavior.

No person on school property or at a school event shall perform any of the following acts:

1. Strike, injure, threaten, harass, or intimidate a staff member, board member, or any other person.
2. Behave in an inappropriate manner or use vulgar or obscene language.
3. Unless specifically permitted by State law, possess a weapon, any object that can reasonably be considered a weapon or looks like a weapon, or any dangerous device.
4. Damage or threaten to damage another's property.
5. Damage or deface school property.
6. Violate any Illinois law or municipal, local or county ordinance.
7. Smoke or otherwise use tobacco products.
8. Distribute, consume, use, possess, or be impaired by or under the influence of an alcoholic beverage, cannabis, other lawful product, or illegal drug.
9. Be present when the person's alcoholic beverage, cannabis, other lawful product, or illegal drug consumption is detectible, regardless of when and/or where the use occurred.
10. Use or possess medical cannabis, unless he or she has complied Illinois' Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Act and district policies.
11. Enter upon any portion of school premises at any time for purposes other than those that are lawful and authorized by the board.
12. Operate a motor vehicle: (a) in a risky manner, (b) in excess of 20 miles per hour, or (c) in violation of an authorized district employee's directive.
13. Engage in any risky behavior, including roller-blading, roller-skating, or skateboarding.
14. Violate other district policies or regulations, or a directive from an authorized security officer or district employee.
15. Engage in any conduct that interferes with, disrupts, or adversely affects the district or a school function.

Any person who engages in prohibited conduct may be ejected from or denied admission to school property in accordance with State law. The person may also be subject to being denied admission to school athletic or extracurricular events for up to one calendar year.

**NAME LABELS:** Any articles of clothing that your child removes at school should be labeled (boots, caps, sweater, etc.) Money sent to school with younger children should be placed in an envelope with the student's name, the teacher's name and the amount of money and purpose written on the outside.

**LOST ITEMS:** Lost and found areas are maintained in the school. Large amounts of money should be given to the teacher or office for safekeeping.

**FIELD TRIPS:** Field trips are correlated with the educational program and are used to either introduce or review a unit. Field trips are considered to be an extension of the classroom. Field trips are planned experiences, which can best be taught outside the classroom. They are also used as a part of the enrichment program. This is concrete learning rather than abstract. Adequate preparations in the subject area and definite objectives are made before each trip. Evaluation and review of material seen on the field trip is made after the trip has been completed.

Children should attend school when a field trip has been scheduled. **All students must have a signed permission slip to go on a field trip.** Safety rules are strictly enforced on these trips and children not conforming to the rules may be barred from participating in future trips.

*We are unable to allow all those who volunteer to be chaperones on field trips. In the event that there are more volunteers than there are spots, we will send home notification regarding whether or not a spot is*

available for you. **If you are not an assigned chaperone, you will not be permitted to attend the field trip.**

**SCHOOL PARTIES:** There will be three parties a year for grades Kindergarten, 1 and 2. These are Halloween, Winter Holiday, and Valentine's Day. You must fill out a volunteer form and return it to the office prior to the day of the party. Please be considerate of classroom parties for the grade-level students. Siblings are not permitted to attend classroom parties, along with other family members. **Only room parents who are signed up to volunteer may attend the classroom parties due to our limited parking space. Please remember that all treats must be store-bought. If you signed up to provide an activity on the day of the party, please be sure to plan an activity that will fill the allotted time slot.**

**BIRTHDAYS:** Birthdays are a time of celebration! You may ask your child's teacher about providing a 10- minute recess instead of a birthday treat. You may donate a book in honor of your child's birthday to the classroom library. If you would like to provide a treat, we ask that you keep it healthy and nut free for all of our students. Check with your child's teacher to confirm a good time for enjoying the treat. Treats will be delivered from the office. Please remember that treats must be store bought and packaged. Birthday party invitations are to be mailed from or distributed from home. **Invitations may be distributed at school only when all children in the class are invited.** Balloons, gifts, and other large gestures, while many times are exciting for students, can be distracting to the general population. If you bring anything in for your student, the office will let the student know it is there and they may pick it up to take home after the school day.

