

MERRILLVILLE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

Merrillville Intermediate School fosters a learning atmosphere in which diversity is celebrated. This partnership of students, staff, parents, and community provides an education based on essential skills, inspires excellence in academics and in the arts, and nurtures positive social interactions. Through this partnership students become creative and self-reliant lifetime learners who exhibit civic responsibility.

SCHOOL COLORS

Purple and White

NICKNAME

Pirates

MERRILLVILLE SCHOOL CORPORATION MISSION STATEMENT

The Merrillville Community School Corporation develops in students; skills for independent learning, responsible citizenship, and productive employment; and it provides the community with educational, vocational, and recreational resources.

GOALS

STUDENTS

1. Communicate effectively utilizing the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
2. Understand and apply both practical and analytical concepts and skills in mathematics and science.
3. Demonstrate higher-order thinking, goal setting and problem solving skills through analysis, synthesis, conceptual application and evaluation.
4. Demonstrate honesty, respect for others, respect for property and respect for our environment.
5. Demonstrate work habits such as punctuality, reliability, perseverance and good conduct essential for academic and employment success.
6. Develop a positive self-image.
7. Engage in independent and cooperative learning activities.
8. Understand and apply the rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship in a democracy.
9. Understand and appreciate the importance of fine and practical arts.
10. Exhibit a positive attitude toward lifetime fitness and wellness.
11. Understand other cultures, both past and present, and the growing interdependence of all nations.
12. Explore basic career processes involving aptitude/ability assessments; demonstrate skills necessary in utilization of career information services.
13. Know and comprehend significant people, places events and concepts associated with the development of the American political and economic system.
14. Demonstrate proficiency in the use of research technology.
15. Develop the ability to manage time effectively.
16. Understand diversity and respect individual differences.

PARENTS

1. Participate in programs designed to help parents support the intellectual emotional and physical development of their children.
2. Provide a home environment, which encourages student academic effort and achievement and supports school policies.

COMMUNITY

1. Utilize school system resources for educational, vocational and recreational needs.
2. Support school activities and provide assistance where needed in both academic and extra-curricular areas.

MERRILLVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION VISION STATEMENT

At the crossroads of Northwest Indiana, the Merrillville Community School Corporation creates a hometown feeling in a metropolitan area. This sprawling school community, nestled in comfortable neighborhood settings, offers attractive, well-maintained and safe schools and a comprehensive curriculum with state-of –the-art technology. A wide range of educational programs and activities are equally available to all – from pre-schoolers to senior citizens. Families are woven into a tapestry representing various ethnic, racial and religious traditions united by the common bond of seeking a quality education for the community.

People feel a close connection to the school system due to the emphasis on communication. Communication is the core that allows for a collaborative relationship among the school staff, parents and community. These relationships foster and support the learning experiences that challenge each student at a level appropriate to the individual’s needs and interests.

Merrillville has long enjoyed a reputation for the professional competence and character of its faculty, staff and administration. The professional staff understands and accepts personal responsibility for achieving the mission of the school corporation. The school system is committed to designing an organization of learning that seeks continuous improvement and quality, resulting in highest student achievement.

Clearly written goals, aligned with rigorous academic standards, have been established that go far beyond the minimum standards, have been established that go far beyond the minimum standards required by the Indiana Department of Education. These goals also focus on developing independent, life-long learners and responsible, productive citizens.

Learning environments throughout the school corporation are energized by a sense of awe, curiosity, and enthusiasm generated by knowledgeable, caring adults who ignite and sustain the desire to learn. Students are inspired by teachers who use a wide range of teaching methods to ensure that students are active learners. Each student is motivated to take ownership for learning resulting in the mastery of basic skills, literacy in a wide range of subjects, and proficiency in the use of technology.

Students are able to make intelligent academic, personal and career choices as a result of individual counseling and community-based learning opportunities. Career exploration activities are provided through internships and mentoring with local business people, civic leaders and government officials. Other interests are pursued through participation in curricular and co-curricular activities. Upon graduation, students are then prepared to further their vocational and academic goals leading to productive and satisfying career choices.

Parents are actively involved in the education of their children and have entered into a highly functional partnership with the schools. The school system provides excellent communication to homes so that parents feel fully informed about their student’s educational plan and progress toward its fulfillment. Exemplary programs are available to parents who seek more knowledge and skills related to effective responsible parenting. Parents take responsibility for knowing and supporting school policies and classroom standards. They establish and maintain high expectations for scholarship and citizenship. Parents enthusiastically support their students in activities by attending school programs and events. They further support the schools by working as volunteers in a wide variety of ways that enrich the school district’s capacity to provide opportunities for all its students.

Citizens served by the Merrillville Schools take pride in the cultural diversity of their school community. Individuals respect the heritage and traditions of the many groups living compatibly together. People feel their school system provides equal opportunities for all, values everyone’s input, and is fair and just.

The Merrillville Community School Corporation exists to uphold this vision.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Students whose parents show an active and supportive interest in their daily schoolwork are more likely to achieve success at school. Parents are expected to cooperate with the school in the areas of academic progress. Parents should encourage children to take responsibility for completing their homework. Parents are encouraged to confer with the teacher on any subject concerning the child. The responsibility for basic behavior development rightfully belongs with the individual and the parents working cooperatively with the school.

Specific suggestions to improve student success include:

1. Parents should meet with teachers when necessary.
2. Parents need to provide a quiet place to study and proper time to study at home.
3. Parents must take an active interest in the academic program and the progress of their child.
4. Parents need to work with the child to develop a systematic approach to successful completion of homework assignments.
5. Parents should try to attend parent events.
6. Parents should support school rules and regulations.
7. Parents should provide instruction in citizenship, patriotism, respect for authority, honesty, integrity, courtesy, regard for the right of others, and personal responsibility.
8. Parents need to monitor their child's leisure time activities which will have an impact on his/her academic success. This includes limiting the amount of time the child spends isolated in the house, immersed in cyberspace. If your Internet service provider has a parental control option, enable it.

Dear Parents and Students:

Welcome to Merrillville Intermediate School. There is no doubt that one of the greatest challenges facing MIS school staff each day is promoting a wholesome and supportive learning atmosphere throughout the school. Managing an educational program means promoting effective discipline that requires a comprehensive program supported by everyone. We believe that a well-disciplined school guarantees a safe environment for all in a friendly and cooperative atmosphere. The same set of rules is applied to everyone. The intent of this handbook is to provide parents, staff, and students with a definition of the limits of acceptable behavior. This information will assist everyone in administering discipline within the guidelines of Merrillville policies related to student behavior. I hope you will take time to review this handbook together with your child.

All of us wish your child success while he/she attends MIS and pledge our cooperation in working towards common educational goals.

Merrillville Intermediate School Administration

Merrillville Intermediate School
Parent Procedures for Concerns

Step 1

Talk with your child. Provide some tools and strategies for your child to work through the situation.

- Accomplish this by allowing your child to explain, in detail, what happened. Get all of the facts.
- If the problem/concern still exists, please contact your child's teacher.



Step 2

Email or call your child's teacher to share your concern.

- Communication is the key!
- The teacher may have additional information to share and is often the best person to help your child.
- The teacher may have already taken care of the situation.
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome, proceed to Step 3.

Our school social worker and /or counselor can also assist with problems or concerns at any time.

Allow time between each step for interventions and strategies to take place.



Step 3

Schedule a meeting with your child's teacher or team.

- Our goal is to make sure that everyone works together to help each child be successful.
- Allow your child to be present to make sure all sides are heard.
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome or if the problem reoccurs, please contact the grade level Assistant Principal.



Step 4

Contact the Grade Level Assistant Principal

- Explain in detail all that has been done or said up to this point.
- The Assistant Principal may schedule a meeting with all parties involved.
- Allow the Assistant Principal to handle any necessary actions.
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome, please contact the Associate Principal.



Step 5

Contact the Associate Principal

- Explain in detail all that has been done or said up to this point.
- The Associate Principal may schedule a meeting with all parties involved.
- Allow the Associate Principal to handle any necessary actions.
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome, please contact the building Principal



Step 6

Contact the building Principal

- Explain in detail all that has been done or said up to this point.
- The Principal may schedule a meeting with all parties involved.
- Allow the Principal to handle any necessary actions.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES

Introduction

As teachers and students are brought together so that learning may take place in Merrillville classrooms, an environment must be created which permits an orderly and efficient operation of the schools. This environment, most of all, comes through consideration of others and self-discipline so that individuals do not allow themselves to infringe upon the rights of others as they seek an expression for their own just and legal privileges as members of the school and society.

The responsibility for development and maintenance of this self-discipline falls to a combined effort of students, parents, teachers, administrators, and to our community, which established the value system we accept. When self-discipline fails, however, regulations for management of school behavior must be outlined by those responsible for the operation of the schools. The Board of School Trustees of the Merrillville Community School Corporation has this legal responsibility for the

school in which Merrillville students are enrolled.

The Board, in turn, has adopted the following policies and has appointed administrative officers to carry them out. Authority for such Board responsibility is included in the School Powers Act and Student Due Process Code of the Indiana General Assembly.

Delegation of Authority

In carrying out the school purposes of the School Corporation, the following grants of authority are hereby made:

1. Each teacher and any of the other school personnel shall, when pupils are under his charge, have the right to take any action which is then reasonably necessary to carry out, or to prevent an interference with, the educational function of which he is then in charge. Teachers and other school personnel may not suspend students from school, and removal of a student from any educational function within the supervision of a teacher or any of the other school personnel may not extend for a period of more than one (1) day unless the removal is treated as a suspension under IC 20-33-8-18.
2. Each principal (or designee) may take any action concerning his school or any school activity within his jurisdiction, which is reasonably necessary to carry out or prevent interference with an educational function or school purposes. Such action may include establishing written rules and standards to govern student conduct. Similarly, the Superintendent, or his administrative staff with his approval, may take any action with respect to all schools within the Superintendent's jurisdiction which is reasonably necessary to carry out or prevent interference with an educational function or school purposes.

MAJOR AND MINOR

The purpose of the Discipline Policy of our school is to ensure a safe and secure environment for members of the school community.

There are times when it is necessary for school officials to make a decision concerning the acceptability of a student's behavior in school. These decisions are based on the welfare of the total school community and how this behavior problem will affect the learning environment.

A breach of discipline may result in reprimand, probation, After School Detention, Lunch Hour Detention, In-School Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension, Friday School, or Expulsion.

Referrals and suspensions under our Major and Minor Discipline Policies will remain on a student's discipline record for the current school year.

The superintendent, principal, administrative personnel, teachers or the school corporation and others placed in a supervisory capacity shall be authorized to take action in connection with student behavior, in addition to the actions specifically provided in this handbook, reasonably desirable or necessary to help any student, to further school purposes, or to prevent an interference therewith, such action including such matters as:

1. Counseling with a student or group of students;
2. Conferences with a parent or group of parents;
3. Assigning students additional work;
4. Rearranging class schedules;
5. Requiring a student to remain in school after regular school hours to do additional school work or for counseling;
6. Restriction of extracurricular activities;
7. Assignment by the principal of:
 - a. A special course of study
 - b. An alternative educational program
8. Removal of a student from school sponsored transportation;
9. Referral to the juvenile court having jurisdiction over the student;
10. The principal or his/her designee may search the person of a student and any object in his/her possession during school or a school sponsored activity if the principal has reasonable suspicion for a search of that student;
11. In-School Suspension;
12. Out-of-School Suspension.

MINOR VIOLATIONS

Minor violations are normally handled by the classroom teacher. Students can receive as punishment any of the following: verbal reprimand, lunch/after-school detention, classroom suspension, in-school suspension, or denial of extra privileges. Repeated offenses of minor violations can result in a 2-10 day In-School Suspension, Out-of-School suspension or Friday School; however, this will be at the discretion of the administration. This, by no means, represents the only steps that can be taken.

Any student who has been suspended for any major violation(s) or referred for repeated minor violations may be excluded from field trips and/or after school events.

MAJOR VIOLATIONS

IT WILL BE RECOMMENDED THAT A STUDENT BE EXPELLED WHEN HE/SHE HAS BEEN ASSIGNED 12 OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS.

Grounds for suspension or expulsion are student misconduct or substantial disobedience. The following include examples of student misconduct or substantial disobedience, but are not limited to:

1. Engaging in conduct that disrupts or interferes with school purposes or an educational function, including but not limited to: the use of violence, force, noise, coercion, threat, intimidation, fear, passive resistance, engaging in sexual behavior on school property, disobedience of administrative authority, engaging in speech or conduct (including clothing, jewelry or hair style) which is profane, indecent, lewd, vulgar or offensive to school purposes, failing to tell the truth about any matter under investigation by school personnel, possessing or using a laser pointer or similar device, or other comparable conduct, or urging others to engage in such conduct.
2. Trespassing, vandalizing school property, breaking and entering a school building or facility, attempting to set fire or setting fire or intentionally damaging any school property.
3. Causing or attempting to cause substantial damage to school property or stealing or attempting to steal school property of substantial value or repeatedly damaging or stealing school property of small value.
4. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause damage to valuable private property, stealing, or attempting to steal valuable private property, or repeatedly damaging or stealing private property.
5. Attending school or a school-sponsored activity, with the odor of alcohol on breath, will be grounds for expulsion. BREATHALYZER TESTS OF VARIOUS TYPES COULD BE USED TO CONFIRM THE CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL.
6. Repeatedly refusing to follow the directions of supervising school employees; engaging in acts of serious disrespect to school employees.
7. Willfully truant from school in violation of building policy.
8. The use or possession of tobacco is prohibited in the Merrillville Schools.
9. The violation or repeated violation, of any rules, standards or policies which have been established by the Superintendent and presented to the Board; or established by the principal of a school, reviewed and approved by the Superintendent, and presented to the Board. The Board may change any such rules, standards or policies in accordance with procedures, which it has adopted.
10. Engaging in immoral conduct.
11. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical injury or intentionally behaving in such a way as could reasonably cause physical injury to any person.
12. Using force or the threat of force to take money or something of value from another person, engaging in blackmail, or using coercion to gain something of value or an advantage.
13. Failing to report the actions or plans of another person to a teacher or administrator where those actions or plans, if carried out, could result in harm to another person or persons or damage property when the student has information about such actions or plans.
14. Falsely accusing any person of sexual harassment, or of violating a school rule, and/or a state or federal law.

15. Engaging in any activity forbidden by the laws of Indiana that constitutes an interference with school purposes or an educational function.
16. Possessing, handling, using, transmitting or selling weapons, dangerous instruments or explosives.
17. Knowingly possessing, handling, or transmitting a knife or any other object that can reasonably be considered a weapon. This does include a "look alike" weapon.
18. Knowingly possessing or using on school grounds during school hours an electronic device or a cell phone in a situation not related to school purpose or an educational function.
19. Knowingly possessing, using, transmitting, or being under the influence of any controlled substance, prescription drug, narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage, intoxicant of any kind, or depressant of any kind, or any paraphernalia used in connection with the listed substances. Also prohibited is the consumption of any of the stated substances immediately before attending school or a school function or event.

Knowingly using or taking a prescription drug that is not prescribed for that person or that exceeds the recommended dosage for the person to which it is prescribed or a patent drug by exceeding recommended dosage with the purpose of creating an intoxicated or irrational state or of causing physical injury, either to one self or to other persons. Knowingly transmitting or selling such prescription or patent drugs to aid a person violates this paragraph.

Any violation of the above rule will result in a recommendation by the school administration that the student be expelled.

Exception to rule: a student with a chronic disease or medical condition may possess and self-administer prescribed medication for the disease or condition if the student's parent has filed a written authorization with the building principal. The written authorization must be filed annually and must include the following information:

1. *Physician's statement that the student has an acute or chronic disease or medical condition for which medication has been prescribed.*
 2. *The nature of the disease or medical condition requires emergency administration of the prescribed medication.*
 3. *The student has been instructed in how to self-administer the prescribed medication.*
 4. *The student is authorized to possess and self-administer the prescribed medication.*
20. Possessing or providing to any person anything used or designed to be used primarily for the storage, processing, delivery or consumption of alcohol, marijuana, stimulants, intoxicants, narcotics, depressants or hallucinogens. Examples of things which are not to be possessed or provided to another person are: pipes, rolling papers, clips, stones and any other devices believed to be, by school authorities, used for the storage, processing, delivery or consumption of the above mentioned drugs.

Any student who is unsure if possession, use or providing another person with any particular medicine, substance or paraphernalia would violate the above rule should contact the building principal or his designee before possessing, using or providing the medication, substance or paraphernalia.
 21. A person knowingly or intentionally delivers any substance that he represents to be controlled substance commits "dealing in a substance represented to be a controlled substance."
 22. Creating a disturbance by displaying or using a substance represented to be a controlled substance.

The grounds for suspension or expulsion listed above apply when a student is:

- a. On school grounds immediately before, during, and immediately after school hours and at any other time when the school is being used by a school group;
- b. Off the school grounds at a school activity, function, or event;
- c. Traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event;
- d. During Summer School.

NOTE

- I. It will be recommended that a student be expelled for one (1) calendar year when, while on school property, the student possesses, handles, uses, or transmits a firearm as defined in IC.35-47-1-5 or a destructive device. The student will be allowed to return to school at the beginning of the first school semester after the end of the one (1) year period.
 1. The following devices are considered to be a firearm under this rule:
 - any weapon which will or is designated to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive
 - the frame or receiver of any weapon described above
 - any firearm muffler or firearm silencer
 - any destructive device which is an explosive, incendiary, or poison gas bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, mine, or any similar device
 - any weapon which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than one-half inch in diameter
 - any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described in the two immediately preceding examples, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled
 - an antique firearm
 - a rifle or shotgun that the owner intends to use solely for sporting, recreational, or cultural purposes
 2. For purposes of this rule, a destructive device is
 - an explosive, incendiary, or overpressure device that is configured as a bomb, a grenade, a rocket with a propellant charge of more than four ounces, a missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, a mine, a Molotov cocktail or a device that is substantially similar to an item described above,
 - a type of weapon that may be readily converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant through a barrel that has a bore diameter of more than one-half inch, or
 - a combination of parts designed or intended for use in the conversion of a device into a destructive device. A destructive device is NOT a device that although originally designed for use as a weapon, is redesigned for use as a signaling, pyrotechnic, line throwing, safety, or similar device.
 3. The superintendent shall immediately notify the appropriate law enforcement agency when a student is expelled under this rule.
- II. It will be recommended that a student be expelled for one (1) calendar year when, while on school property, the student possesses, handles, uses, or transmits a deadly weapon as defined in IC.35-41-1.8.
 1. The following devices are considered to be deadly weapons as defined in I.C. 35-41-1-8:
 - a weapon, taser or electronic stun weapon, equipment, chemical substance, or other material that in the manner it is used, or could ordinarily be used, or is intended to be used, is readily capable of causing serious bodily injury.
 - an animal readily capable of causing serious bodily injury and used in the commission or attempted commission of a crime
 2. The superintendent shall immediately notify the appropriate law enforcement agency when a student is expelled under this rule.
- III. A student may be suspended or expelled for engaging in unlawful activity on or off school grounds if the unlawful activity may reasonably be considered to be an interference with school purposes or an educational function, or the student's

removal is necessary to restore order or protect persons on school property. This includes any unlawful activity meeting the above criteria which takes place during weekends, holidays, other school breaks, and the summer period when a student may not be attending classes or other school functions.

IV. It will be recommended that a student be expelled when a student's legal settlement is not in the attendance area of the Merrillville Community School Corporation.

UNLAWFUL ACTIVITY

A student may be suspended or expelled for engaging in unlawful activity on or off school grounds if the unlawful activity may reasonably be considered to be an interference with school purposes or an educational function, or the student's removal is necessary to restore order or protect persons on school property. This includes any unlawful activity meeting the above criteria that takes place during weekends, holidays, other school breaks, and the summer period when a student may not be attending classes or other school functions.

Short-Term Suspension

Any principal (or designee) may suspend for a period of no more than ten (10) school days. This suspension may deny a student the right to attend school or to take part in any school function until midnight of the last day of suspension. A student may be suspended on the following grounds:

1. Conduct constituting grounds for expulsion as set out above.
2. Other violation of rules and standards of behavior, the Board approves or received. Such suspensions shall be made only after the principal (or designee) has made an investigation thereof and has determined that such suspension is necessary to help any student, to further school purposes, or to prevent an interference therewith. No suspension may be made without affording the student an opportunity for an informal meeting. At the informal meeting the student is entitled to:
 - a. a written or oral statement of the charges against him;
 - b. and, if he denies the charges, a summary of the evidence against him; and
 - c. the student will be provided an opportunity to explain his conduct.
3. The meeting shall precede suspension of the student except where the nature of the misconduct requires immediate removal. In such situations, the meeting will follow the suspension as soon as reasonably possible following the date of the suspension.
4. Following the suspension, the parent or guardian of a suspended student will be notified in writing. The notification will include the dates of the suspension, describe the student's misconduct, and the action taken by the principal (or designee).

Expulsion Procedures

When a principal (or designee) recommends to the superintendent (or designee) that a student be expelled from school, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The superintendent (or designee) may conduct an expulsion meeting, or may appoint one of the following persons to conduct the expulsion meeting:
 - a. legal counsel
 - b. a member of the administrative staff who did not expel the student during the current school year and was not involved in the events giving rise to the expulsion.
2. An expulsion will not take place until the student and the student's parent are given notice of their right to appear at an expulsion meeting.
3. The notice of the right to appear at an expulsion meeting will contain the reasons for the expulsion and the procedure for

requesting an expulsion meeting.

4. At the expulsion meeting, the principal (or designee), will present evidence to support the charges against the student. The student or parent will have the opportunity to answer the charges against the student, and to present evidence to support the student's position.
5. If an expulsion meeting is held, the person conducting the expulsion meeting will make a written summary of the evidence heard at the meeting, take any action found to be appropriate, and give notice of the action taken to the student and the student's parent.

The student or parent has the right to appeal the decision of the person conducting the expulsion meeting to the school board within ten (10) days of the receipt of notice of the action taken. The student or parent appeal to the school board must be in writing. If an appeal is properly made, the board must consider the appeal unless the board votes not to hear the appeal. If the board hears the appeal, it will consider the written summary of the expulsion meeting and the arguments of both the school administration and the student and/or student's parent. The Board will then take any action deemed appropriate.

Any expulsion taking effect more than three (3) weeks prior to the beginning of the next trimester of any school year must be reviewed prior to the beginning of that trimester. Any expulsion that will remain in effect during the first trimester of the following school year must be reviewed before the beginning of the school year.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES OR SUSPECTED DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities are subject to the discipline rules adopted by the board of school trustees and, therefore, may be suspended or expelled for any violation(s) of such rules. In accordance with I.C.20-8.1-5.1 and 511 IAC 7-15, administrators may take the following discipline actions:

Suspension

A suspension is defined as a unilateral, temporary cessation of the educational or related services. A short-term removal of a student pursuant to the student's individualized education program or Section 504 plan is not a suspension. Students with disabilities or suspected disabilities may be suspended up to ten (10) consecutive school days, but no more than ten (10) cumulative school days in a school year.

Before a student with disabilities or suspected disabilities can be suspended, the student must be afforded a meeting with the Principal or Assistant Principal, wherein the student is entitled to: (1) a written or oral statement of the charges against the student; (2) if the student denies the charge, a summary of the evidence against the student; and an opportunity to explain the student's conduct. This meeting shall precede the suspension of a student unless the nature of the misconduct requires immediate removal of the student.

Expulsion

An expulsion is defined as separation from school attendance or a related service for more than ten (10) consecutive school days.

Before a student with disabilities or suspected disabilities can be expelled from school, the student and the student's parent must be afforded the opportunity to attend an expulsion meeting before an appointed expulsion examiner. However, prior to any expulsion meeting, the case conference committee or Section 504 committee made up of persons knowledgeable with the student and evaluation data, must meet to review the student's behavior and determine whether the behavior is caused by, or is a manifestation of, the student's disability or suspected disability. If the committee determines there is such a causal relationship between the student's behavior and the student's disability or suspected disability, the student may not be expelled. If, however, the committee determines there is no causal relationship between the student's behavior and the student's disability or suspected disability, the parent may: (1) request the appointment of an independent hearing officer to contest the committee's determination; (2) request an expulsion meeting; or (3) waive the right to an expulsion meeting.

In the event of the expulsion of a student with disabilities, educational and related services shall not cease. The case conference committee shall determine which educational services will be provided during the expulsion period and where the services will be provided as indicated by the student's status by their Special Education or 504 plan.

LAW ENFORCEMENT NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

1. Reporting of Threat or Intimidation Against School Employee: In compliance with Indiana law, any employee who has knowledge of a school employee being the subject of a threat or an act of intimidation shall report orally this knowledge to the building administra-

tor and to the local law enforcement agency.

The building administrator upon receiving such a report shall also make an oral report to the local law enforcement agency. The law provides that any person who reports a threat or an act of intimidation against a school employee, or who participates in any judicial proceeding or other proceeding resulting from such a report, is immune from any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be imposed because of such actions, provided that the individual is acting in good faith.

2. The Superintendent, or his designee, will notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when a student is expelled for violation of behavior rules related to firearms, destructive devices and deadly weapons.

LEGAL REFERENCE I.C. 20-8.1-5.1-1 et seq.; 20 U.S.C. §8921; 20 U.S.C. §8922; 20 U.S.C. §1415; 511 I.A.C. 7-15-1; 511 I.A.C. 7-15-2; I.C. 35-47.5-2-4; I.C. 35-41-1-8; I. I.C. 35-47-1-5.

DETENTION AND SUSPENSION POLICY

Any student who is on a lunch detention, after school detention, Friday School, or in-school suspension will be picked up by security from class and escorted to the behavior room.

Students serving in-school suspension will remain will be permitted to use the cafeteria to purchase a lunch or they may also bring their own lunch. Students will remain in this room throughout the day. They will be excused from the room only at special times and then under direct control of the person in charge. Each student will bring books and other study materials to the room. Assignments will be given to students by teachers. If a student is absent during the suspension or detention, the suspension or detention will continue upon returning to school. MISBEHAVIOR IN THE SUSPENSION OR DETENTION ROOM RESULT IN ADDITIONAL DAYS OF IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION, OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION OR FRIDAY SCHOOLS.

ANY STUDENT WHO FAILS TO SHOW UP FOR DETENTION WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL OF THE PROPER AUTHORITI ES WILL SERVE ONE ADDITIONAL DAY OF DETENTION. ANY SUBSEQUENT INFRACTIONS OF THIS POLICY RESULT IN FULL DAY SUSPENSIONS OR FRIDAY SCHOOLS. If an examination is being given while a student is in suspension or detention he/she must make that up the day he/she returns to his/her regular class or the teacher may give the student the test while he/she is in suspension. A student must be doing something constructive and cannot sleep while in detentions, Friday Schools or in-school suspensions.

When a student is assigned a full day suspension, he/she is not allowed to attend any Merrillville Community School function or be on any school property until midnight of the last day of suspension.

All discipline referrals will be recorded and kept as part of that student's record until the end of that school year.

Any student who is truant from Friday School will receive a 1 day out of school suspension.

BULLYING

Bullying Education and Protocol HEA1423

IC 20-33-8-0.2

Bullying is:

- **Unwanted**

- Targeted student has asked the student exhibiting bullying behavior to stop.
- Targeted student is not participating in continuing the conflict with the other student.
- Targeted student is emotionally affected. The bullying is negatively impacting one of more areas of the students functioning.
- Targeted student is displaying truant behavior due to anticipated emotional distress caused by student exhibiting bullying behavior.

- **Repeated**

-Pattern of behavior that continues more than once over a period of time.

- **Between two students with a real or perceived power imbalance.**

Bullying is NOT:

- **A mutual conflict**

-Example: 2 students are arguing. Both are equally involved.

- **A one-time incident of classroom meanness**

-Example: A student is being bothered in class for the clothes he is wearing. It has never happened before and it never happens again. He is friends with the students who are being mean.

- **A situation where there is no power difference.**

MIS Student Anonymous Reporting of Bullying Procedure:

Students may make an anonymous report in the red bully box located in the main office. Students need to fill out the red form next to the box and drop it inside. Anonymous reports can also be made to the MCSC Safe Line at 219-650-5499 or through the online form on the Merrillville Community Schools website at www.mvsc.k12.in.us.

Types of Bullying:

Physical – pushing, shoving, pinching, hitting, knocking books, pulling backpack (any physical touching).

Verbal – name calling, teasing, threats, intimidation.

Social/Relational – social isolation, intentionally trying to humiliate.

Electronic or Written – cyber bullying (texts and social media).

This rule applies when a student is:

- a. On school grounds immediately before or during school hours, immediately after school hours or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group (including summer school);
- b. Off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event;
- c. Traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event; or
- d. Using property or equipment provided by the school.
- e. Through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network of the school corporation.

Bullying by a student or groups of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, or harm the other student through overt, repeated acts or gestures, including verbal or written communications transmitted, and/or physical acts committed, or any other similar behavior is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to electronic harassment, threats, bullying via texts and social media that affects the school environment to create a substantial disruption to the environment.

Parents or students who suspect that repeated acts of bullying are taking place should report the matter to the school principal or designee. School personnel will investigate all reports of bullying.

Counseling, corrective discipline, and/or referral to law enforcement will be used to change the behavior of the perpetrator. This includes appropriate intervention(s), restoration of a positive climate, and support for victims and others impacted by the violation.

Educational outreach and training will be provided to school personnel, parents, and students concerning the identification, intervention in bullying.

All schools in the corporation are encouraged to engage students, staff and parents in meaningful discussions about the negative aspects of bullying. The parent involvement may be through parent organizations already in place in each school.

ZERO TOLERANCE

Merrillville School Corporation has adopted a “zero tolerance” policy for the discipline infractions listed below. Expulsion will be recommended for these first time offenses:

1. Serious disrespect to a staff member, who is the target of a student’s hostile or highly offensive speech or action
2. Causing a false alarm.
3. Immoral conduct.
4. Possession or use of alcohol.
5. Possession or use of a drug/look alike.
6. Possession of firecrackers or other explosives (Bullets, etc.)
7. Possession of a weapon/facsimile. (BB guns, Paint guns and balls, knives, etc.)
8. Engaging in unlawful activities off of school grounds (Indiana State Code 20-8.1-5.1-9)

RULE OF TWELVE

It will be recommended that a student be expelled when he/she has been assigned (12) Out-Of-School Suspensions.

DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

The following guidelines have been developed for use when students are sent to the office with discipline referrals. Each team will develop their own team rules, which will be sent home to the parents.

KEY:

LD	Lunch Detention (30 minutes)
ASD	After School Detention Program (60 minutes)
ISS	In School Suspension (all day)
F	Friday School Detention Program (3 hours)
OSS	Out of School Suspension (all day)
REC. EXP	Recommended for Expulsion

Disciplinary measures may be issued in multiple numbers. Expulsion will be recommended for first time offenses under the Zero Tolerance Policy. Additionally, each team will develop its own rules which will be sent home to parents/guardians.

POLICIES AND GENERAL INFORMATION

ACADEMIC

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Student attendance throughout the year is extremely important to student achievement. Missed classroom instruction can never totally be recaptured. Research shows that students who attend school consistently are more likely to master the necessary academic skills for success. The Indiana compulsory attendance law requires every child who turns seven during the school year to attend public or non-public school up to the age of sixteen. Parents are asked to call the office to report their child's absence prior to the start of the school day. Without a parent phone call **your child will** be considered truant. The following shall be considered valid reasons for student absences:

- A. Personal illness (With Doctor's Note)
- B. Death in the immediate family
- C. Court attendance required by legal authorities
- D. Dental and medical appointments (make every effort to schedule after school)
- E. Religious holiday (verification requested)
- F. Special circumstances will be considered on a case by case basis for various family situations.

The Merrillville Community School Corporation recognizes that vacations and out-of-town trips do not always coincide with school vacations. However, we strongly recommend that you make every effort to plan your vacations around the school calendar. In order to be fair to both the school and the students involved, parents desiring to have their children absent from school for family trips must follow these procedures:

1. Parents must complete and turn into the school office a signed form (can be obtained from school office) at least one week in advance of the planned absence. (One form for each child in school.)
2. The student will be counted absent and the absence will be properly recorded.
3. The student is responsible for all work missed during the absence and shall be responsible for make-up work assigned by the teacher. (Alternative assignments may be given.) Work may be assigned before the child leaves or upon his/her return. This will be left up to the discretion of the teacher. The amount of time allowed for make-up work shall be one day for each day absent.

4. When work is made up on time, there will be no penalty on the assignment. If work is not made-up, no credit will be given which will negatively affect your child's grade.
5. Parents are urged not to remove their child/children the week prior and during standardized testing or the last two weeks of the school year. It is also important that your child is present at the start of each trimester.

Absences

1. A notification will be sent to the parents on the 3rd and 5th unexcused/nonexempt absence with a copy of the Indiana Compulsory Law and information concerning the truancy diversion program, The C.A.P.S. (Consistent Attendance Promote Success) program; a collaboration between the Merrillville Town Court and Merrillville Schools.
2. The school social worker will contact the parents on the 3rd absence to address issues that are impacting consistent attendance.
3. On the 9th unexcused/nonexempt absences a referral will be sent to the Merrillville Town Truancy Court. These absences are in violation of the Indiana Compulsory Attendance Law. Failure to appear could result in a bench warrant for your arrest, as well as educational neglect charges being filed with the Lake County Prosecutor's Office and a referral made to the Lake County Child Protection Services.

Tardies to school

It is extremely important for students to arrive to school on time. Late arrival hinders the child's ability to receive instruction at the beginning of the day with the rest of the classmates. Students who arrive after the school day begins will be considered tardy.

1. Students must first report to the office
2. A tardy slip will be issued before being admitted to class
3. After 3 tardies, an automated "wake up" call will be made to the child's home for 5 consecutive school days as a reminder to arrive at school on time and a 3rd tardy letter will be sent.
4. On the 3rd tardy, the school social worker or guidance counselor will contact the parent/guardian to address the tardy policy.
5. After 5 tardies, a notice will be sent home citing the record of tardies to remind parents of the importance of students arriving to school on time.
6. After 7 tardies, the student will serve a Friday School and the administration will contact the parent.
7. On the 9th tardy, a referral will be made to the Merrillville Town Truancy Court.

Tardies to class

A student will be considered tardy to class when he or she is late to class without a legitimate excuse.

1. The first tardy will result in a warning.
2. After 2 times tardy to class the student will serve one lunch detention and teacher will call parent/guardian.
3. After 3 times tardy to class the student will serve one after school detention and teacher will meet with parent/guardian.
4. After 4 times tardy to class a meeting with the student will serve 2 after school detentions.
5. After 5 times tardy to class the student will serve a Friday School.

Truancy

A student is considered truant if:

The absence is unexcused. The state of Indiana identifies a student that has unexcused absences from school for more than ten (10) days in one (1) school year as a habitual truant. (IC 20-33-2-11)

Truancy to class

A student is considered truant from class when they are out of the class without permission for 15 minutes or more. Disciplinary action will be taken by teachers/or administrators for repeat offenders.

Perfect Attendance

Perfect attendance is perfect attendance.

If a student receives 2 tardies (up to 15 minutes late) or 1 truancy to school they will no longer be eligible for perfect attendance.

CHEATING (AND PLAGIARISM)

Cheating is defined here to mean seeking unauthorized assistance from another or providing such assistance to another so as to acquire credit for school work (homework, tests, quizzes, projects, others) in a manner deemed dishonest by those in authority. Involved students will receive a zero for assignments/assessments and the teacher will document parent contact of such offense. Any subsequent acts of cheating will carry zero credit and referral to the office for assignment to Friday School for each violation incurred thereafter.

GRADING POLICY

Assessment of effort and progress is inevitable and essential to growth. Standards of achievement set expectations toward which students can strive. Grades are symbols that indicate to a student and parent(s) how well the student has progressed towards achieving these expectations. Teachers will discuss their grading/marking system with each of their classes. In the final analysis, each teacher is deemed the best judge of a student's performance in a given subject.

Report card grades are electronically calculated based on the following percentage breakpoints (wherein a .5 is rounded up to the next whole number, such as 59.5 rounded up to 60 whose grade value is D-):

A+	100	C+	77.5
A	92.5	C	72.5
A-	89.5	C-	69.5
B+	87.5	D+	67.5
B	82.5	D	62.5
B-	79.5	D-	59.5

Plus and minus may be used. Less than 60 percent is Failure.

Academic grades will be calculated as follows:

MIS Weighted Category Breakdown

Tests – 40%

Quizzes – 30%

Assignments/Projects – 20%

Homework – 10%

HOMEWORK

Homework will be assigned on a regular basis. When homework is assigned, it will be meaningful and realistic, providing the student the opportunity for creativity. All assignments will be designed to strengthen daily work and they will be made with specific purpose and expectation. Homework aids in learning to work independently and to improve skills taught in the classroom. Homework may be assigned over the weekends. All students will be provided with a student assignment book, which should be used as a communication tool for students, parents and teachers. Failure to complete homework on a regular basis will likely result in a lower report card grade and/or disciplinary measures based on individual team's class rules.

Abundant research indicates that effective homework policies can induce higher student achievement at all ability levels if purposes are clear and thoughtful, amounts are reasonable, and responsibilities are shared by students, parents, and teachers. The following policy

has been adopted to establish homework as a continuous and systematic part of the school corporation's educational programs.

A. Purposes:

1. *Reinforce Classroom Learning:* Includes independent practice or review of knowledge and concepts introduced during the school day.
2. *Extend the Day's Lesson:* Requires the utilization of newly acquired knowledge to achieve higher levels of understanding. Such utilization often involves the mental processes of analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and application.
3. *Introduction of New Material:* Involves additional reading or searching for new information as a means of extending the acquisition of new knowledge beyond the confines of the school day.

B. Responsibilities for Homework:

1. *Students:* Students are expected to make a good faith effort to complete all assigned homework on time and to the best of their ability.
2. *Parents:* Parents are expected to provide a home environment conducive to the development of reliable and systematic study habits, and to monitor homework to ensure its completion.
3. *Teachers:* Teachers are expected to explain the purpose of homework, to make assignments that are deemed fair and reasonable when compared to homework being assigned by other teachers, to review all completed homework, and to contact parents when assigned homework is not being appropriately completed.

HONORS PROGRAM

Merrillville Intermediate School's Honors program is a differentiated extension of a quality curriculum based on Indiana Academic Standards. The selection process for placement into the Honors Program is a combination of aptitude and academics.

Students may be reevaluated and/or removed from the Honors Program if any of the following occurs:

- Not achieving a Pass or Pass+ on ISTEP+
- Falling below a 70% in Math and/or Reading/Language Arts in the Honors classroom
- Repeated disruptive behavior in class
- Repeatedly exhibiting poor work ethic
- Repeated instances of incomplete class work
- Difficulty keeping up with class work and the challenges of the class

HONOR ROLL

Students at MIS may qualify for one of three honor roll categories providing they have no grade lower than "C" and they meet one of the following criteria:

- "A" Honor Roll – student must earn all A's
- "A-B" Honor Roll – student must earn all A's and B's

Honor Roll Bumper Stickers will only be given to a student one time per year.

MAKE-UP POLICY

It is the student's responsibility to ask the teacher for missing assignments after any absence. Number of days absent plus one will be allowed for make-up work including tests. Students who are out of school due to suspension will be provided with assignments for make-up work within one day of suspension. Weekends and holidays shall be counted as make-up days. It is the teacher's responsibility to spell out for the student exact assignments and projects, which must be made up after any absence.

If a student has been absent one day with the knowledge of a forthcoming test and returns the next day (day of test), he/she should take the test. If a student is absent two or more days, he/ she must decide either to take or not to take the test that day. If he/she decides not to take the test that day, the usual rules for make-up go into effect.

Students who are absent a number of consecutive days(three days or more) may have their parents contact the main office for make-up work, allowing 24 hours' notice to teachers.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports are issued after 6 weeks of every trimester. Comparable reports may be sent to parents any time during the year. Such reports may be used to report satisfactory or outstanding progress, as well. If it becomes apparent that a student is not progressing, as he/she should, the parents will be notified immediately.

PROJECT EFFORT

MAIN OBJECTIVES:

- Increase sense of responsibility for academic success
- Develop better study habits and higher quality work

HOW WILL WE DO THIS:

- Provide students a “second chance” to turn in their work and get help
- Provide supervised study time after school (Monday thru Wednesday) from 2:30pm – 3:30pm
- Communicate “doing nothing” is NOT an option for students
- Place and communicate higher expectations for student success

If a student fails to turn in their assignment(s) then the:

1. Teacher will notify the student that they need to attend Project Effort the following day
2. Teacher will check the assignment as missing in Skyward (i.e. gradebook) daily
3. Teacher will notify the parents of their child’s required attendance at Project Effort via email, phone call, DOJO
4. Student attends Project Effort and completes any missing/incomplete assignments
5. Student turns in their work to the Project Effort supervisor, not the teacher
6. Student will receive full credit for their work

Consequences will be assigned for students who do not attend Project Effort to complete their missing/incomplete assignments. Also, students will continue to be required to attend Project Effort until their missing/incomplete assignments are turned in. Their assigned work must be completed with integrity and be quality work.

READ TO SUCCEED REQUIRED READING

Recognizing that the amount of time spent in recreational reading is a predictor of students' academic success, the Merrillville Community School Corporation has adopted a corporation-wide required reading program. All students are required to read and pass tests to accumulate a certain number of points. Students are required to achieve 70% or higher on the corresponding computer book quiz to receive credit for the book. The number of points received will determine the student's letter grade each trimester.

Students will take a Scholastic Reading Inventory test each year. The test consists of a series of short passages the student is required to read, and then they will complete fill-in-the-blank sentences. This test takes approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. Students then receive a Lexile score. A Lexile score is a measurement that is used to assess the student's reading ability and to help students find books at an appropriate reading level. Students will have an opportunity to take an SRI test at least three times a year.

Although students' may know their current Lexile score, they may always test on book titles based on the parameters below. Parents may also login to RDS Parent Access to see their student's latest SRI score.

PARAMETERS:

Students may test on non-fiction books or picture books 50 points below their Lexile.

Students may also test on chapter books at:

5 th – 6 th Grades	500+
--	------

**Teacher discretion may also be used to determine books for students based on the students' interests and reading level. All books found on the Young Hoosier lists may be tested upon regardless of the Lexile level.*

All book assessments must be completed no later than five days prior to the end of the trimester in order for the students to receive credit.

TESTING:

Students must accumulate 12 points per trimester. Each trimester these points will reset to 0. Books read over the summer months will count toward the first trimester. In order to attend the end of the school year field trip, a student must accumulate a total of 36 points for the year and at least 70% in comprehension.

A student's final testing percentage of the SRI tests each trimester will be figured into their reading grade.

Students that do not complete their RSRR will not be eligible for the honor roll.

Please contact your school librarian for more information.

PARENTS RIGHT TO KNOW

Professional Qualifications of Teachers

As a parent/guardian of a Merrillville Community School Corporation student, and in accordance with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Section 111(h)(6), you have the right to request and receive information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's classroom teachers. This information shall include the following:

- If the teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade level and subject areas taught.
- If the teacher is teaching under emergency or temporary status in which Indiana qualifications and licensing criteria are waived.
- The teacher's baccalaureate degree major, graduate certification, and field of discipline.
- Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.

If at any time your student has been taught for 4 or more consecutive weeks by a teacher that is not highly qualified, you will be notified by the school of this information.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL PRINCIPAL.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued every trimester (12 weeks). Students may receive an incomplete grade for a course if there has been an extended illness or for incomplete projects.

RETENTION/ASSIGNMENT

All fifth and sixth grade students will take four (4) academic subjects, language arts, math, science, and social studies. Student grades, test scores, and performance will be the determining factors for retention. Failure of Math and English/Language Arts for two trimesters will be grounds for retention for the next school year.

Parents are responsible for monitoring student progress on mid-term reports and report cards. In addition, parents may electronically access grades on RDS. Teachers will notify parents at the beginning of the third trimester to discuss possible summer school options or recommendation for retention. **THE FINAL DECISION FOR RETENTION OR ASSIGNMENT IS DETERMINED BY SCHOOL BOARD POLICY.**

SCHEDULE CHANGES

Students are required to remain in classes to which they are assigned or elect to take. Any possible change will be considered only after teacher, principal, and parent contacts have occurred.

STUDENT ID'S

Student ID's are issued free to each student at the start of each school year. **Student ID's must be worn at all times.** Failure to do so will result in progressive disciplinary measures. Students must show school ID to participate in any and all after school/extra curricula activities.

TRANSFERS

In the event that a student is transferring, the parent must call or write to secure a withdraw form. This must be done at least two days in advance before changing schools. All books and equipment are to be returned and all fees paid. Each teacher will initial and enter the up-to-date grade. Students must then secure final signature from the treasurer.

NON-ACADEMIC

ALCOHOL AND DRUG TESTING POLICY

Reasonable Suspicion (Gr.5-12)

Philosophy

Merrillville Community School Corporation has a strong commitment to the health, safety, and welfare of its students. Results of studies throughout the United States indicate that education alone, as a preventative measure, is not effective in combating substance abuse. Our commitment to maintaining the Merrillville Community School Corporation as a safe and secure educational environment requires a clear policy and supportive programs relating to detection, treatment, and prevention of substance abuse by students.

Definitions

As used in this policy:

Reasonable suspicion: means a belief based upon circumstances which, when taken together in the context of the school building or activity in which they occur, would lead a reasonable person to believe a student has violated a state law, federal law, or student rule. Information provided by other persons may be considered by an administrator as part of the administrator's reasonable suspicion where the administrator has reason to believe the person offering the information is credible.

Scope of Policy

The provisions of this policy apply in all situations in which a student is subject to school disciplinary rules pursuant to Indiana Code 20-8.1-5.1-8(b), including:

1. on school grounds immediately before or during school hours, or immediately after school hours, or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group;
2. off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event; or
3. traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event.

Reasonable Suspicion Testing

When a trained administrator, counselor, or school nurse has reasonable suspicion to believe that a student is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the administrator may require the student to submit to an alcohol or drug test. The physical characteristics that may be grounds for reasonable suspicion that a student is under the influence of alcohol or drugs include but are not limited to the following:

1. odor of alcohol or marijuana on breath or clothing - bruises, cuts or needle marks;
2. excessive drowsiness - accelerated heart rate - dilated pupils - bloodshot, watering and or dull looking eyes- decreased heart rate
3. unsteady gait or loss of balance when walking - rapid, slowed or slurred speech - extreme hyperactivity;
4. manic or hyper behavior - irresponsible, disrespectful or argumentative behavior - fighting or aggressive behavior - emotional instability, especially overreactions to minor provocation - anxiety or depression - euphoria - dysphoria - hallucinations - delusions - tremors - drowsiness or lethargy - confusion - seizures

Procedures

A testing laboratory that is certified pursuant to the regulations of the United States Department of Transportation will provide training and direction to those who supervise the alcohol and drug testing of students. The test sample shall be collected by a person designated by the Superintendent and trained to collect specimen for analysis. The integrity of the test sample shall be carefully preserved at all times through a strict chain of custody maintained with the supervision of the testing laboratory. The sample shall be tested at a certified testing laboratory. Test results shall be reported to the school corporation's Medical Review Officer.

Consequences of Positive Test

Students who test positive for being under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be subject to the provisions of the school corporation's student discipline policy.

A refusal to submit to an alcohol or drug test will be treated as a positive test result.

Financial Responsibility

The Merrillville Community School Corporation will be responsible for the costs of all initial alcohol and drug tests based on reasonable suspicion.

A request for a confirmation test, following a positive test result, will be the financial responsibility of the student or his/her parent or guardian.

Confidentiality

If the test is positive, the principal or administrative designee will meet with the student and the student's parent or guardian. The student and the student's parent or guardian will be given the names of counseling and assistance agencies that the family may want to contact for help.

Other than when necessary to administer this policy, any employee of the Merrillville Community School Corporation who has knowledge of the test result of an alcohol or drug test shall not divulge to anyone, other than the student or the student's parent or guardian, the results of the alcohol or drug test. Exceptions to this rule may be made in the case of a valid court order.

BOOK FINES

The following is the procedure in determining the book fine:

1. Fines are assessed for books that are lost or stolen. The full price of a new book will be charged to the student.
2. If a book has been improperly handled or used and rebinding is necessary, the fine will be the cost of the rebinding.
3. If a book has been improperly handled or misused and is not in usable condition, the full price of a new book will be charged to the student.
4. If the book will not be used again the following year and is lost, stolen, or needs rebinding, a charge equivalent to the cost of rebinding will be made.
5. Original cost of books will be available in the office. All fines are to be paid by the last day of school.

BOOK RENTAL AND FEES

Students are supplied all necessary books for a rental charge. They are responsible for all books issued to them and will be subject to a fine should any book be lost or damaged; they should NOT loan books to other students. Charges are also made for workbooks, test sheets, consumable items, and some course projects. These fees will vary from course to course. Delinquency in book rental payment beyond final due date established by the Corporation will be handled through a collections agency. Delinquent book rental is also a barrier for student participation in optional field trips.

BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB

Boys and Girls Club is currently housed in Merrillville Intermediate School. The organization establishes its own enrollment process and calendar or services and activities, which should prove very beneficial to MIS students (and their parents, as well). Parents are urged to stay informed of variations (from the school calendar) in the Boys and Girls Club calendar to make alternate custodial and transportation arrangements for their students when Boys and Girls club is not in operation. Questions and concerns regarding the program are to be directed to the Club's supervisors/personnel whenever possible.

Boys and Girls Club operates in partnership with Merrillville Intermediate School, and - as such - All rules contained in the MIS Student Handbook apply to, and are enforced by the Boys and Girls club as well.

BUSES

Merrillville Community School Corporation provides transportation for its students. All students who avail themselves of this service must remember riding the bus is a privilege that should not be abused. All students must ride their assigned bus to and from school. If an emergency arises whereby a student must ride another bus, the parent of that student must call a school administrator. Common sense will dictate the conduct necessary for the safety and welfare for all. Failure to comply with bus regulations will result in disciplinary action being taken.

IC 20-33-8-14

Grounds for suspension or expulsion

Sec. 14. (a) The following are the grounds for student suspension or expulsion, subject to the procedural requirements of this chapter and as stated by school corporation rules:

- (1) Student misconduct.
- (2) Substantial disobedience.

(b) The grounds for suspension or expulsion listed in subsection (a) apply when a student is:

- (1) on school grounds immediately before or during school hours, or immediately after school hours, or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group;
- (2) off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event; or
- (3) traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event.

As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.17.

When the bus arrives at school, students are to go directly into the building to the designated area.

After school is dismissed, students will wait for their bus in a properly designated area.

There is to be no pushing, hitting, kicking, cutting lines, or running to the bus stop nor running at the side of a moving bus. Once on the bus, students must remain in their seat. Students should obey the bus drivers. They are responsible for student's safety.

While on the bus, students are to remain seated, use an appropriate voice level, and keep hands, feet and other objects inside the bus and to self. Failure to adhere to the bus rules may result in disciplinary action which may result in bus suspension and/or suspension from school.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCE WILL STUDENTS WHO RIDE BUSES LEAVE SCHOOL GROUNDS BEFORE THEIR BUS ARRIVES. Failure to comply with this rule will result in the student being considered truant.

CAFETERIA RULES

Using the facilities of the cafeteria is a privilege given to those students who wish to follow a few simple rules. All students whether purchasing or bringing their own lunches, are required to eat in the cafeteria. If a student purchases a lunch, he/she will be required to line up as instructed. Cutting or giving cuts is prohibited. There are numerous selections from which to make a choice. Upon finishing lunch, students should return the tray to the tray rack or window. A STUDENT SHOULD CLEAN UP HIS/HER OWN AREA AND DISPOSE OF HIS/HER SACK IN THE TRASH CONTAINERS. Students who willfully create messy conditions in the cafeteria will be assigned kitchen/maintenance duties or placed in lunch detention. ****As a courtesy an email will be sent on Fridays reminding parents/guardians of low balances of lunch accounts. The student change limit is \$6.30. Visitors and students cannot bring in restaurant food to school. NO sharing of food and NO large bags of chips.**

CHANGE OF CONTACT INFORMATION

Parents should inform the office immediately of any change in telephone number(s) or other emergency contact information. They should also provide proof of residency when reporting any change in address.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS & PARENT CONFERENCES

We encourage all parents to visit school and observe the school in action. Should any parent wish a conference, it may be arranged by calling the school office. Conferences are scheduled before or after school, or at any time during the day the teacher is not scheduled to be with students.

The following procedures should be followed before making a classroom observation:

1. Arrange classroom observations with a minimum 24 hour advanced notice by calling the main office: (219) 650-5306.
2. All visitors must register through Entrance A in the front office to obtain a Visitor's Pass.
3. Visits shall be limited to adults to minimize classroom disruption.
4. Classroom observations should not exceed one hour a day per teacher per visit unless the teacher feels a longer visit is warranted.

5. Visitors should arrive between classes when possible so their entry will be as unobtrusive as possible.
6. It is inappropriate for visitors to speak out, make statements or ask questions of the students or teacher during the visit unless asked to participate.
7. If a visitor wishes to discuss his/her observation or any issue with the teacher, he/she should make an appointment to meet during non-class time.
8. The use of tape recorder, videotape machines or other recording equipment to record meetings at which a teacher is present or to record a teacher during the discharge of his/her duties is prohibited without the prior written consent of each teacher who will be included in the recording.

Visitation Policy:

The Merrillville Community School Corporation welcomes visits to school by parents/guardians, other adult residents of the community and interested educators. To protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel, as well as to minimize classroom disruptions, procedures for visitors shall include the following:

1. School visits should make allowance for 24 hours' notice and should be arranged through main office personnel: (219) 650-5306.
2. Every visitor to MIS must register through Entrance A in the front office to obtain a Visitor's Pass.
3. Sign-in lists showing name purpose of visit, arrival time, and departure time shall be maintained by the school office.
4. The office will hold the license/ID of any visitor until they depart from the building.
5. Any person who does not register with school office is on school property illegally and should be asked to identify him/herself properly, get visitor's pass, or leave the school's grounds.
6. No student guests are allowed in the building during the school day.

CLOSED CAMPUS

(Sign-in Sign-out)

Students who come to school late or must leave during the day must sign in or out in the school's main office. Those who must leave during the school day should have a note from their parents stating the reason why and then secure permission from the office personnel or the school nurse. The individual picking the student up must come in and notify the office personnel. If a student comes to school late he/she should have a note from his/ her parents.

DRESS CODE

We believe in providing a learning environment that focuses on the education of each student. In order to prevent distractions that may prevent an optimal setting for learning, we have implemented the following dress code:

Clothes must be worn of a length and size that is safe for movement in all settings. Shoelaces must be tied. Pants that drag on the floor may not be worn. Skirts and shorts must end at the mid-thigh. Skirts and shorts may not have slits that extend beyond fingertip length.

Clothes may not be worn that are sheer, see-through, expose the midriff, have holes/slits or expose underwear/undergarments.

Tutus may not be worn.

No pajamas or slippers/house shoes may be worn, unless it's a designated Pajama Day for the school, in which case, all dress code rules must still be followed and pajamas must be appropriate.

Students may not wear sleeveless shirts of any kind. T-shirts must be worn under jerseys.

Shirts and tops must be long enough to be tucked in, but are not required to be tucked in. Shirts that expose the midriff are not allowed.

No head gear (i.e. hats, bandanas, wave caps, hair wraps, excessively large headbands, etc.) may be worn, unless approved by staff.

All students are to remove hats and other head covering upon entering the building during the day.

No jewelry or hair accessories with spike/sharp points may be worn. (Rat-tail combs, picks with metal teeth, etc.)

No shades/dark lens glasses or non-prescription glass worn in school unless under medical directive.

Pant "sagging" is not acceptable! Pants must fit at the waist and/or a belt must be worn to prevent the "dropped" pant look. A student's underwear, gym shorts, any other garment worn under his/her pants or shorts, or skin should not be exposed due to the sagging of pants or shorts.

Pants may not be tied or bound at any part of the leg.

No thonged flip-flops may be worn.

Coats, gloves, mittens, and scarves worn for outdoor use may not be worn to class unless approved by staff.

Backpacks, large purses and tote bags are to be kept in lockers and not carried to class. Book bags on wheels are not allowed.

Any clothing/jewelry with words, symbols, or pictures that promotes violence, alcohol, drugs, sex, tobacco or vulgarities is forbidden.

Additionally any attire may be considered inappropriate at an administrator's discretion.

Violations of the dress code will result in being required to change clothing. The office may provide a suitable garment if a student cannot reach anyone to bring a change of clothes. Repeated violations of the dress code may result in a parent conference, detention or suspension.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

FIRE DRILLS

A fire evacuation plan has been given to each teacher and has been posted in each room. Students should study the plan and become familiar with it. When the fire alarm sounds, students will immediately stand and form lines as they leave the room. Running is not permitted. The first students to reach the outside doors are to hold them open until all have left the building. Students are not permitted to talk during a fire drill and are to remain at least 50 feet away from the building until the signal to return is given by the principal or his/her authorized representative.

POWER FAILURE

In the event there is a power failure, all movement throughout the building will be made in a quiet, orderly manner and the following instructions will be followed:

1. Teachers will remain with their students.
2. Electrical or gas equipment that is being used when the blackout occurs will be shut off immediately.
3. Students will remain in classrooms.
4. In case of complete darkness in an interior room (failure of emergency lighting to work or an absence of emergency lighting), teachers will take the students to exterior classrooms.
5. If a room is vacated, the door to that room will be closed.
6. If the emergency occurs during a class break, teachers will go to assigned room. Students will go quietly and orderly to nearest classroom (an outside classroom or one with emergency lighting functioning) or to the gym.
7. An injury or unusual happening will be reported to the office immediately.

TORNADO DRILLS

1. A tornado evacuation plan will be given to each teacher and posted in each room. Students should study the plan and become familiar with it.
2. All persons in the room will proceed to the nearest solid wall in the hall when the signal is given over the public address system. They will remain standing until they receive further instructions or the 'All Clear' signal is given.
3. Everyone is to remain absolutely quiet.
4. All instructions are to be obeyed promptly.
5. Avoid areas where there is any object that could do personal damage i.e., glass laboratory equipment, glass bookcases, etc.
6. Avoid window areas and have your back to such areas.
7. In case of a real tornado alert, students will be asked to get down on their knees and cover their heads with their hands to protect themselves from flying debris.
8. It is important that everyone be absolutely quiet so that instructions that are given can be heard by everyone. Also, when there is an excessive amount of commotion and noise, people tend to become very nervous and panic. The most important thing is to remain calm and follow all instructions.

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Students in the Merrillville Community School Corporation are exposed to technology at all grade levels. With this exposure to technology we also want students to learn to become good Digital Citizens. Much like we have rules for the way we behave in society we

have rules for how we should behave in our digital society. Student expectation while using technology is in place to help create the best technology environment possible. Students will learn about Internet safety, cyberbullying, digital footprint and other important aspects of digital citizenship.

Expectations

- Be responsible when using any technology devices in the corporation
- Do not install or remove any program or applications on a device without permission of your teacher
- Devices should be handled with care and returned to their assigned location at the end of the day.
- Students devices may be used by multiple students, make sure that you leave the device in working condition.
- Use the device for educational purposes
- Students should refrain from posting any information on the internet and remember to keep the private and personal information to themselves.
- Social media should only be used under supervision of a teacher
- Report damage immediately to your teacher

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Electronic devices such as cell phones, pagers, CD players, handheld games, etc. are prohibited on school property, which includes school buses and bus stops. If a student is found to be in possession of such a device, the item will be confiscated and will only be released directly to a properly identified parent/guardian who comes to school wishing to reclaim it.

Cell phone use or having a cell phone visible in the school building is strictly prohibited and will result in a Friday School. The staff member will take the cell phone and give it to the appropriate assistant principal for pick up. Refusal will result in suspensions.

Sending, sharing, viewing, or possessing pictures, text messages, emails, or other material of sexual nature in electronic or any other form, including the contents of a cell phone or other electronic device is strictly prohibited and possessing such items will be grounds for expulsion.

Important Notice to Students and Parents Regarding Cell Phone Content and Display

- The Child abuse/Neglect Law requires school personnel to report to law enforcement or child protective services whenever there is reason to believe that any person/student is involved with “child exploitation” or “child pornography” as defined by Indiana Criminal Statutes.
- It is “child exploitation,” a Class C felony under I.C. 35-42-4-4(b), for any person/student (1) to exhibit, photograph or create a digitalized image of any incident that includes “sexual conduct” by a child under the age of 18; or (2) to disseminate, exhibit to another person, or offer to so disseminate or exhibit, matter that depicts or describes “sexual conduct” by a child under the age of 18.
- It is “child pornography,” a Class D felony under I.C. 35-42-4-4(c), for any person/student to possess a photograph, motion picture, digitalized image, or any pictorial representation that depicts or describes “sexual conduct” by a child who the person knows is less than 16 years of age or who appears less than age 16.
- “Sexual conduct” is defined by I.C. 35-42-4-4(a) to include sexual intercourse, exhibition of the uncovered genitals intended to satisfy or arouse the sexual desires of any person, or fondling or touching of a child by another person or of another person by a child intended to arouse or satisfy the sexual desires of the child or other person.
- The Indiana Sex Offender Registration Statute at I.C. 11-8-8-7 and the Sex Offender Registry Offense Statute at I.C. 35-42-4-11, as of May 2009, require persons convicted of or adjudicated as a juvenile delinquent for violating the Child Exploitation Statute at I.C. 35-42-4-4(b) to register as a sex offender.

Because student cell phones have been found in a number of Indiana school districts to have contained evidence of “sexual conduct” as defined above, it is important for parents and students to be aware of the legal consequences should this occur in our school system.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Extra-curricular activities in the intermediate school are encouraged. Academic Teams, Student Council, PEARLS, STAND, STEM Club and ART Club, etc., comprise some of the types of activities for student involvement. School newspaper and yearbook staff work is also available for those interested in this type of activity. 6th graders can participate in Pierce athletics which include wrestling, tennis, track and cross country.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an essential part of a student's learning experience. All students are encouraged to participate in the opportunities that field trips provide. For this reason, rarely will a student be restricted from attending a field trip. However, there may be circumstances involving behavioral guidelines, unpaid fees, and attendance that may lead to restrictions.

HEALTH SERVICES

Merrillville Community Schools have a full or part-time Registered Nurse on duty during the school day. Students should report to the main office when a nurse is not present in the health office. The nurse should not be used as a personal physician and should be utilized for injury or illness occurring at school. As a rule the Nurse's Office is open from 7:15 am – 2:45 pm.

NO STUDENT IS TO REPORT TO THE NURSE'S OFFICE WITHOUT THE PROPER PASS, EXCEPT IN THE CASE OF AN EMERGENCY. The principals, nurse and office personnel are the only people who have the authority to send students home for apparent sickness or injury.

THE NURSE SHOULD NOT BE USED AS A PERSONAL PHYSICIAN AND SHOULD BE UTILIZED ONLY FOR INJURY OR ILLNESS OCCURRING AT SCHOOL.

Students may be excluded from school for the following conditions and diseases. A physician's release is required to return to school for those marked with an asterisk *.

1. Conjunctivitis- bacterial* and viral
Students with conjunctivitis or "pinkeye" may not return to school until the eyes are clear and without drainage or on antibiotics for 24 hours and a doctor's release to return to school is presented in the nurse's office.
2. Diarrhea (excluded until the diarrhea is gone)
3. Fifth Disease (may be excluded if fever persists)
4. Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease *
5. Herpes Zoster (Shingles) *
6. Hepatitis A *
7. