

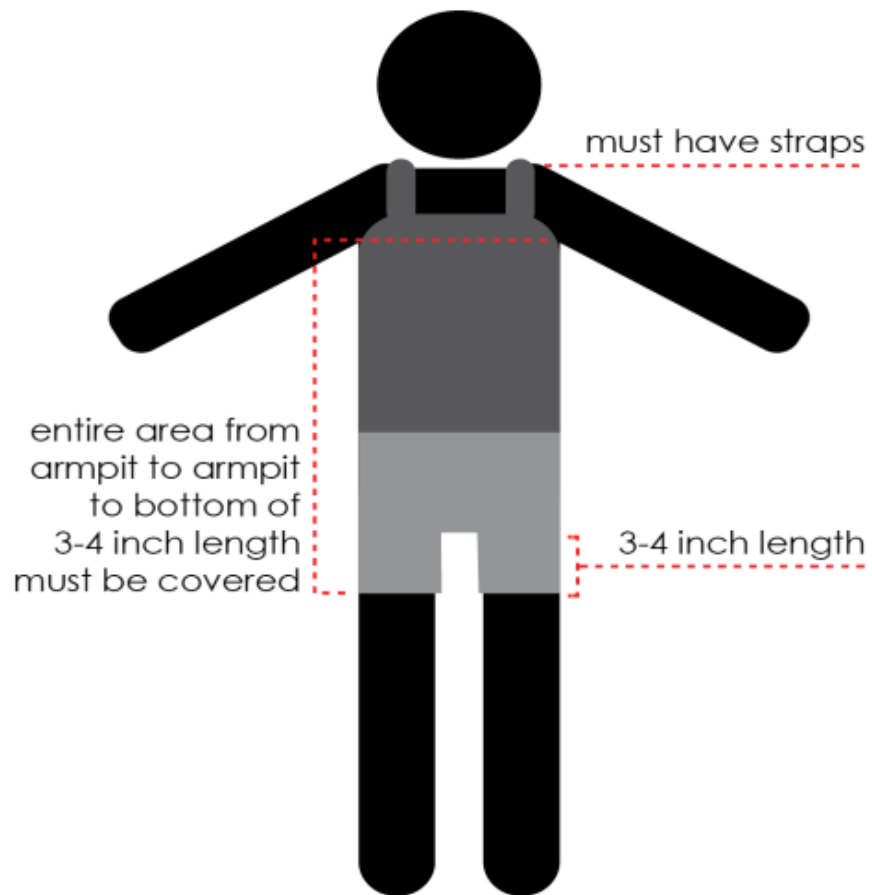


**Medford 7-12 Schools
School Board Report
August 21, 2023**

- 1) **Rolling out the new school year-** Most of our open positions have been filled with some great new teachers. We will have 8 new staff members at the high school. These include Ms. Akers in art, Ms. Hover in business, Ms. Rogers and Ms. Newton in English, Mr. Kroshus and Mx. Schmidt in Band and Choir, Mr. Dumas in science, and Mr. McCorkel in social studies. We were unable to fill the open position in Ag, left by Ms. Jensen, which has resulted in some schedule changes for students as we adjust the master schedule to accommodate that loss, but we will continue to pursue filling the position this fall and spring in hopes of renewing those offerings as soon as possible.
- 2) **Faculty will be rolling in shortly-** New teacher workshop will be Aug. 24th with all teachers reporting the 28th through the 30th. We have a full slate of things to prepare for including many legislative changes that will affect our students and classrooms.
- 3) **Handbook Updates:** The student and faculty handbooks are still a work in progress. There was a significant amount of policy changes, as well as other issues like the appearance of AI and focuses on student safety that have led to a variety of changes to the handbooks and policies. A few of those that are complete include:
 - a) Language added to our Academic Integrity policy regarding student use of AI applications in coursework. Currently the recommendation from all sources is that we adopt policies that allow teachers to create, teach, and monitor the use of these applications rather than trying to ban them- as enforcement of that is difficult. So I am working to provide teachers with a variety of resources and information on current best practice as we are in uncharted territory and it is likely to change multiple times in the future.
 - b) Attendance- Without truancy services front he county to help us enforce unexcused absences, it has been difficult to do much with attendance the last several years. It is a growing concern however. This year we are taking part in a pilot program to help promote school attendance- called LIFT UP which will also assist parents in better monitoring their students attendance. Unfortunately, because it is a pilot, not all students will be involved (there will be a control group) but the hope is that if it shows promising results, we can roll out to all families next year. We did add some language to the excused absences section of the handbook to note that if Medford buses are running, weather may not be considered an excused absence. Also, Mr. Grayson, Ms. Routh, Ms. Wetmore, and myself have met to discuss how to better address attendance issues here this year. We are hopeful that we can turn things around and improve this area.
 - c) We did update the cell phone policy/electronics & ear buds policy. We saw some improvement with the disruptions from cell phones last year with the changes we made to the policy. However they were still very much an issue, especially in relation to social media posts and pictures etc. This year we are implementing some stronger penalties for violating the policy (including involving parents to partner with us in developing a plan to prevent further problems). In addition, earbuds have become an increasing issue with students hiding them under hair, wearing one and not paying attention, etc. So as a result, we are mandating that all headphones/earbuds be corded-in an effort to more easily identify when they are being used inappropriately.
 - d) Chromebooks- 7th and 8th grade students only- Middle school students will no longer be taking devices home except under check out procedures and for E-learning (so similar to 6th

grade). This was due to issues with forgetting, issues with dead chromebooks, breakage, and using them for non-school related issues. Additionally, it was felt by our middle school team that students may be more on task if they didn't have the option to take home. They assured me that there is plenty of class time to complete daily work if students use it. For those who are sick or were gone for an extended period of time, check out procedures will be in place to allow them to take their chromebook home for a period of time necessary to complete the work.

- e) Dress code was updated with a picture and simpler language per MSBA. We are hopeful this will help with issues we were having with student compliance on this issue.



- f) Added a definition of "Student in Good Standing" which basically states that ALL students regardless of participation in extracurricular activities will be held to the same standards as those that are involved; including academically, substance use, and attendance- so it applies to participation in ALL outside of school day activities including dances, field trips, work based learning, etc.
- g) DoorDash- No longer allowed- this is due to both requirements of the USDA food program

and their no compete/equity policy as well as issues we had on-going last school year with allowing it.

- h) Discipline- LOTS OF CHANGES to 506. Because we are still working through those, I'll wait until the policies are completed and share those in the future. But we will be making several changes to how we handle behavior issues in the building and focusing on making sure that our expectations are clear, students are aware of them, and understand why their behavior is not appropriate or acceptable at school.
- 4) **7th Grade and New Student Orientation**-This will be held as part of our annual open house on Wed. Aug. 30. We will have 7th grade and new students from 5-6pm and then invite all remaining high school students to come in from 6-7 and take care of all the new school year business, meet the new teachers, etc. Our hope is to welcome everyone back and/or to the Medford community and get them excited about the upcoming school year.
- 5) **Site Team**-Planning for first day of school. We will have an altered schedule to assist in making sure that students get the updates to the handbook that they need, have a chance to ask questions about anything that they are unclear about, do some planning for Homecoming, and then some time to get reacquainted with one another and their teachers. 7th and 8th graders will have a separate schedule so that their teachers can help them become familiar with google, smartpass, and a variety of other NEW things to middle schoolers without the added stress of finding classrooms amongst the rest of the high schoolers etc. they will then join the 9-12th graders at the end of the day for some fun activities.

Thanks!

Jen Ford