



Meridian Junior High School

Student Handbook 2025-2026

207 W. Main Street
Stillman Valley, IL 61084
815-645-2230

Property of: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____ SOAR Teacher: _____

In case of emergency, please notify:

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

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PREAMBLE

This handbook is provided to the students and their families to acquaint them with the rules, regulations, procedures, and other relevant information necessary for the orderly functioning of the school. It has been structured to help promote student

progress as well as a guide to school operations. In addition this handbook provides for the psychological and physical safety of students through appropriate rules and regulations.

When violations of school disciplinary rules and regulations occur, it is the responsibility of the involved teachers and administrators to work with the student, his/her parents, and other support personnel to help the student correct his/her behavior. All disciplinary actions shall be directed toward protecting the welfare of the school community, as well as helping the student develop self-discipline. When determining the response for a specific violation of discipline, school personnel will consider the nature of the act, the student’s previous history, his/her age and maturation, any mitigating circumstances and the effect his/her action had on the welfare of the school community. Disciplinary responses may include, but are not limited to, the actions described in this handbook.

This handbook does not equate to an irrevocable contractual commitment to the student. This handbook is only a summary of board policies governing the district. Those policies are available for inspection at the district’s administrative office.

Membership or participation in a school-sanctioned activity is a privilege and not a property right. **The school has the right to update this handbook at any time during the school year.**

MERIDIAN COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #223
MISSION STATEMENT

“Our mission is to educate students to be self-directed learners, collaborative workers, complex thinkers, quality producers and community contributors.”

GREETINGS FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Welcome to Meridian Junior High School! We are so excited for this upcoming school year and to provide you and your student a positive educational experience which will help shape him/her into productive citizens. The purpose of this handbook is to present information about our school policies, areas of study, and activities. It will answer many questions you may have about your needs and how we do business at MJHS! Everyone on the faculty and staff is ready to help your student have a high quality educational experience. We hope that if you have any questions or problems during the year, you will contact us. We are proud of Meridian Junior High and are expecting you to represent our school with pride. Let’s have a successful school year! #WeAreMCUSD

Mrs. Speakes
Principal
Meridian Junior High School

PERIOD & BELL SCHEDULES

8th Grade: (Late Start Days Listed Below)							
1st hour	2nd hour	3rd hour	4th hour	5th hour	6th hour	Lunch	8th hour
9th hour							

8:00-8:42 2:30	8:45-9:27	9:30-10:12	10:15-10:57	11:00-11:42	11:45-12:27	12:30-1:00	1:03-1:45	1:48-
8:30-9:08 2:30	9:11-9:49	9:52-10:30	10:33-11:11	11:14-11:52	11:55-12:33	12:36-1:06	1:09-1:47	1:50-

7th Grade: (Late Start Days Listed Below)

1st hour	2nd hour	3rd hour	4th hour	5th hour	Lunch	7th hour	8th hour	
9th hour								
8:00-8:42 2:30	8:45-9:27	9:30-10:12	10:15-10:57	11:00-11:42	11:45-12:15	12:18-1:00	1:03-1:45	1:48-
8:30-9:08 2:30	9:11-9:49	9:52-10:30	10:33-11:11	11:14-11:52	11:55-12:25	12:28-1:06	1:09-1:47	1:50-

6th Grade: (Late Start Days Listed Below)

1st hour	2nd hour	3rd hour	4th hour	Lunch	6th hour	7th hour	8th hour	
9th hour								
8:00-8:42 2:30	8:45-9:27	9:30-10:12	10:15-10:57	11:00-11:30	11:33-12:15	12:18-1:00	1:03-1:45	1:48-
8:30-9:08 2:30	9:11-9:49	9:52-10:30	10:33-11:11	11:14-11:44	11:47-12:25	12:28-1:06	1:09-1:47	1:50-

Early Dismissal Days out at 11:10

Early Release Days out at 1:00

SCHOOL CALENDAR **WILL UPDATE** 2025-2026

AUGUST

11-12 Teacher Institute
13 First Day of School
29 Early Dismissal 11:10 a.m.

2-3

JANUARY

No School - Winter Break
5 Teacher Institute
19 No School - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

SEPTEMBER

1 No School - Labor Day

FEBRUARY

13 Early Dismissal 11:10 a.m.
16 No School - Presidents' Day

OCTOBER

10 End of 1st Quarter
10 Early Dismissal 11:10 a.m.
13 No School - Columbus Day

MARCH

14 End of 3rd Quarter
27 Early Dismissal 11:10 a.m.
30-31 No School - Spring Break

NOVEMBER

10 No School - Election Day
24-28 Thanksgiving Break

APRIL

1-2 No School - Spring Break
3 No School - Good Friday
6 No School - Easter Monday
24 Teacher Institute

DECEMBER

19 Early Dismissal 11:10 a.m.
19 End of 1st Semester
23-31 No School - Winter Break

26

MAY

23 Last Day of School - Early Dismissal 11:10 am
Memorial Day
27-30 Possible Emergency Days

JUNE

2 Possible Emergency Days

MERIDIAN JUNIOR HIGH PERSONNEL

BOARD OF EDUCATION:	Mr. John Smith	Mr. Matt Rhodes	Mr. Tim DeVries	Mrs. Kristine Youman
	Mrs. Jill Huber	Mrs. Marsha Welden	Mr. Dustin Collins	
SUPERINTENDENT:	Dr. Michael Plourde	mplourde@mail.meridian223.org		
PRINCIPAL:	Mrs. Jen Speakes	jspeakes@mail.meridian223.org		
AD/AP.....	Mrs. Tara Jepsen	tjepsen@mail.meridian223.org		
COUNSELOR:	Mr. Robert Wissinger	rwissinger@mail.meridian223.org		
	Mrs. Kelli Zitzke	kzitzke@mail.meridian223.org		
SECRETARY:	Mrs. Margarita Alvarez	malavrez@mail.meridian223.org		
	Mrs. Kelli Spray	kspray@mail.meridian223.org		
NURSE:	Mrs. Joellen Johnson	jjohnson@mail.meridian223.org		
HEAD LIBRARIAN:	TBD	TBD		
LIBRARY AIDE:	Ms. Elizabeth Hong	ehong@mail.meridian223.org		
JANITOR:	Miss Ashley Simmons	asimmons@mail.meridian223.org		
HEAD COOK:	Mrs. Pam Allison	pallison@mail.meridian223.org		

TEACHING STAFF	SUBJECT	EMAIL
Ms. Jacquie Arjes	7th Math	jarjes@mail.meridian223.org
Mrs. Rebecca Barton	7th Science	rbarton@mail.meridian223.org
Mrs. Malinda Bonnell	8th Resource	mbonnell@mail.meridian223.org
Mrs. Sarah Bouton	Paraprofessional	sbouton@mail.meridian223.org
Mrs. Emilea Bramm	Paraprofessional	ebramm@mail.meridian223.org
Mrs. Deb Close	8th Literature	dclose@mail.meridian223.org
Mrs. Kathleen Combs	Math Intervention	kcombs@mail.meridian223.org
Mrs. Katie Fore	7th ELA	kfore@mail.meridian223.org
Mr. John Gelasi	Band	jgelasi@mail.meridian223.org
Mrs. Jolene Graney	Building Sub	jgraney@mail.meridian223.org
Mr. Ben Groselak	8th Math	bgroselak@mail.meridian223.org
Mrs. Janet Hall	7th Resource	jhall@mail.meridian223.org
Mrs. Jennifer Hall	8th Science	jenhall@mail.meridian223.org
Mr. Todd Hall	6th English	thall@mail.meridian223.org
Mrs. Katelyn Hamel	6th Resource	khamel@mail.meridian223.org
Ms. Kim Hofmeister	8th English	khofmeister@mail.meridian223.org
Mrs. Darby Gensler	7th Literature	dgensler@mail.meridian223.org
Mrs. Beth Kleinschmidt	Instructional Coach	bkleinschmidt@mail.meridian223.org
Mr. Michael Lalor	8th History	mlalor@mail.meridian223.org
Mrs. Kristi Lundine	6th Math	klundine@mail.meridian223.org
Mrs. Leanne Campbell	Self-Contained Special Ed	lcampbell@mail.meridian223.org
Mr. Ryan McDevitt	6th/7th Physical Education	rmcdevitt@mail.meridian223.org
Mrs. Lisa McNeal	Aide	lmcneal@mail.meridian223.org
Mr. Adham Ralev	6th History	aralev@mail.meridian223.org
Mrs. Kaitlyn Rippentrop	Art	krippentrop2@mail.meridian223.org
Miss Abigail Risner	Choir	arisner@mail.meridian223.org
Miss Alyssa Rueff	Reading Interventionist	arueff@mail.meridian223.org
Mrs. Ali Salo	7th History	asalo@mail.meridian223.org
Mrs. Jacey Schneiker	6th Literature	jschneiker@mail.meridian223.org
Mrs. Aimee Stewart	6th Science	astewart@mail.meridian223.org
Mrs. Jessica Summers	Paraprofessional	jsummers@mail.meridian223.org
Ms. Abbey Wheeler	Paraprofessional	awheeler@mail.meridian223.org
Mr. TJ Zambrovitz	7th/8th Physical Education	tzambrovitz@mail.meridian223.org

Parents are encouraged to contact teachers and get acquainted with the teacher and classroom procedures. Through contact with teachers and the use of Student/Family Access, parents become partners in the academic development of their child. If parents have any questions or concerns about their child, they should contact the teacher **FIRST**. As a courtesy we request that you email the teacher or call and make an appointment that will be convenient for both you and the teacher.