## **Section 12 – Legal Notices**

**Notice Regarding Public Act 94-0994:** The purpose of this notice is to help the school and district comply with the state law placing restrictions on child sex offenders' access to school, school property or loitering within 500 feet of a school property when persons under 18 are present. In an effort to keep you informed and increase awareness of the Illinois Sex Offender Registry legislation, school districts are required to notify parents that information about sex offenders is available to the public. The names and addresses of all registered sex offenders in the State of Illinois listed by county are posted for public access on the following website: <http://www.isp.state.il.us/sor>. You may search the site database by name, zip code or county.

### **Title I School Notification**

In accordance with ESEA Section 1111(h)(6) *PARENTS RIGHT-TO-KNOW*, the Meridian CUSD #223 School District is notifying every parent of a student in a Title I school that you have the right and may request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's classroom teacher. This information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's classroom teachers including, at a minimum, the following:

1. Whether the teacher has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
2. Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
3. The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
4. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

If at any time your child has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher not highly qualified, the school will notify you. If you have questions, please feel free to contact your district superintendent at 815- 645-2230 ext. 7002.

### **Meridian CUSD #223 Legal Notice Behavioral Intervention Policy**

It is the purpose of this policy to comply with P.A. 89-191 of *The School Code* on the use of behavioral interventions for students with disabilities.

The Meridian District #223 recognizes that appropriate interventions are necessary for all students, disabled or non-disabled, whose behavior is not acceptable, and that administrators, teachers and other school personnel who work with students with disabilities require training and guidance in the use of behavioral interventions. A goal of this policy and procedure (hereafter collectively, "Policy") is to make available training and guidance to administrators and teachers of students with disabilities who require behavioral intervention, that provides ways for working successfully with said students, in order to provide an environment in which said students can learn. The policy recognizes that the use of positive or non-aversive interventions is generally most consistent with the educational goals of promoting students' academic, social and personal growth. Therefore, non aversive or positive desirable interventions designed to develop and strengthen desirable behaviors should be used to the extent possible and are generally preferable to the use of aversive or more restrictive procedures. While positive approaches alone may not always succeed in controlling inappropriate behavior, the use of more restrictive procedures may be necessary and should be utilized as provided in the Policy.

### **Meridian CUSD #223 Legal Notice**



### **Annual Asbestos Management Plan Notice**

This is to inform you of the status of the Meridian CUSD #223 asbestos management plan(s). It has been determined by the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Federal Environmental Protection Agency that asbestos containing materials are in the school building.

As required, our buildings were initially inspected for asbestos in 1988. The AHERA law requires that a visual surveillance of asbestos containing areas be completed every six months and a re-inspection conducted every three years. Any evidence of disturbance has been, and will continue to perform the required inspections through the services of IDEAL and Associated Environmental Engineering Services, Inc.

The Inspection/Management Plan is available for public review in the District Office at Meridian Junior High School. Should you wish to review the plans, please call to make an appointment between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM on weekdays.

Any concerns relative to asbestos containing materials should be directed to Mr. Kenny Lamer.

### **Faith's Law Notifications**

#### **Employee Conduct Standards**

School districts are required to include in their student handbook the District's Employee Code of Professional Conduct. These standards, in part, define appropriate conduct between school employees and students. A copy of these standards can be found on the District's website or requested from the Superintendent's office. **See Meridian #223 policy 5:120.**

#### **Making a Complaint: Enforcement**

Students are encouraged to report claims or incidences of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, or any other prohibited conduct to the building principal or superintendent. A student may choose to report to a person of the student's same sex. Complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible given the need to investigate. Students who make good faith complaints will not be disciplined.

**See Meridian #223 policy 7:20.**

#### **Student Assignments:**

The superintendent or designee shall assign students to classes. **See Meridian #223 policy 7:30.**

#### **Parents Right to Know:**

In accordance with ESEA Section 1111 (h)(6) PARENTS RIGHT TO KNOW, the Meridian CUSD #223 District is notifying every parent of a student in a Title I school that you have the right to and may request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's classroom teacher. The information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's classroom teacher will include, at a minimum, the following:

1. Whether the teacher has met State qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
2. Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status, through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
3. The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
4. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals, if so, their qualifications. If at any time your child has been taught for 4 or more consecutive weeks by a teacher not highly qualified, the school will notify you.

### **NOTICE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

Under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, the District must provide students with disabilities with appropriate special education and related services to address their educational needs. If your student receives related services from the District through their Individualized Education Program (“IEP”) document, such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, social work, nursing services, and speech and language therapy, you may request copies of related service logs developed and maintained by the District for your child. These related service logs include information regarding the type and duration of related services administered to your child.

If you have any questions regarding your child’s special education services, please contact Mr. Matt Zilm, Special Education Director of Ogle County Educational Cooperative, at [mzilm@ocecil.org](mailto:mzilm@ocecil.org).

### **Annual Notice to Parents About Educational Technology**

School districts throughout the State of Illinois contract with different educational technology vendors for beneficial K-12 purposes such as providing personalized learning and innovative educational technologies, and increasing efficiency in school operations.

Under Illinois’ Student Online Personal Protection Act, or SOPPA (105 ILCS 85/), educational technology vendors and other entities that operate Internet websites, online services, online applications, or mobile applications that are designed, marketed, and primarily used for K-12 school purposes are referred to in SOPPA as *operators*. SOPPA is intended to ensure that student data collected by operators is protected, and it requires those vendors, as well as school districts and the Ill. State Board of Education, to take a number of actions to protect online student data.

Depending upon the particular educational technology being used, our District may need to collect different types of student data, which is then shared with educational technology vendors through their online sites, services, and/or applications. Under SOPPA, educational technology vendors are prohibited from selling or renting a student’s information or from engaging in targeted advertising using a student’s information. Such vendors may only disclose student data for K-12 school purposes and other limited purposes permitted under the law.

In general terms, the types of student data that may be collected and shared include personally identifiable information (PII) about students or information that can be linked to PII about students, such as:

- Basic identifying information, including student or parent/guardian name and student or parent/guardian contact information, username/password, student ID number

- Demographic information
- Enrollment information
- Assessment data, grades, and transcripts
- Attendance and class schedule
- Academic/extracurricular activities
- Special indicators (e.g., disability information, English language learner, free/reduced meals or homeless/foster care status)
- Conduct/behavioral data
- Health information
- Food purchases
- Transportation information
- In-application performance data
- Student-generated work
- Online communications
- Application metadata and application use statistics

- Permanent and temporary school student record information

Operators may collect and use student data only for K-12 purposes, which are purposes that aid in the administration of school activities, such as:

- Instruction in the classroom or at home (including remote learning)
- Administrative activities
- Collaboration between students, school personnel, and/or parents/guardians
- Other activities that are for the use and benefit of the school district

## **UNIFORM GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

A student, parent/guardian, employee, or community member should notify any District Complaint Manager if he or she believes that the School Board, its employees, or its agents have violated his or her rights guaranteed by the State or federal Constitution, State or federal statute, or Board policy, or have a complaint regarding any one of the following:

1. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §12101 et seq.
2. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq., excluding Title IX sexual harassment complaints governed by policy 2:265, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure
3. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. §791 et seq.
4. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. §2000d et seq.
5. Equal Employment Opportunities Act (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act), 42 U.S.C. §2000e et seq
6. Sexual harassment prohibited by the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act, 5 ILCS 430/70- 5(a); Illinois Human Rights Act, 775 ILCS 5/; and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §2000e et seq. (Title IX sexual harassment complaints are addressed under policy 2:265, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure)
7. Breastfeeding accommodations for students, 105 ILCS 5/10-20.60
8. Bullying, 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7
9. Misuse of funds received for services to improve educational opportunities for educationally disadvantaged or deprived children
10. Curriculum, instructional materials, and/or programs
11. Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act, 820 ILCS 180/
12. Illinois Equal Pay Act of 2003, 820 ILCS 112/
13. Provision of services to homeless students
14. Illinois Whistleblower Act, 740 ILCS 174/
15. Employee Credit Privacy Act, 820 ILCS 70/.

The Complaint Manager will first attempt to resolve complaints without resorting to this grievance procedure. If a formal complaint is filed under this policy, the Complaint Manager will address the complaint promptly and equitably. A student and/or parent/guardian filing a complaint under this policy may forego any informal suggestions and/or attempts to resolve it and may proceed directly to this grievance procedure. The Complaint Manager will not require a student or parent/guardian complaining of any form of harassment to attempt to resolve allegations directly with the accused (or the accused's parents/guardians); this includes mediation.

### **Right to Pursue Other Remedies Not Impaired**

The right of a person to prompt and equitable resolution of a complaint filed under this policy shall not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies, e.g., criminal complaints, civil actions, etc. Use of this grievance procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies and use of this grievance procedure does not extend any filing deadline related to the pursuit of other remedies. If a person is pursuing another remedy subject to a complaint under this policy, the District will continue with a simultaneous investigation under this policy.

### **Deadlines**

All deadlines under this policy may be extended by the Complaint Manager as he or she deems appropriate. As used in this policy, school business days means days on which the District's main office is open.

### **Filing a Complaint**

A person (hereinafter Complainant) who wishes to avail him or herself of this grievance procedure may do so by filing a complaint with any District Complaint Manager. The Complainant shall not be required to file a complaint with a particular Complaint Manager and may request a Complaint Manager of the same gender. The Complaint Manager may request the Complainant to provide a written statement regarding the nature of the complaint or require a meeting with a student's parent(s)/guardian(s). The Complaint Manager shall assist the Complainant as needed. For any complaint alleging bullying and/or cyberbullying of students, the Complaint Manager shall process and review the complaint according to Board policy 7:180, Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment, in addition to any response required by this policy. For any complaint alleging sexual harassment or other violation of Board policy 5:20, Workplace Harassment Prohibited, the Complaint Manager shall process and review the complaint according to that policy, in addition to any response required by this policy.

### **Investigation Process**

The Complaint Manager will investigate the complaint or appoint a qualified person to undertake the investigation on his or her behalf. The Complaint Manager shall ensure both parties have an equal opportunity to present evidence during an investigation. If the Complainant is a student under 18 years of age, the Complaint Manager will notify his or her parents/guardians that they may attend any investigatory meetings in which their child is involved. The complaint and identity of the Complainant will not be disclosed except: (1) as required by law, this policy, or any collective bargaining agreement, (2) as necessary to fully investigate the complaint, or (3) as authorized by the Complainant. The identity of any student witnesses will not be disclosed except: (1) as required by law, this policy, or any collective bargaining agreement, (2) as necessary to fully investigate the complaint, or (3) as authorized by the parent/guardian of the student witness, or by the student if the student is 18 years of age or older.

The Complaint Manager will inform, at regular intervals, the person(s) filing a complaint under this policy about the status of the investigation. Within 30 school business days after the date the complaint was filed, the Complaint Manager shall file a written report of his or her findings with the Superintendent. The Complaint Manager may request an extension of time. The Superintendent will keep the Board informed of all complaints.

If a complaint contains allegations involving the Superintendent or Board member(s), the written report shall be filed directly with the Board, which will make a decision in accordance with paragraph four of the following section of this policy.

### **Decision and Appeal**

Within five school business days after receiving the Complainant and the accused by registered mail, return receipt requested, and/or personal delivery as well as to the Complaint Manager. All decisions shall be based upon the preponderance of evidence standard.

Within 10 school business days after receiving the Superintendent's decision, the Complainant or the accused may appeal the decision to the Board by making a written request to the Complaint Manager.

The Complaint Manager shall promptly forward all materials relative to the complaint and appeal to the Board.

Within 30 school business days after an appeal of the Superintendent's decision, the Board shall affirm, reverse, or amend the Superintendent's decision or direct the Superintendent to gather additional information. Within five school business days after the Board's decision, the Superintendent shall inform the Complainant and the accused of the Board's action.

For complaints containing allegations involving the Superintendent or Board member(s), within 30 school business days after receiving the Complaint Manager's or outside investigator's report, the Board shall mail its written decision to the Complainant and the accused by registered mail, return receipt requested, and/or personal delivery as well as to the Complaint Manager.

This policy shall not be construed to create an independent right to a hearing before the Superintendent or Board. The failure to strictly follow the timelines in this grievance procedure shall not prejudice any party.

### **Appointing a Nondiscrimination Coordinator and Complaint Managers**

The Superintendent shall appoint a Title IX Coordinator to coordinate the District's efforts to comply with Title IX.

The Superintendent shall appoint at least two Complaint Managers, one of each gender. The District's Nondiscrimination Coordinator, if any, may be appointed a Complaint Manager. The Superintendent shall insert into this policy the names, office addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers of current Complaint Managers. The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that students, parents/guardians, employees, and members of the community are informed of the contact information for the District's Nondiscrimination Coordinator and Complaint Managers on an annual basis.

#### **LEGAL REF.:**

8 U.S.C. §1324a et seq., Immigration Reform and Control Act.  
20 U.S.C. §1232g, Family Education Rights Privacy Act.  
20 U.S.C. §1400, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.  
20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq., Title IX of the Education Amendments; 34 C.F.R. Part 106.  
29 U.S.C. §206(d), Equal Pay Act.  
29 U.S.C. §621 et seq., Age Discrimination in Employment Act.  
29 U.S.C. §791 et seq., Rehabilitation Act of 1973.  
29 U.S.C. §2612, Family and Medical Leave Act.  
42 U.S.C. §2000d et seq., Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.  
42 U.S.C. §2000e et seq., Equal Employment Opportunities Act (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act).  
42 U.S.C. §2000ff et seq., Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act.  
42 U.S.C. §11431 et seq., McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.  
42 U.S.C. §12101 et seq., Americans With Disabilities Act.  
105 ILCS 5/2-3.8, 5/3-10, 5/10-20, 5/10-20.5, 5/10-20.7a, 5/10-20.60, 5/10-20.69 5/10-20.75 (final citation pending), 5/10-22.5, 5/22-19, 5/24-4, 5/27-1, 5/27-23.7, and 45/1-15.  
5 ILCS 415/10(a)(2), Government Severance Pay Act.  
5 ILCS 430/70-5(a), State Officials and Employees Ethics Act.  
410 ILCS 513/, Ill. Genetic Information Privacy Act.  
740 ILCS 174/, Whistleblower Act.  
740 ILCS 175/, Ill. False Claims Act.  
775 ILCS 5/, Ill. Human Rights Act.  
820 ILCS 180/, Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act; 56 Ill.Admin.Code Part 280.  
820 ILCS 112/, Equal Pay Act of 2003.  
820 ILCS 70/, Employee Credit Privacy Act, 70/10(b), and 70/25  
23 Ill.Admin.Code §§1.240, 200.40, 226.50, and 226.570.  
CROSS REF.: 2:105 (Ethics and Gift Ban), 2:265 (Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure), 5:10 (Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Recruitment), 5:20 (Workplace Harassment Prohibited), 5:30 (Hiring Process and Criteria), 5:90 (Abused and Neglected Child Reporting), 6:120 (Education of Children with Disabilities), 6:140 (Education of Homeless Children), 6:170 (Title I Programs), 6:260 (Complaints About Curriculum, Instructional Materials, and Programs), 7:10 (Equal Educational Opportunities), 7:15 (Student and Family Privacy Rights), 7:20 (Harassment of Students Prohibited), 7:180 (Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment), 7:185 (Teen Dating Violence Prohibited), 7:310 (Restrictions on Publications; Elementary Schools), 7:315

Adopted: January 6, 2022

## **TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

Sexual harassment affects a student's ability to learn and an employee's ability to work. Providing an educational and workplace environment free from sexual harassment is an important District goal. The District does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any of its education programs or activities, and it complies with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) and its implementing regulations (34 C.F.R. Part 106) concerning everyone in the District's education programs and activities, including applicants for employment, students, parents/guardians, employees, and third parties.

### **Title IX Sexual Harassment Prohibited**

Sexual harassment as defined in Title IX (Title IX Sexual Harassment) is prohibited. Any person, including a District employee or agent, or student, engages in Title IX Sexual Harassment whenever that person engages in conduct on the basis of an individual's sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. A District employee conditions the provision of an aid, benefit, or service on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct; or
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 educational program or activity; or
3. *Sexual assault* as defined in 20 U.S.C. §1092(f)(6)(A)(v), *dating violence* as defined in 34 U.S.C. §12291(a)(10), *domestic violence* as defined in 34 U.S.C. §12291(a)(8), or *stalking* as defined in 34 U.S.C. §12291(a)(30).

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, touching, crude jokes or pictures, discussions of sexual experiences, teasing related to sexual characteristics, spreading rumors related to a person's alleged sexual activities, rape, sexual battery, sexual abuse, and sexual coercion.

### **Definitions from 34 C.F.R. §106.30**

*Complainant* means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

*Education program or activity* includes locations, events, or circumstances where the District has substantial control over both the *Respondent* and the context in which alleged sexual harassment occurs.

*Formal Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint* means a document filed by a *Complainant* or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a *Respondent* and requesting that the District investigate the allegation.

*Respondent* means an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of the conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

*Supportive measures* mean non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the *Complainant* or the *Respondent* before or after the filing of a *Formal Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint* or where no *Formal Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint* has been filed.

### **Title IX Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response**

The Superintendent or designee will ensure that the District prevents and responds to allegations of Title IX Sexual Harassment as follows:

1. Ensures that the District's comprehensive health education program in Board policy 6:60, *Curriculum Content*, incorporates (a) age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention programs in grades pre-K through 12, and (b) age-appropriate education about the

warning signs, recognition, dangers, and prevention of teen dating violence in grades 7-12. This includes incorporating student social and emotional development into the District's educational program as required by State law and in alignment with Board policy 6:65, *Student Social and Emotional Development*.

2. Incorporates education and training for school staff pursuant to policy 5:100, *Staff Development Program*, and as recommended by the Superintendent, Title IX Coordinator, Nondiscrimination Coordinator, Building Principal, Assistant Building Principal, or a Complaint Manager.
3. Notifies applicants for employment, students, parents/guardians, employees, and collective bargaining units of this policy and contact information for the Title IX Coordinator by, at a minimum, prominently displaying them on the District's website, if any, and in each handbook made available to such persons.

### Making a Report

A person who wishes to make a report under this Title IX Sexual Harassment grievance procedure may make a report to the Title IX Coordinator, Nondiscrimination Coordinator, Building Principal, Assistant Building Principal, a Complaint Manager, or any employee with whom the person is comfortable speaking. A person who wishes to make a report may choose to report to a person of the same gender.

School employees shall respond to incidents of sexual harassment by promptly making or forwarding the report to the Title IX Coordinator. An employee who fails to promptly make or forward a report may be disciplined, up to and including discharge.

The Superintendent shall insert into this policy and keep current the name, office address, email address, and telephone number of the Title IX Coordinator.

### Processing and Reviewing a Report or Complaint

Upon receipt of a report, the Title IX Coordinator and/or designee will promptly contact the *Complainant* to: (1) discuss the availability of supportive measures, (2) consider the *Complainant's* wishes with respect to *supportive measures*, (3) inform the *Complainant* of the availability of *supportive measures* with or without the filing of a *Formal Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint*, and (4) explain to the *Complainant* the process for filing a *Formal Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint*.

Further, the Title IX Coordinator will analyze the report to identify and determine whether there is another or an additional appropriate method(s) for processing and reviewing it. For any report received, the Title IX Coordinator shall review Board policies 2:260, *Uniform Grievance Procedure*; 5:20, *Workplace Harassment Prohibited*; 5:90, *Abused and Neglected Child Reporting*; 5:120, *Employee Ethics; Conduct; and Conflict of Interest*; 7:20, *Harassment of Students Prohibited*; 7:180, *Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment*; 7:185, *Teen Dating Violence Prohibited*; and 7:190, *Student Behavior*, to determine if the allegations in the report require further action.

Reports of alleged sexual harassment will be confidential to the greatest extent practicable, subject to the District's duty to investigate and maintain an educational program or activity that is productive, respectful, and free of sexual harassment.

### Formal Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Grievance Process

When a *Formal Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint* is filed, the Title IX Coordinator will investigate it or appoint a qualified person to undertake the investigation.

The Superintendent or designee shall implement procedures to ensure that all *Formal Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaints* are processed and reviewed according to a Title IX grievance process that fully complies with 34 C.F.R. §106.45. The District's grievance process shall, at a minimum:

1. Treat *Complainants* and *Respondents* equitably by providing remedies to a *Complainant* where the *Respondent* is determined to be responsible for sexual harassment, and by following a grievance process that complies with 34 C.F.R. §106.45 before the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions or other actions against a *Respondent*.
2. Require an objective evaluation of all relevant evidence – including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence – and provide that credibility determinations may not be based on a person’s status as a *Complainant*, *Respondent*, or witness.
3. Require that any individual designated by the District as a Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision maker, or any person designated by the District to facilitate an informal resolution process:
  - a. Not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual *Complainant* or *Respondent*.
  - b. Receive training on the definition of sexual harassment, the scope of the District’s *education program or activity*, how to conduct an investigation and grievance process (including hearings, appeals, and informal resolution processes, as applicable), and how to serve impartially.
    1. Require that any individual designated by the District as an investigator receiving training on issues of relevance to create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence.
    2. Require that any individual designated by the District as a decision-maker receive training on issues of relevance of questions and evidence, including when questions and evidence about the *Complainant’s* sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant.
    3. Include a presumption that the *Respondent* is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.
    4. Include reasonably prompt timeframes for conclusion of the grievance process.
    5. Describe the range of possible disciplinary sanctions and remedies the District may implement following any determination of responsibility.
    6. Base all decisions upon the *preponderance of evidence* standard.
    7. Include the procedures and permissible bases for the *Complainant* and *Respondent* to appeal. 8. Describe the range of *supportive measures* available to *Complainants* and *Respondents*.
    9. Not require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use questions or evidence that constitute, or seek disclosure of, information protected under a legally recognized privilege, unless the person holding such privilege has waived the privilege.

### Enforcement

Any District employee who is determined, at the conclusion of the grievance process, to have engaged in sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge. Any third party who is determined, at the conclusion of the grievance process, to have engaged in sexual harassment will be addressed in accordance with the authority of the Board in the context of the relationship of the third party to the District, e.g., vendor, parent, invitee, etc. Any District student who is determined, at the conclusion of the grievance process, to have engaged in sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, suspension and expulsion consistent with student behavior policies. Any person making a knowingly false accusation regarding sexual harassment will likewise be subject to disciplinary action.

This policy does not increase or diminish the ability of the District or the parties to exercise any other rights under existing law.

### Retaliation Prohibited

The District prohibits any form of retaliation against anyone who, in good faith, has made a report or complaint, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in a proceeding under this policy. Any person should report claims of retaliation using Board policy 2:260, *Uniform Grievance*



*Procedure.* Any person who retaliates against others for reporting or complaining of violations of this policy or for participating in any manner under this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge, with regard to employees, or suspension and expulsion, with regard to students. LEGAL REF.:

20 U.S.C. §1681 *et seq.*, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; 34 C.F.R. Part 106.

Davis v. Monroe County Bd. of Educ., 526 U.S. 629 (1999).

Gebser v. Lago Vista Independent Sch. Dist., 524 U.S. 274 (1998).

CROSS REF.: 2:260 (Uniform Grievance Procedure), 5:10 (Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Recruitment), 5:20 (Workplace Harassment Prohibited), 5:90 (Abused and Neglected Child Reporting), 5:100 (Staff Development Program), 5:120 (Employee Ethics; Conduct, and Conflict of Interest), 6:60 (Curriculum Content), 6:65 (Student Social and Emotional Development), 7:10 (Equal Educational Opportunities), 7:20 (Harassment of Students Prohibited), 7:180 (Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment), 7:185 (Teen Dating Violence Prohibited), 7:190 (Student Behavior)