WEATHER RELATED / EMERGENCY RELATED SCHOOL CANCELLATION / EARLY DISMISSAL

As a general rule, #223 believes it is best to transport students to and from school at the regular times because area drivers are accustomed to our buses on the roads at these times, and statistics prove less bus/traffic problems occur at these times. Under unusual circumstances, approaching winter storm advisories, we will make the decision to lose schools early. We plan to make this decision by noon and notify the below listed media. Early dismissal

means the junior high and high school will be dismissed one hour early (1:30 PM) and the elementary schools will also be dismissed one hour early (2:30 PM).

The decision to cancel school because of weather and or other emergencies is planned to be made by 6:00 AM 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. If the weather is questionable, we would rather cancel school than take any unnecessary chances. Making up missed school days is done in the spring when weather is not an issue.

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. A Wind Chill Index of approximately -35 degrees will generally warrant school cancellation. While these are the general guidelines used by the district, we understand parents are the final authority for 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.

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, all morning bus pickups would occur two hours later than usual. Dismissal times would remain the same. The schedule within the building would be accommodated in order to ensure that students miss as little instructional time as possible, which also allows us to keep students safe coming to school.

Wednesday Late Start: Each Wednesday, school will start at 8:30 a.m. instead of 8:00 a.m. This time will be utilized to allow teachers to collaborate on instruction, assessment, and student learning. MJHS will be staffed as normal, so students may be dropped off as normal. Students riding buses will be picked up 30 minutes later on Wednesdays.

MEDIA NOTIFIED: SCHOOL CANCELLATION / EARLY DISMISSAL

School App

Edurooms: id.edurooms.com

Television

Rockford: WIFR - 23

WREX - 13

Web Site: Meridian School District 223: www.meridian223.org

WTVO - 17

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.

VISITORS

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.

Visitors must sign in using the LobbyGuard system, 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.

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.

Visitors are not permitted to have lunch with students.

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, sports official or coach, or any other person.
2. Behave in an unsportsmanlike 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 detectable, regardless of when and/or where the use occurred.

10. Use or possess medical cannabis, unless he or she has complied with Illinois' Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Act and district policies.
11. Impede, delay, disrupt, or otherwise interfere with any school activity or function (including using cellular phones in a disruptive manner).
12. Enter upon any portion of school premises at any time for purposes other than those that are lawful and authorized by the board.
13. 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.
14. Engage in any risky behavior, including roller-blading, roller-skating, or skateboarding.
15. Violate other district policies or regulations, or a directive from an authorized security officer or district employee.
16. Engage in any conduct that interferes with, disrupts, or adversely affects the district or a school function.

VOLUNTEERS

All school volunteers must complete the "Volunteer Information Form" and have a background check completed. Visitors will need prior approval by the building principal prior to assisting at the school. Forms are available in the school office. Some teachers utilize parent volunteers in the classroom. The individual teachers make this decision. Teachers who desire parent volunteers will notify parents. For school-wide volunteer opportunities, please contact the building principal.

Volunteers are required to sign into LobbyGuard in the office and wear the supplied badge. Volunteers should use this badge to sign out before exiting the building.

STUDENT APPEARANCE

Student dress and grooming must not disrupt the educational process; interfere with the maintenance of a positive teaching/learning climate, or compromise reasonable standards of health, safety, and decency.

The School Board believes it is the parent's responsibility to have their children dress in an acceptable manner for school. Any form of dress that is deemed to be a distraction or disruption to the serious business of the educational process is unacceptable, such as:

STUDENT APPEARANCE	APPROPRIATE ACTION
<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student dress (including accessories) may not advertise, promote, or picture alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, violent behavior, or other inappropriate images. ● Student dress (including accessories) may not display lewd, vulgar, obscene, or offensive language or symbols, including gang symbols. ● Hats, coats, bandannas, sweat bands, and sun glasses may not be worn in the building during the school day. ● Hair styles, dress, and accessories that pose a safety hazard are not permitted in the shop, laboratories, or during physical education. ● Clothing with holes, rips, tears, and clothing that is otherwise poorly fitting, showing skin and/or undergarments may not be worn at school. ● The length of shorts or skirts must be appropriate for the school environment. ● Appropriate footwear must be worn at all times. ● If there is any doubt about dress and appearance, the building principal will make the final decision. ● Student whose dress causes a substantial disruption of the orderly process of school functions or endangers the health or 	<p>The list is only a guideline and should not be considered all-inclusive. When dress is identified as inappropriate, the student will be immediately referred to the building principal for appropriate action, which may include</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A request to remove or cover up the unacceptable clothing, jewelry, etc. 2. Parental contact to bring in acceptable clothing. 3. A student may be sent to in-school suspension if nothing can be done to either cover-up, remove or replace the inappropriate dress. 4. Any other incident of inappropriate dress may result in an out of school suspension for insubordination.

safety of the student, other students, staff or others may be subject to discipline.	
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If you debate whether the clothing you're wearing may be inappropriate - it probably is.

Meridian Junior High School is committed to providing the best educational climate possible. Student dress is part of that climate. Although there are very few restrictions on dress in the Meridian School District, we expect all students to respect and observe the stated dress code and guidelines.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board of Education, Administration, and Faculty of Meridian Junior High School believe that maximum educational achievement occurs for most students through regular attendance in classes; while excessive absences may result in a poor grade and possible failure. A student is expected to attend school regularly and to be on time for classes in order to receive the maximum benefit from the instructional program and to develop habits of punctuality, self discipline and responsibility. There is a direct relationship between poor attendance and class failure. Students who have good attendance generally achieve higher grades, enjoy school more, and are much more employable after leaving high school. Students must be in attendance at least half a day in order to participate in extracurricular activities after school. At Meridian Junior High School, attendance will be taken every period. If a student is absent for less than 150 minutes, it is considered ½ day. If a student is absent 151 minutes or more, it is considered a full day absence. Pursuant to Public Act 102-981 (effective 01/01/2023), school boards must allow “public middle school and high school” students one day-long excused absence per school year for the purpose of attending a civic event.

815-645-2230 Option number 2 (MJHS) then Option 1 to report an absence.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

1. If a student is going to be absent for all or part of the school day, the parent or guardian should call the junior high **the morning of the absence, before 9:00 a.m.** Students may make up work missed for credit. Failure to report an absence within 24 hours will result in an unexcused absence.
2. If the parent does not call the school, the student must bring a note to the office **immediately** upon his/her return to school. The note must state the **specific reason for the absence and the specific date(s) of the absence.** If the cause of the student's absence is recognized as valid, an excused absence will be recorded. Students should come to the office before going to class to receive a class admit. Students may make up work missed for credit.
3. If the cause of any student's absence is judged as invalid, the absence will be recorded as unexcused.
4. Students who have used all of their allotted 10 excused absences will be issued an unexcused absence for any additional days missed, unless a doctor's note is provided.
5. Students with excessive unexcused absences (6 full days or 12 half days) may be referred to truancy.
6. Suggested guidelines for valid absences are:
 - a. Illness (including mental or behavioral health of a student).
 - b. Serious illness or death in the immediate family.
 - c. Emergency medical or dental attention.
 - d. Absence approved in advance with the school principal.
 - e. Authorized religious holidays or events.
 - f. Attending a funeral.
 - g. Pre-arranged absences due to vacation; medical, dental or legal appointments; reasonable parental requests.

PROCEDURES FOR PRE-ARRANGED ABSENCES

1. Parents must call or send a note **before** the absence in order for the student to be excused.
2. If neither a phone call nor a written note precedes the absence, then the absence will automatically be considered unexcused.
3. Suggested guidelines for **unexcused** absences are:
 - a. Truancy.
 - b. Missing the school bus.
 - c. Trips not approved in advance.
 - d. Birthday or other celebrations.
 - e. Gainful employment.
 - f. Hair appointments.
 - g. Oversleeping, too tired, and lack of sleep.

PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT SIGN OUT

The Meridian CUSD #223 has a policy in place for students who leave the building early. All students who leave the building before 2:30 p.m. must be signed out via the LobbyGuard System. **Only** those listed as Family/Guardian or Emergency Contacts within the Skyward system will be able to sign a student out. Those who are signing out students, must bring in a valid driver's license, which is needed in the signout process. Siblings may be added as an emergency contact, as long as they are of legal age (18+). Students will be called down to the office only **after** the signout has been completed. Please make sure to arrive early to allow for this process and for students to collect their homework and belongings.

GENERAL ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

1. Attendance letters will be sent to parents after the student has 5, 7, and 10 or more absences per year. The letter is to inform both students and parents of attendance history.
2. **TARDINESS:** Students must report to all classes and study halls on time. There are three minutes between classes. If a student is not in his/her classroom at the time the second bell rings, the student will be considered tardy unless the student has a signed pass explaining the reason for the tardiness. Excessive tardies will mean after school detentions, parent conference, and/or Saturday detentions. **Tardies accumulate per quarter.**
3. If a teacher or the office is responsible for a student being late to class, the student will be given a pass and will not be counted as tardy or absent.
4. Students will not be penalized for missing school if they participated in a school-sponsored activity or a visit to the counselor- -provided the counselor requested that the student leave class.
5. Parents/guardians are the only ones authorized to call in an absence for a student.
6. Parents are asked to notify the school if a student is absent for three or more consecutive days. If the student will be absent for three or more consecutive days the office will, upon request from the parents, arrange for the student's assignments. Requests for homework will need to be made before 9:00 a.m. with pick up available after 3:00 p.m. Students cannot be excused from P.E. for more than three days without written request from the physician or of the school nurse.
7. Use of the Nurse's Office: If a student becomes ill at school, every effort will be made to contact the parent to come and pick up the student. Students may request permission to see the school nurse when she is available; however, only in extreme situations will a student be allowed to stay in the nurse's office.
8. After ten (10) absences per school year, to excuse each absence thereafter a physician's note stating specific medical reasons for the student's absence may be required within 24 hours of the student's return to school. While seeking a medical excuse, the student's parent or guardian must still comply with absence notification procedures. Should a parent or guardian choose not to secure a medical excuse, the absence will be considered unexcused. Medical notes must state specific days that a student is excused from school and signed by a doctor.
9. Students are allowed up to 5 excused absences for mental/behavioral health reasons before a medical note is required.
10. To prevent from receiving unexcused absences, parents need to inform the school of any planned student absences (i.e. vacations, etc.) as soon as possible (3-5 days in advance). Students are responsible for their homework during this time. Whenever possible, it is strongly urged that the student get his/her assignments before being absent rather than waiting until he/she returns to school.

MENTAL HEALTH DAYS

Public Act 102-0321 (Senate Bill 1577) amends the compulsory attendance article of the School Code by allowing students to take up to five mental or behavioral health days per year. A student is not required to provide a medical note and must be given the opportunity to make up any schoolwork missed during such absences. **Following the second mental health day, a student may be referred to the appropriate school personnel.**

MERIDIAN JUNIOR HIGH PHYSICAL EDUCATION GOALS

Students will learn the value of lifelong physical activity. Physical activities can and should be fun, so the students are more likely to remain active throughout their lives. Teachers will teach according to national and state standards for quality physical education, thus helping the students feel confident in their ability to lead an active life and be in control of their own health.

UNIFORM AND DRESS POLICY FOR P.E. - REGULATION DRESS:

- ★ — Gray Shirt
- ★ — Plain Black Athletic Shorts. Minimum of a 7" inseam.
- ★ — Athletic Socks
- ★ — Tennis Shoes
- ★ — Some type of Sweats (recommended for use on days with cold weather)

CHANGING FOR P.E. AND CONSEQUENCES

If a student does not have their own P.E. clothes shoes, they may be issued a loaner. Any student who is issued a loaner will need to do so on a Google Spreadsheet. Upon the third loan, parents will be notified by the student via the office phone during their scheduled P.E. time. Daily points will not be deducted from the students' grade.

If a student should refuse a loaner, a minor will be given for being unprepared for class, daily points will be deducted and an alternate assignment will be given. This assignment will need to be completed before the end of the class period. Student(s) will also be required to notify a parent via a phone call immediately upon their refusal.

We want to help every student be successful and participate in P.E. Providing loaners in P.E. is the same as letting them borrow a pencil or chromebook.

HEALTH CLASS

6th, 7th, and 8th graders will participate in Health and/or Too Good for Drug classes during their scheduled P.E. times. Students will not be required to take or participate in any class or courses in comprehensive sex education, including in grades 6-12, instruction on both abstinence and contraception for the prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS; family life instruction, including in grades 6-12, instruction on the prevention, transmission, and spread of AIDS; instruction on diseases; recognizing and avoiding sexual abuse; or instruction on donor programs for organ/tissue, blood donor, and transplantation, if his or her parent or guardian submits a written objection. The parent or guardian's decision will not be the reason for any student discipline, including suspension or expulsion. Nothing in this Section prohibits instruction in sanitation, hygiene or traditional courses in biology.

P.E. LOCKERS

All students will be assigned a P.E. locker and are to use the lockers assigned to them. Students are not allowed to share lockers. If for any good reason a locker cannot be used, students will need to report this to their P.E. teacher. **Students must keep their locker locked during and after P.E. class.** The

school cannot assume responsibility for lost articles. Lockers should be clean and tidy. Students will be held responsible for any damages done to their locker. **There will be a \$10.00 charge for all lost locks; due to increase in costs, prices are subject to change.**

Students should bring home their P.E. clothes weekly to be washed, **if they change throughout the week.**

Students must have a parent note to be excused from physical activity. Students requiring more than three days from P.E. are required to bring a note from a doctor.

SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM

REQUIRED PHYSICALS:

According to Illinois State law, **all** students entering Kindergarten (first entrance), 6th, and 9th grades are required to present evidence of a physical examination, completed within the last year, with a complete immunization record, and the recommended dental exam. Students who do not fulfill these requirements will not be allowed to enroll. In case of transfer from another school or state, the student will be given 30 days to comply with any health record requirement. A “sports” physical does **NOT** satisfy this requirement. The 6th grade physical **DOES** satisfy the “sports” physical.

SPORTS PHYSICALS

Student athletic participation in junior high requires an annual physical examination.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS

Taking medication during school hours or during school-related activities is prohibited unless it is necessary for a student’s health and well-being. When a student’s licensed health care provider and parent/guardian believe that it is necessary for the student to take medication during school hours or school-related activities, the parent/guardian must request that the school dispense the medication to the child by completing a “School Medication Authorization Form.”

Completed “School Medication Authorization Forms” are valid for one school year. All prescription and over-the-counter medications must be brought to the school nurse’s office by a parent or guardian. The medication must be in the original prescription bottle or over-the-counter container. Medications are to be stored in the school nurse’s office, with the exception of medications outlined in the Self-Administration of Medication section below. No medications are allowed on school buses, with the exception of medications outlined in the Self-Administration of Medication section below.

No school or district employee is allowed to administer to any student, or supervise a student’s self-administration of, any prescription or non-prescription medication until a completed and signed School Medication Authorization Form is submitted by the student’s parent/guardian. No student is allowed to possess or consume any prescription or non-prescription medication on school grounds or at a school-related function other than as provided for in this procedure.

An occasional dose of 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. Documentation of this administration will be kept by the school nurse.

SELF-ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

A student may possess and self-administer an epinephrine injector (e.g., EpiPen®) and/or an asthma inhaler or medication prescribed for use at the student’s discretion, provided the student’s parent/guardian has completed and signed a School Medication Authorization Form.

Students who are diabetic may possess and self-administer diabetic testing supplies and insulin if authorized by the student’s diabetes care plan, which must be on file with the school.

Students with epilepsy may possess and self-administer supplies, equipment and medication, if authorized by the student’s seizure action plan, which must be on file with the school.

Students may self-administer (but not possess on their person) other medications required under a qualified plan, provided the student’s parent/guardian has completed and signed a School Medication Authorization Form.

The school district shall incur no liability, except for willful and wanton conduct, as a result of any injury arising from a student’s self-administration of medication, including asthma medication or epinephrine injectors, or medication required under a qualifying plan. A student’s parent/guardian must indemnify and hold harmless the school district and its employees and agents, against any claims, except a claim based on willful and wanton conduct, arising out of a student’s self-administration of an epinephrine injector, asthma medication, and/or a medication required under a qualifying plan.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICAL CANNABIS

In accordance with the Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Program, qualifying students are allowed to utilize medical cannabis infused products while at school and school events. Please contact the building principal for additional information. Discipline of a student for being administered a product by a designated caregiver pursuant to this procedure is prohibited. The District may not deny a student attendance at a school solely because he or she requires administration of the product during school hours.

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).

EMERGENCY AID TO STUDENTS

Nothing in this policy shall prohibit any school employee from providing emergency assistance to students, including administering medication for the school response plan.

SCREENINGS

Vision and hearing tests are conducted by the school nurse. 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.

HEAD LICE (PEDICULOSIS)

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.

Care for Students with Diabetes

If your child has diabetes and requires assistance with managing this condition while at school and school functions, a Diabetes Care Plan must be submitted to the building principal. Parents/guardians are responsible for and must:

- Inform the school in a timely manner of any change which needs to be made to the Diabetes Care Plan on file with the school for their child.
- Inform the school in a timely manner of any changes to their emergency contact numbers or contact numbers of health care providers.
- Sign the Diabetes Care Plan.
- Grant consent for and authorize designated School District representatives to communicate directly with the health care provider whose instructions are included in the Diabetes Care Plan.

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 emergency contact cannot be reached, the student will be transported to the hospital for emergency treatment.

ALLERGIES

If your student has a severe to life threatening allergy to any food, environmental agent or insect sting please contact the school nurse or **building principal** IMMEDIATELY so special arrangements can be made for the safety of your student.

ILLNESS

In the event a student becomes ill at school, a parent will be notified concerning action to be taken. Students will only be released to individuals who are on the emergency contact list within Skyward and who are 18 years and older. Students must see the nurse to be excused from school. Students who text from their phones to be picked up may not be excused. Illinois Department of Public Health guidelines regarding communicable illnesses will be used by the school nurse to determine when students may not be in attendance. Please be attentive to update Skyward when any emergency contacts, contact information, critical health information or demographic information changes.

WHEN SHOULD I KEEP MY CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL

Parents and school staff know the importance of school attendance and do everything possible to ensure that students are in school. Yet there are times when it is necessary for a child to miss school. It is not in the child's best interests, and it places other students and staff at risk to send a child to school ill. For school purposes, a temperature of 100 degrees F or above is considered a fever. Students should not return to school until they have been "fever-free" 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.

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 concerns.

MANDATED SCHOOL EXAMS

All Illinois children in kindergarten, second and sixth grades will be required to have an oral health examination. Examinations must be performed by a licensed dentist and he/she shall sign the report form. This includes all public, private, or parochial schools. Each child shall present proof of examination by a dentist prior to May 15th, of the school year. If a child in second or sixth grade fails to present proof by May 15th, the school may hold the child's report card until: Child presents proof of dental examination or child presents proof that dental examination will take place within 60 days after May 15th. Each school must give notice of the dental examination requirement to the parents or guardians of the children at least 60 days prior to May 15th of each school year. The Illinois Department of Public Health has established, by rule, a waiver for children who show undue burden or lack of access to a dentist.

TRANSPORTATION

Students are expected to follow all school rules while on the bus. Students may be suspended from riding the school bus for up to 10 consecutive school days for violating school rules or for engaging in other gross disobedience or misconduct. The school board may suspend the student from riding the school bus for a period in excess of 10 days for safety reasons. The district's regular suspension procedures shall be used to suspend a student's privilege to ride a school bus.

A student who is suspended from riding the school bus and who does not have alternative transportation to school shall be allowed the opportunity to make up all missed work for equivalent academic credit. It is the responsibility of the student's parent or guardian to notify the school that the student does not have alternative transportation to school.

The same conduct rules that apply on the campus of Meridian Junior High School also apply on bus routes. Bus drivers are responsible for conduct on their bus and will report serious misconduct to the principal. Gross disobedience or misconduct will result in the suspension of bus riding privileges and possible suspension from school. Examples of misconduct include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Willful injury or threat of injury to a bus driver or to another rider.
2. Willful and/or repeated defacement of the bus.
3. Repeated use of profanity.
4. Repeated willful disobedience of the bus driver's directives.
5. Such other behavior as the administration deems to threaten the safe operation of the bus and/or its occupants.

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. Students who are not regular passengers on the bus are not allowed to ride for any reason. Regular bus students must ride the bus unless a phone call and note from the parent is given to the Transportation Department in advance, or they are attending a scheduled school activity. If you have questions or concerns regarding buses please contact the Bus Garage at 815.645.2230. Students will not be permitted to ride the bus if they leave the school property and return. Any students who choose to leave the property will need to find another means of transportation.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

ADDRESS CHANGES

It is important that we have at all times your current address and telephone number. This information is especially important in cases of emergency. Please take proof of address to the District Office if you need to change your address.

BEFORE SCHOOL

No student should be on school grounds before 7:00 a.m. Doors will be unlocked at 7:00 a.m.

AFTER SCHOOL

The building is to be cleared by 2:45 p.m. Students waiting for a late bus must wait in the small large gym. Only those who have supervised activities may remain in the building after 2:45 p.m.

AT SCHOOL

You become the school's responsibility when you board the bus in the morning until you depart the bus at night. Students may be taken to the park that is located behind the school during or after school by staff members or across the street to our fields by the bus garage. In the event that parents must remove a child from school before the close of day, they should send a note to that effect and bring it to the office.

ITEMS NOT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

Problems arise each year because children bring articles to school, which are hazards to the safety of others or interfere in some way with school procedures. Such items as Stanley's, toy guns, electronic games, ipods, dice, laser pointers, skateboards, game cards, any items of value, etc., if brought to school as playthings, are undesirable and will be confiscated.

The school is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

BIRTHDAYS & SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Deliveries of balloons and flowers are not permitted. If you choose to bring in food for your student, please ensure that the food provided is intended for your student only. Visitors are not permitted to have lunch with students.

CELL PHONES

Cell phones may be brought to school for before and after school use. ~~or if required by a teacher for a specific lesson.~~ Phones must be turned off and locked in lockers during school hours. If a student's phone is observed during school hours, ~~or in a class that was not required by the teacher that day~~ it will be confiscated and taken to the principal to be held until the end of the school day. Students will be given a warning for the first incident and a 4-hour Saturday school on the second and thereafter. ~~Apple Smart watches may be worn~~ **are not allowed.** ~~but students should not use them during the school day;~~ Watches that are being used will be confiscated and the same consequences will be given as cell phones.

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. On the students' third visit to borrow a chromebook from the office, they will be required to make a phone call home to inform a parent that they were unprepared for school, they will speak with the principal and receive a minor. Minors will be issued for each occurrence thereafter for the duration of the quarter.

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.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

The Meridian District runs emergency drills throughout the year. Parents may request that their student(s) opt out of participating in any of the drills. Please send a request in writing to the principal 24 hours prior to said drill.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are correlated with the educational program and are used to either introduce or climax a unit. Field trips are considered to be an extension of the classroom. Field trips are planned teaching of those things which can best be taught outside the classroom. Children should not be kept home because a field trip has been scheduled. It is a part of the enrichment program and is concrete learning rather than abstract. Adequate preparation 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. No child is allowed to go on a trip without a signed permit from his/her parents. Safety rules are strictly enforced on these trips, and children not conforming to the rules may be barred from participating in future trips.

FOOD & BEVERAGES

Students are not allowed to leave the cafeteria with any food items, opened or unopened. Only clear water bottles are permitted in classrooms; due to spills, only water will be allowed in the building. Students who arrive at school with anything other than water, may leave their beverages in the office to be picked up at lunch or after school. In addition, students are not allowed to have gum. Students can only have clear, plastic water bottles.

HONOR ROLL

The purpose of an Honor Roll is to provide students recognition for academic achievement. Honor roll recognition will be given at the end of ~~each~~ **semester** of the school year for students in grades six through eight. Recognition may include an Honor Roll Certificate and students name entered on the Honor Roll List. To qualify for this honor students must have all homework and assignments submitted by 2:30 p.m. on the last day of the semester.

INTERNET ACCESS

Meridian Junior High School is fortunate to have extensive access to the internet. In order to have access to the internet, students and parents must sign a Meridian C.U.S.D at meridian223.org. #223 acceptable use policy. This policy requires students to abide by appropriate protocol while on the internet. Failure to abide by the policy may result in the student being permanently denied access to the internet. Students are prohibited from emailing from the school, unless it is authorized by a teacher/administrator and part of the school's instructional program. Students are also prohibited from entering and participating in online "chat rooms". Violations will result in disciplinary measures up to and including expulsion.

LIBRARY

The library has a wide variety of materials for individual reports and research. By arrangement with the librarian the day before, students may use the library for studying before or after school. The library is open during the noon hours by arrangement with the librarian only.

LIBRARY LOST/DAMAGED BOOKS

Lost Books:	Fine = Replacement cost plus \$3 processing fee
Lost/Found/Returned Books:	Book returned before replacement ordered = accumulated late fine only
	Book returned after replacement ordered = No Refund
Damaged Books:	\$3 repair fine if the book can be repaired. If the book is wet (prone to mold) or damaged beyond repair, refer to Lost Books.

LOCKERS

On the opening day of school a locker will be assigned to each student. All students are to use the lockers assigned to them. Students are not allowed to share lockers. If for any good reason a locker cannot be used, report the trouble to the office. **Keep your locker locked at all times.** The school cannot assume responsibility for lost articles. Valuable property, such as money, cell phones, etc. should not be brought to school. In case a sum of money must be brought to school, it should be deposited with the office staff for safekeeping and never in your locker. Lockers should be clean and tidy. Students will be held responsible for any damages done to their locker. **There will be a \$10.00 charge for all lost or damaged locks; due to increase in costs, prices are subject to change.**

LUNCH PROGRAM

Checks for payment of lunch fees should be made payable to the MERIDIAN CUSD #223. Parents are able to add lunch payments via E-pay, which is located through the district website or cash/checks may be brought to the school office. Payments through the MJHS office will be processed daily at 10:00 a.m. Credit card payments made through E-pay may take up to 72 hours to process. If lunch cards are implemented, students will be issued a student i.d. which is needed to purchase a lunch; ala carte items can only be purchased with the student's i.d. First time replacements will be issued at no charge; all cards thereafter will be \$1 each. If an account goes more than \$5.00 in debt, a student will be allowed to purchase lunch, but will not be able to purchase any ala carte items until their account is in good standing.

Students will be notified as to the status of their account.

PARKING AREAS

Please do not park on the east side of the building 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. There are parking spaces on the west, north, and south sides of the building.

INTERVENTION

Students who have been identified as needing academic support through classroom, district, and/or state assessments, will have the ability to work with a math/reading interventionist. The interventionist will work on skill remediation in order to bring the student's readiness level to grade-level proficiency. This will be done through SOAR, elective classes, and/or PE, as scheduled by the interventionist.

PROMOTION (8TH GRADE)

In order for students to be eligible to participate in the 8th grade promotion ceremony, students must be in good academic standing, meaning they must be passing all of their classes. Any misbehavior that results in disciplinary action may exclude students from the ceremony. Students must be in attendance the entire day of school to attend.

REMOTE LEARNING

Remote learning is offered only on days when school is closed due to inclement weather. All students will be considered "present" on remote school days. Faculty, staff, admin, counselors & support staff (paras, interventionists, administrative assistants) will be available via email for students and parents as needed during the school day (8:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.). Students should check Google Classroom for any assignments and do their work remotely.

RISE (REACH INDIVIDUAL SUCCESS & EXCELLENCE)

Students who do not turn in an assignment when it is due, will be issued RISE. RISE sessions run every morning Monday/Tuesday & Thursday/Friday from 7:00 (or 7:15 when their early bus arrives)-8:00 a.m and 2:35 to 3:15pm (RISE will not take place on Wednesdays). If students are not able to finish

their assignment(s), they will be expected to return for another session. Parents will be notified by text and phone call if their student has been issued a RISE for the following morning. The purpose of RISE is to ensure that all students are completing assignments and remain caught up in class in order to learn new rigorous concepts. Students who are not in attendance will be issued another alternative method (warning, lunch detention, after school detention, in school suspension).

SCHOOL ARRIVAL

1. **Students will not be permitted to enter the building before 7:00 a.m.**
2. When you arrive in the morning, students will need to ring the bell at the front door in order to gain entry. Students must use only these doors to enter the building, unless arriving by bus.
3. When arriving at school in the a.m. 6th and 8th grade students must go to the large gym, 7th grade students must go to the small gym and talk quietly until the first bell. **Students are not to be in the hallways without permission.** Students' needing admins or having office business should go to the office before going to the small/large gym.
4. All other areas are closed to students.
5. Students cannot go upstairs to their lockers before the first bell rings without a pass from the office or a teacher.
6. Students may not leave the school campus once they have arrived.

STUDENT FINES/DAMAGES

Pursuant to Public Act 102-805 (effective 01/01/2023), fines for loss or damage to school property are waived for students who meet certain eligibility guidelines.

TARDINESS

If you arrive late to school you must report to the office, sign in and secure a pass from the office to enter class. You will be asked to explain the reason for your tardiness. During the school day, there are THREE (3) minutes given between class periods. You are expected to be in your seat when the bell sounds. If you are not in your seat by this time, you will be required to explain to the teacher why you were detained. Being on time is one of the first things an employer inquires about when checking on a student. Now is the time to begin forming a lifelong habit of being on time.

If a student is tardy 3 times in a 9-week period, he/she will serve detention after school. (Detentions are held on Thursdays from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.) Students will receive a detention after school for every 3 tardies that are accumulated. If a student accumulates 9 tardies in a nine-week period, he/she will serve a 4-hour Saturday school detention and every 3 tardies beyond 9 there will be another Saturday school assigned. Parents will need to arrange transportation for students who stay after school for detentions.

TELEPHONE

INCOMING CALLS: The school recognizes that there are times when parents need to communicate with their children during the school day. However, the school would appreciate those situations to be kept to a minimum. Only under extreme emergencies at the request of a parent will a student be taken out of a class or study hall to take a phone call. The office will attempt to get phone messages from parents to students during the school day, however due to increased phone messages, any messages that need to be passed on to your student should be phoned into the school office **before** their lunch period. 6th grade lunch: 11:00; 7th grade lunch 11:45; 8th grade lunch 12:30. Calls received after the lunch hour, will be emailed to the student.

OUTGOING CALLS: Students finding it necessary to make local telephone calls may do so before or after school only. No calls are to be made during the time school is in session, **including lunch**, unless approved by a faculty member or the office.

CALLS TO TEACHERS: Teachers and staff will **NOT** be taken out of class for phone calls. **PHONE MESSAGES WILL BE PLACED IN TEACHERS' MAILBOXES OR VOICE MAIL AND THEY WILL RESPOND TO THE MESSAGES AT THEIR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE.** Please be aware that messages may not always reach them before dismissal time.

TESTING TRANSPARENCY

The State and District requires students to take certain standardized tests. A parent/guardian may request, and the District will provide in a timely manner, information regarding student participation in any assessments mandated by law or District policy, which shall include information on any applicable right you may have to opt your student out of such assessment.

TRANSFERS

When a child is to be transferred from Meridian Junior High 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 on the last day of the child's attendance. School records will be forwarded upon request by the other school.

WAIVER OF FEES

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 should be submitted to the office. Forms for submission of such requests are available in each building 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.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are entitled to enjoy the rights protected by the Federal and State Constitutions and laws for persons of their age and maturity in a school setting. Students should exercise these rights reasonably and avoid violating the rights of others. Students, who violate the rights of others, violate District policies, or MJHS rules will be subject to disciplinary measures.

DUE PROCESS

The Board of Education and Administration intend to protect students' rights. A brief summary of Due Process for students follows:

1. A student has the right to hear the charges/evidence against him/her.

2. A student has the right to tell his/her side of the story.
3. A student has a right to be informed of the decision.
4. A student and the student's parents have a right to a hearing with:

1st - Principal

2nd - Superintendent

3rd - Board of Education

CONTACT INFORMATION:

AP/Principal: Tara Jepsen/Jen Speakes
207 West Main Street, Stillman Valley, IL
Phone: 815.645.2230

Superintendent: Dr. Michael Plourde
207 West Main Street, Stillman Valley, IL
Phone: 815.645.2230

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

For the safety and supervision of students in the absence of parent(s)/guardian(s), to maintain discipline and order in schools, and to provide for the health, safety and welfare of students and staff, school authorities are authorized to conduct searches of students and their personal effects, as well as Meridian C.U.S.D. #223 property.

Certified employees and school administrators may search a student and/or a student's personal effects (e.g., purses, wallets, knapsacks, book bags, lunch boxes, etc.) when there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will produce evidence that a student has violated or is violating either the law or MJHS conduct rules.

School property, including, but not limited to, desks, lockers, and parking lot is owned and controlled by the Meridian C.U.S.D. #223 and may be searched by school authorities at any time. School authorities are authorized to conduct area-wide, general administrative inspections of school property (e.g., searches of all student lockers) without notice to or consent of the student and without a search warrant.

If a search produces evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or Meridian C.U.S.D. #223 policy or MHS rules, such evidence may be seized and impounded by school authorities and disciplinary action may be taken. When appropriate, such evidence may be transferred to law enforcement authorities.

Questioning of Students Suspected of Committing Criminal Activity

Before a law enforcement officer, school resource officer, or other school security person detains and questions on school grounds a student under 18 years of age who is suspected of committing a criminal act, the building principal or designee will: (a) Notify or attempt to notify the student's parent/guardian and document the time and manner in writing; (b) Make reasonable efforts to ensure the student's parent/guardian is present during questioning or, if they are not present, ensure that a school employee (including, but not limited to, a social worker, psychologist, nurse, guidance counselor, or any other mental health professional) is present during the questioning; and (c) If practicable, make reasonable efforts to ensure that a law enforcement officer trained in promoting safe interactions and communications with youth is present during the questioning.

ACCESS TO STUDENT SOCIAL NETWORKING, PASSWORDS AND WEBSITES

School officials may conduct an investigation or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is specific information about activity on the student's account on a social networking website that violates a school disciplinary rule or policy. In the course of an investigation, the student may be required to share the content that is reported in order to allow school officials to make a factual determination.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

PROHIBITED STUDENT CONDUCT

Students may be disciplined for gross disobedience or misconduct, including but not limited to the following:

1. Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, selling or offering for sale tobacco or nicotine materials, including electronic cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vapes, vape pens or other vaping related products.
2. Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling alcoholic beverages. Students who are under the influence of an alcoholic beverage are not permitted to attend school or school functions and are treated as though they had alcohol in their possession.
3. Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, selling or offering for sale:
 - Any illegal drug, controlled substance, or cannabis (including marijuana, hashish, and medical cannabis unless the student is authorized to be administered a medical cannabis infused product under *Ashley's Law*).
 - Any anabolic steroid unless it is being administered in accordance with a physician or licensed practitioner's prescription.
 - Any performance-enhancing substance on the Illinois High School Association's most current banned substance list unless administered in accordance with a physician or licensed practitioner's prescription.
 - Any prescription drug when not prescribed for the student by a physician or licensed practitioner, or when used in a manner inconsistent with the prescription or prescribing physician or licensed practitioner's instructions. The use or possession of medical cannabis, even by a student for whom medical cannabis has been prescribed, is prohibited unless the student is authorized to be administered a medical cannabis infused product under *Ashley's Law*.
 - Any inhalant, regardless of whether it contains an illegal drug or controlled substance: (a) that a student believes is, or represents to be capable of, causing intoxication, hallucination, excitement, or dulling of the brain or nervous system; or (b) about which the student engaged in behavior that would lead a reasonable person to believe that the student intended the inhalant to cause intoxication, hallucination, excitement, or dulling of the brain or nervous system. The prohibition in this section does not apply to a student's use of asthma or other legally prescribed inhalant medications.
 - "Look-alike" or counterfeit drugs, including a substance that is not prohibited by this policy, but one: (a) that a student believes to be, or represents to be, an illegal drug, controlled substance, or other substance that is prohibited by this policy; or (b) about which a

student engaged in behavior that would lead a reasonable person to believe that the student expressly or impliedly represented to be an illegal drug, controlled substance or other substance that is prohibited by this policy.

- Drug paraphernalia, including devices that are or can be used to: (a) ingest, inhale, or inject cannabis or controlled substances into the body; and (b) grow, process, store, or conceal cannabis or controlled substances.
- Any substance inhaled, injected, smoked, consumed or otherwise ingested or absorbed with the intention of causing a physiological or psychological change in the body, including without limitation, pure caffeine in a tablet or powdered form.
- Students who are under the influence of any prohibited substance are not permitted to attend school or school functions and are treated as though they have the prohibited substance, as applicable, in their possession.

4. Using, possessing, controlling or transferring a “weapon” or violating the procedures listed below under the Weapons Prohibition section of this handbook procedure.

5. Using or possessing an electronic paging device.

4. Using a cellular telephone, smartphone, video recording device, personal digital assistant (PDA), or similar electronic device in any manner that disrupts the educational environment or violates the rights of others, including using the device to take photographs in locker rooms or bathrooms, cheat, or otherwise violate student conduct rules. Prohibited conduct specifically includes, without limitation, creating and sending, sharing, viewing, receiving or possessing an indecent visual depiction of oneself or another person through the use of a computer, electronic communication device or cellular telephone, commonly known as “sexting.” Unless otherwise banned under this policy or by the building principal, all cellular phones, smartphones and other electronic devices must be kept powered-off and out-of-sight during the regular school day unless: (a) the supervising teacher grants permission; (b) use of the device is provided in a student’s individualized education program (IEP); (c) it is used during the student’s lunch period; or (d) it is needed in an emergency that threatens the safety of students, staff, or other individuals..
5. Using or possessing a laser pointer unless under a staff member’s direct supervision and in the context of instruction.
6. Disobeying rules of student conduct or directives from staff members or school officials. Examples of disobeying staff directives include refusing a staff member’s request to stop, present school identification or submit to a search.
7. Engaging in academic dishonesty, including cheating, intentionally plagiarizing, wrongfully giving or receiving help during an academic examination, altering report cards and wrongfully obtaining test copies or scores.
8. Engaging in bullying, hazing or any kind of aggressive behavior that does physical or psychological harm to a staff person or another student or encouraging other students to engage in such behavior. Prohibited conduct specifically includes, without limitation, any use of violence, intimidation, force, noise, coercion, threats, stalking, harassment, sexual harassment, public humiliation, theft or destruction of property, retaliation, hazing, bullying, bullying using a school computer or a school computer network or other comparable conduct.
9. Engaging in any sexual activity, including without limitation, offensive touching, sexual harassment, indecent exposure (including mooning) and sexual assault.
10. Engaging in teen dating violence.
11. Causing or attempting to cause damage to, stealing, or attempting to steal, school property or another person’s personal property.
12. Entering school property or a school facility without proper authorization.
13. In the absence of a reasonable belief that an emergency exists, calling emergency responders (calling 9-1-1); signaling or setting off alarms or signals indicating the presence of an emergency; or indicating the presence of a bomb or explosive device on school grounds, school bus or at any school activity.
14. Being absent without a recognized excuse.
15. Being involved with any public school fraternity, sorority, or secret society.
16. Being involved in a gang or engaging in gang-like activities, including displaying gang symbols or paraphernalia.
17. Violating any criminal law, including but not limited to, assault, battery, arson, theft, gambling, eavesdropping, vandalism and hazing.
18. Engaging in any activity, on or off campus, that interferes with, disrupts, or adversely affects the school environment, school operations, or an educational function, including but not limited to, conduct that may reasonably be considered to: (a) be a threat or an attempted intimidation of a staff member; or (b) endanger the health or safety of students, staff, or school property.
19. Making an explicit threat on an Internet website against a school employee, a student, or any school-related personnel if the Internet website through which the threat was made is a site that was accessible within the school at the time the threat was made or was available to third parties who worked or studied within the school grounds at the time the threat was made, and the threat could be reasonably interpreted as threatening to the safety and security of the threatened individual because of his or her duties or employment status or status as a student inside the school.
20. Operating an unarmed aircraft system (AUS) or drone for any purpose on school grounds or at any school event unless granted permission by the building principal
21. For purposes of these rules, the term “possession” includes having control, custody, or care, currently or in the past, of an object or substance, including situations in which the item is: (a) on the student’s person; (b) contained in another item belonging to, or under the control of, the student, such as in the student’s clothing, backpack, or automobile; (c) in a school’s student locker, desk, or other school property; (d) at any location on school property or at a school-sponsored event; or (e) in the case of drugs and alcohol, substances ingested by the person.

Efforts, including the use of positive interventions and supports shall be made to deter students, while at school or a school-related event, from engaging in aggressive behavior that may reasonably produce physical or psychological harm to someone else.

No disciplinary action shall be taken against any student that is based totally or in part on the refusal of the student’s parent/guardian to administer or consent to the administration of psychotropic or psychostimulant medication to the student.

The grounds for disciplinary action also apply whenever the student's conduct is reasonably related to school or school activities, including but not limited to:

1. On, or within sight of, school grounds before, during, or after school hours or at any time;
2. Off school grounds at a school-sponsored activity or event, or any activity or event that bears a reasonable relationship to school;
3. Traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event; or
4. Anywhere, if the conduct interferes with, disrupts, or adversely affects the school environment, school operations, or an educational function, including but not limited to, conduct that may reasonably be considered to: (a) be a threat or an attempted intimidation of a staff member; or (b) endanger the health or safety of students, staff, or school property.

DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

MINOR	Minor Progression Defined
Preparedness Throwing small object Noncompliance Touching (Minor) Inappropriate comments/gestures Inappropriate hallway behavior (Minor) Minor Disruptions Minor physical contact Cheating Put down Calling outs Refusing to work Minor dishonesty Attitude/tone Disrespect Sleeping Dress code	<u>Administrative Action:</u> <u>1st Minor:</u> Student is Notified <u>2nd Minor:</u> Parent/Guardian Notified <u>3rd Minor:</u> Parent/Guardian Notified & Teacher Assigned Detention <u>4th Minor:</u> Moves to a Major Administration will issue Discipline and call home.
MAJOR	<i>Consequences - Progressive discipline will be followed when appropriate.</i>
Fighting Verbal Threats Major Dishonesty Tobacco Alcohol Walking out of Class Cutting Class Hate Speech Aggressive Physical Attack Inappropriate Language Chronic Minor Infractions Harassment of Students or Teacher Truancy/Tardies Inappropriate Hallway Behavior (Major) Vandalism Drugs Dress Code (Chronic) Severe Insubordination Cheating Major Disruption	<u>Administrative Action:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Detention ● In School Suspension ● Saturday School ● Out of School Suspension <u>Interventions:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meet with Counselor ● Develop Behavior Contract ● Assign adult mentor ● Parent attends school

Discriminatory/Inflammatory Language Cell Phones Sexual Harassment Discrimination (racial, disability, religion) Theft	
MAJOR	Consequences - <i>Progressive discipline will be followed when appropriate.</i>
Weapons Group Fighting Threats	<u>Administrative Action:</u> In addition to the above Administrative Actions, <i>Possible recommendation for expulsion</i>

This is just a guide, not a complete list. Other infractions against the ‘Cardinal Code’ not listed may fall as either a major or minor. 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.

BULLYING POLICY

Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment

Bullying, intimidation, and harassment diminish a student’s ability to learn and a school’s ability to educate. The term bullying means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student that has or can be reasonably assumed to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- Placing the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s person or property.
- Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student’s physical or mental health
- Substantially interfering with the student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, military status, unfavorable discharge from military service, sex, sexual orientation, gender orientation, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, physical or mental disability, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, academic status, order of protection status, homelessness, actual or marital status, parenting status, pregnancy, parenting status, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic is prohibited in each of the following situations:

1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity.
2. While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities.
3. Through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment.
4. Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the school district or school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school.

Bullying includes cyber-bullying and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s or students’ person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student’s or students’ physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

*Cyberbullying means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photo-electronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the

definition of bullying. Cyberbullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the building principal, nondiscrimination coordinator, district complaint manager or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. All school staff members are available for help with a bully or to make a report about bullying. Anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to the district complaint manager or any staff member. Anonymous reports are also accepted by phone call or in writing.

A reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is prohibited. A student's act of reprisal or retaliation will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.

A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the school's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, knowingly making a false accusation or providing knowingly false information will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.

Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the school shall make diligent efforts to notify a parent or guardian within 24-hours after the school's administration is made aware of a student's involvement in an alleged bullying incident. The term "bullying incident" includes individual instances of bullying, as well as all threats, suggestions, or instances of self-harm determined to be a result of bullying. Notification to a parent or guardian shall include, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.

Bullying may involve, but is not limited to any of the following actions that create an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment:

- Repeated teasing or name calling
- Cyber bullying*
- Sexual, religious, or racial harassment
- Public humiliation
- Social exclusion
- Spreading rumors

Meridian Junior High School has a no tolerance policy against any form of bullying, intimidation and harassment. Administration will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation of alleged incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, intimidation, harassing behavior or similar conduct. Administration will also provide each student who violates one or more of these policies with appropriate consequences and remedial action and protect students against retaliation for reporting such conduct. A reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is prohibited. A student's act of reprisal or retaliation will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions. A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the school's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, knowingly making a false accusation or providing knowingly false information will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.

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

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.

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. The use of prone restraint is prohibited.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is illegal and will not be used. Corporal punishment means a discipline method in which a person deliberately inflicts pain upon a student in response to the student's unacceptable behavior or inappropriate language, with an aim to halt the offense, prevent its recurrence, or set an example for others.

Weapons Prohibition

A student who is determined to have brought one of the following objects to school, any school-sponsored activity or event, or any activity or event that bears a reasonable relationship to school shall be expelled for a period of not less than one year but not more than 2 calendar years:

(1) A firearm, meaning any gun, rifle, shotgun, weapon as defined by Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code, firearm as defined in Section 1.1 of the Firearm Owners Identification Card Act, or firearm as defined in Section 24-1 of the Criminal Code of 1961. The expulsion period may be modified by the superintendent, and the superintendent's determination may be modified by the board on a case-by-case basis.

(2) A knife, brass knuckles or other knuckle weapon regardless of its composition, a billy club, or any other object if used or attempted to be used to cause bodily harm, including "look-alikes" of any firearm as defined above.

The expulsion requirement may be modified by the superintendent, and the superintendent's determination may be modified by the board on a case-by-case basis.

Gang & Gang Activity Prohibited

“Gang” is defined as any group, club or organization of two or more persons whose purposes include the commission of illegal acts. No student on or about school property or at any school activity or whenever the student’s conduct is reasonably related to a school activity, shall: (1) wear, possess, use, distribute, display, or sell any clothing, jewelry, paraphernalia or other items which reasonably could be regarded as gang symbols; commit any act or omission, or use either verbal or non-verbal gestures, or handshakes showing membership or affiliation in a gang; or (2) use any speech or commit any act or omission in furtherance of the interest of any gang or gang activity, including, but not limited to, soliciting others for membership in any gangs; (3) request any person to pay protection or otherwise intimidate, harass or threaten any person; (4) commit any other illegal act or other violation of district policies, (5) or incite other students to act with physical violence upon any other person.

Re-Engagement of Returning Students

The building principal or designee shall meet with a student returning to school from an out-of-school suspension, expulsion or alternative school setting. The goal of this meeting shall be to support the student’s ability to be successful in school following a period of exclusion and shall include an opportunity for students who have been suspended to complete or make-up missed work for equivalent academic credit.

SATURDAY SCHOOL SUSPENSION

Saturday school will take place at Stillman Valley High School on Saturday mornings from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Saturday morning schools will be assigned for various reasons including: truancy, tardies, cell phone violations, inappropriate behavior, failure to serve a detention, etc. This policy enables students to serve time for disciplinary problems without missing classroom instruction. Students refusing to serve any Saturday school sessions could be suspended 2 days out of school for insubordination. An out of school suspension does not erase/substitute an assigned Saturday school detention.

DETENTION

Detentions will be assigned for after school by teachers or administrators. Detentions take place Monday-Thursday from 2:30-3:30. It will be the parent’s responsibility to provide transportation to or from detentions.

HARASSMENT

No person, including a school district employee, agent, or student, shall harass, intimidate, or bully a student on the basis of actual or perceived: race; color; national origin; military status; unfavorable discharge status from military service; sex; sexual orientation; gender identity¹; gender-related identity or expression; ancestry; age; religion; physical or mental disability; order of protection status; status of being homeless; actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy; physical appearance; socioeconomic status; academic status; association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics; or any other distinguishing characteristic. The District will not tolerate harassing, intimidating conduct, or bullying whether verbal, physical, sexual, or visual, that affects the tangible benefits of education, that unreasonably interferes with a student’s educational performance, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. Examples of prohibited conduct include name-calling, using derogatory slurs, stalking, sexual violence, causing psychological harm, threatening or causing physical harm, threatened or actual destruction of property, or wearing or possessing items depicting or implying hatred or prejudice of one of the characteristics stated above.

Sexual Harassment Prohibited (Title IX)

The school and district shall provide an educational environment free of verbal, physical, or other conduct or communications constituting harassment on the basis of sex as defined and otherwise prohibited by State and federal law.

A District employee, agent, or student violates this prohibition whenever that person engages in conduct on the basis of sex that causes another person to be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity operated by the District. Sex discrimination includes discrimination on the basis of sex, stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity.

Teen Dating Violence Prohibited

Engaging in teen dating violence that takes place at school, on school property, at school-sponsored activities, or in vehicles used for school-provided transportation is prohibited. For purposes of this policy, the term teen dating violence occurs whenever a student who is 13 to 19 years of age uses or threatens to use physical, mental, or emotional abuse to control an individual in the dating relationship; or uses or threatens to use sexual violence in the dating relationship.

Making a Report or Complaint

Students are encouraged to promptly report claims or incidents of bullying, intimidation, harassment, sexual harassment, or any other prohibited conduct to the Nondiscrimination Coordinator, Building Principal, Assistant Building Principal, or any employee with whom the student is comfortable speaking. A student may choose to report to an employee of the student’s same gender.

Any person making a knowingly false accusation regarding prohibited conduct will likewise be subject to discipline.

Investigation Process

Reports and complaints of discrimination or harassment will be confidential to the greatest extent practicable, subject to the District's duty to investigate and maintain an educational environment that is productive, respectful, and free of unlawful discrimination, including harassment.

Retaliation Prohibited

Retaliation against any person for bringing complaints, participating in the complaint process, or otherwise providing information about discrimination or harassment based on race, color, or national origin is prohibited. Individuals should report allegations of retaliation to the Building Principal, an administrator, the Nondiscrimination Coordinator, and/or a Complaint Manager.

Individuals should report allegations of retaliation to the Building Principal, an administrator, the Nondiscrimination Coordinator, and/or a Complaint Manager.

Sexual Harrassment

Sexual harassment of students is prohibited. An employee, district agent, or student engages in sexual harassment whenever he/she makes unwelcome sexual advances, requests sexual favors, and engages in other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual or sex-based nature, imposed on the basis of sex, which denies or limits the provision of educational aid, benefits, services or treatment; or that makes such conduct a condition of a student's academic status; or has the purpose or effect of:

1. Substantially interfering with a student's educational environment
2. Creating an intimidating hostile, or offensive educational environment; or
3. Depriving a student of educational aid, benefits, services or treatment; or making submission to or rejection of such unwelcome conduct is the basis for academic decisions affecting a student.

The terms "intimidating", "hostile", and "offensive" include conduct, which has the effect of humiliation, embarrassment, or discomfort. Examples of sexual harassment include unwelcome touching, crude jokes or pictures, discussions of sexual experiences, teasing related to sexual characteristics and spreading rumors related to a person's alleged sexual activities.

Students, who believe they are victims of sexual harassment or have witnessed sexual harassment, are encouraged to discuss the matter with the student Nondiscrimination Coordinator, building principal, or assistant principal. Students 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.

An allegation that one student was sexually harassed by another student shall be referred to the building principal or assistant principal for appropriate action.

First Violation

Option 1: Up to one day out of school suspension if the student along with the parents or guardians agrees to have the student go through a sexual harassment educational program provided by the school.

Option 2: Up to five days out of school suspension

Second Violation

Option 1: Up to 1-10 days out of school suspension if the student along with the parents and guardians approval agrees to repeating the sexual harassment educational program and meeting with the school counselor.

Option 2: Up to 10 days out of school suspension.

Third Violation

10 days out of school suspension and possible expulsion hearing.

TRUANCY

We want to inform you of our school policy regarding student absences. In accordance with our guidelines:

- Parents/guardians will receive a letter when a student has been absent for 5 excused or 2 unexcused days.
- A second letter will be sent when a student has been absent for 7 excused or 4 unexcused days.
- A third letter will be sent when a student reaches 10 excused or 6 unexcused days of absence.

Please note that students who accumulate 6 unexcused absences may be referred to truancy.

HAZING PROHIBITED

Soliciting, encouraging, aiding, or engaging in hazing is prohibited. "Hazing" means any intentional, knowing, or reckless act directed against a student for the purpose of being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization, club, or athletic team whose members are or include other students. Students engaging in hazing will be subject to one or more of the following disciplinary actions:

1. Conference with parent/guardian.
2. Removal from extra-curricular activities.
3. Referral to appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Students' engaging in hazing that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of another may also be subject to:

1. Suspension for up to 10 days.
2. Expulsion for the remainder of the school term.

ATHLETICS/ACTIVITIES INELIGIBILITY

The weekly eligibility report is run each Friday morning at 9:00 a.m. A student failing one class during the week is ineligible for the next week of competition, Sunday—Saturday. After the ineligibility report is completed, it is sent to all coaches and junior high school teachers. The junior high school teachers are asked to contact the Activities Director if they notice any errors in grading. Students who are ineligible will be allowed to practice, but will not be able to participate in games and/or contests. Students should remain supportive by attending games during their period of ineligibility. (see page 5-6 in the Athletic and Activity Handbook via the district website)

Weekly Academic Eligibility

1. On Wednesday mornings, students with a current grade of an "F" in a class will receive a letter of ineligibility stating which class or classes they are failing.
2. Students should contact their teacher(s) to determine if the "F" is correct. Sometimes, due to undelivered assignments or low assessment scores, the "F" cannot be increased by the end of the week.
3. This would result in the student not being eligible to compete in games/meets the following week (Sunday – Saturday). The final part of the process requires the student to return the letter to the office by the end of the week (2:30 pm Friday), where they are then reminded of their expectations for the coming week. If the letter is not returned, the student is automatically ineligible whether the grade is changed or not.
4. At that time, coaches will be notified of ineligible players for the following week.

Ineligible players are required to attend and participate in practices, but can not compete in the games/meets.

ATHLETICS/ACTIVITIES REGISTRATION

Students who participate in sports/clubs, will need to register via 8 to 18:

1. Log into the district website www.meridian223.org
2. Scroll down to the red trophy icon (8 to 18)
3. Click on registration
4. If you already have an account, click on “Begin Registration”
5. Choose your activity
6. Follow the instructions/steps making sure to check participant and parent for every form.
7. Fee Payment
 - a. Pay online
 - b. If you choose to pay by check or cash, you will need to enter the waiver code in the payment code box and then you must comment how you intend to pay the fee (sending a check/cash to school, free/reduced, or this is our 3rd activity this school year).
 - c. Athlete’s will not be allowed to compete in games/meets until the fee is paid in full.
8. Make sure your athlete has a current sports physical on file in the office prior to the first practice.
9. Communication to parents will be through Rooms (In the MCUSD app).

RESIDENCY

Only students who are residents of the Meridian C.U.S.D. #223 may attend Meridian Junior High School without tuition charge, except as otherwise provided below or in state law. A student’s residence is the same as the person who has legal custody of the student.

A person asserting legal custody over a student, who is not the child’s natural or adoptive parent, shall complete a signed statement stating: (a) that he or she has assumed and exercises legal responsibility for the child, (b) the reason the child lives with him or her, other than to receive an education in the Meridian C.U.S.D. #223 and © that he or she exercises full control over the child regarding daily educational and medical decisions in case of emergency. In addition, the child’s natural or adoptive parents, if available, shall complete a signed statement of Power of Attorney stating: (a) the role and responsibility of the person whom their child is living, and (b) that the person with who the child is living has full control over the child regarding daily educational and medical decisions in case of emergency.

A student whose family moves out of the district during the school year will be permitted to attend school for the remainder of the year without payment of tuition.

STUDENT RECORDS

The school keeps an official record of each student’s school experience on file. In it will be found a record of the student’s standardized test result for reviewing by parents or guardians upon their request. (School officials will need 15 days of advance notice, in writing, from parents to review this file.) Counseling and guidance services are available to all junior high students. Students are encouraged to make an appointment at the counseling office at any time for assistance.

1. Student’s Permanent Record shall consist of:
 - a. Name of Student
 - b. Name of Parent(s)
 - c. Addresses
 - d. Birth Date
 - e. Gender
 - f. Attendance

- g. Health Records
- 2. Student's Temporary Record shall consist of:
 - a. Family Background Information
 - b. Intelligence Test Scores
 - c. Aptitude Test Scores
 - d. Reports of Psychological Evaluations
 - e. Elementary and Secondary Achievement Test Results
 - f. Participation in Extracurricular Activities
 - g. Honors and Awards Received
 - h. Other verified information of clear relevance to the education of the student
- 3. Parents will be granted access to official records pertaining to their children's records upon written request. The school will have a fifteen-day period with which to meet such a request. Students over the age of 14, or with parental consent under the age of 14, shall also have access. Copies of said records will be available upon request of parents or students at a cost of \$.35 per page.
- 4. The student's records, or information contained in those records, shall not be released to anyone other than school or educational officials without the informed written consent of the student's parents. If the student is above the age of 18 or attending a postsecondary institution, only the student may grant such a release.
- 5. Parents shall have the right to challenge any entry exclusive of grades on the basis of:
 - a. Accuracy
 - b. Relevance and/or
 - c. Propriety

The request for a hearing will be submitted in writing to the school and shall contain notice of the specific entry to be challenged and the basis for the challenge.

- a. Procedure:
 - i. Informal conference with parents within 15 school days of receipt of request with the counselor and principals.
 - ii. If not resolved, a meeting with the Board of Education will be scheduled.
 - iii. If not resolved by either of these methods, then:
 - 1. A hearing officer, not employed in an attendance center in which a student is enrolled, shall be appointed by the school.
 - 2. Hearing officer shall conduct a hearing within 15 days after the informal conference unless extension is agreed upon.
 - 3. A verbatim record of the hearing shall be made.
 - 4. A decision shall be rendered no later than 10 school days after the conclusion of the hearing and shall be immediately transmitted to the parents and the school district.
- 6. The school shall grant access to, or release information from school student's records without parental consent or notification to: An employee or official of the school, school district, or State Board of Education, provided the person has a current demonstrable educational or administrative interest and the records are in furtherance of such interest.
- 7. The school shall destroy the contents of the temporary record within five years after the student has transferred, graduated or permanently withdrawn. A yearly review of temporary records will be made. Before a record is destroyed, a parent will have the opportunity to copy the information to be destroyed.
- 8. Directory information is limited to:
 - a. Identifying information: name, address, gender, grade level, birth date;
 - b. Academic awards, degrees, and honors;
 - c. Information in relation to school sponsored activities, organizations and athletics;
 - d. Major Fields of study;
 - e. Period of attendance in school

Directory information may be released to the general public, unless a parent requests that any or all information not be released on his/her child.
- 9. The records of a student shall be transferred to another school in which the student is enrolled or intends to enroll upon the written request of the school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. If such a request is not obtained, the parent will be notified in writing of their opportunity to inspect such information. If, after ten school days, the parent makes no objection, the records may be transferred to the requesting school.
- 10. The school shall grant access to information contained in school student records to persons authorized or required by state or federal law to gain such access provided that:
 - a. Such person shall provide the school with appropriate identification and a copy of the statute authorizing such access; and
 - b. The parent receives prior notice of the nature and substance of the information to be released and an opportunity to inspect, copy and/or challenge such information. If this release of information relates to more than 25 students, such prior notice shall be given in a local newspaper.

Catastrophic Accident Insurance is available for families when severe injuries occur during school activities. CONTACT THE BUILDING ADMINISTRATOR FOR INFORMATION.

ACCELERATED PLACEMENT PROGRAM

Meridian CUSD 223 provides an accelerated placement of students in multiple ways. Students may be accelerated by early entrance to Kindergarten or 1st Grade, single subject acceleration, and grade acceleration. Every accelerated placement program is initiated by a referral process that may be initiated by staff or parent/guardian(s), followed by an evaluation and eligibility determination. This process is outlined in detail on the district website and is in alignment with Board Policy 6:135.

ANNUAL ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN NOTICE

This is to inform you of the status of the Meridian C.U.S.D. #223 asbestos management plan(s). It has been determined by the Illinois Department of Public Health and Federal Environmental Protection Agency that asbestos is a potential health hazard, and precautions should be taken to avoid disturbing any asbestos containing materials.

As required, our buildings were initially inspected for asbestos in 1988. The AHEARA law required 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 or change in condition will be documented in the management Plan as required. The district 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 SVHS District Office. Should you wish to review the plans, please call to make an appointment between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. weekdays. Any concerns related to asbestos containing materials should be directed to Mr. Kenny Lamer, Director of Building and Grounds at 207 West Main Street, Stillman Valley, IL 815.645.2230.

AUTHORIZATION FOR INTERNET ACCESS & CHROMEBOOK CHARGES

I understand and will abide by the rules of Internet access. I further understand that should I commit any violation, my access privileges may be revoked, and school disciplinary action may be taken. In consideration for using the district’s Internet connection and having access to public networks, I hereby release the school district and its board members, employees, and agents from any claims and damages arising from my use, or inability to use the Internet.

STUDENT FIRST AND LAST NAME (Please Print)

STUDENT SIGNATURE - FIRST AND LAST NAME (User)

DATE

I have read the guidelines for Internet Access. I understand that access is designed for educational purposes and that the district has taken precautions to eliminate controversial material. However, I also recognize it is impossible for the district to restrict access to all controversial and inappropriate materials. I will hold harmless the district, its employees, agents, or school board members for any harm caused by materials or software obtained via the network. I accept full responsibility for supervision if and when my child’s use is not in a school setting. I have discussed the terms of use with my child. I hereby request that my child be allowed access to the district’s Internet.

PARENT/GUARDIAN FIRST AND LAST NAME (Please Print)

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE - FIRST AND LAST NAME

DATE

Chromebook Charges (See page 12 of the Parent Handbook)	Cost
Replace keys on keyboard (not a keyboard replacement)	\$5.00
Headphone Jack Replacement	\$30.00
LCD Screen Replacement	\$45.00
Keyboard Replacement	\$65.00
Touchpad Replacement	\$15.00
USB Port	\$30.00
Body/Hinge Replacement	\$25.00
Charger Replacement	\$30.00
Chromebook total Loss/Damage August 01, 2022, a Replacement Chromebook cost \$359.00.	\$359.00

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Name of Student: _____ (First and Last Name)

Student Acknowledgement and Pledge

I acknowledge receiving and/or being provided electronic access to the Student/Parent Handbook and School Board policy on student behavior. I have read these materials and understand all rules, responsibilities and expectations. In order to help keep my school safe, I pledge to adhere to all School and School District rules, policies and procedures.

I understand that the Student/Parent Handbook and School District policies may be amended during the year and that such changes are available on the School District website or in the school office.

I understand that my failure to return this acknowledgement and pledge will not relieve me from being responsible for knowing or complying with School and School District rules, policies and procedures.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement

I acknowledge receiving and/or being provided electronic access to the Student/Parent Handbook and School Board policy on student behavior. I have read these materials and understand all rules, responsibilities and expectations.

I understand that the Student/Parent Handbook and School District policies may be amended during the year and that such changes are available on the School District website or in the school office.

I understand that my failure to return this acknowledgement will not relieve me or my child from being responsible for knowing or complying with School and School District rules, policies and procedures.

Parent Signature:_____ Date:_____

2025-2026 • GOAL SETTING WORKSHEET

Student
Name _____

Grade _____

STAR							
<u>READING</u>	Date	Goal	Scaled Score	Grade Equivalent	Percentile Rank	Goal Met? Yes/Not Yet	Was there growth? Yes/Not Yet
B.O.Y.							
Winter							
E.O.Y.							
IXL							
B.O.Y.		Winter			E.O.Y.		

2025-2026 • GOAL SETTING WORKSHEET

Student

Name _____

Grade _____

STAR							
<u>MATH</u>	Date	Goal	Scaled Score	Grade Equivalent	Percentile Rank	Goal Met? Yes/Not Yet	Was there growth? Yes/Not Yet
B.O.Y.							
Winter							
E.O.Y.							
IXL							
B.O.Y.			Winter			E.O.Y.	

ThinkCERCA Benchmark Record

The middle- and end-of-year Writing Benchmarks are designed to monitor your writing progress throughout the school year. Keep a record of your scores and set a goal for the next benchmark. Reflect on your writing progress by celebrating your accomplishments (Glow) and setting a goal for improvement (Grow).

Criteria	Beginning Benchmark	Goal	Mid-Year Benchmark	Goal Met Y/N	Goal	End-of-Year Benchmark	Mid-Year Goal Met Y/N	Reflection	
								Mid-Year Reflection	End-of-Year Reflection
Claim/Counterclaim								<u>Glow</u>	<u>Grow</u>
Evidence									
Reasoning									
Coherence								<u>Glow</u>	<u>Grow</u>
Audience Appeal									
Growth Focus									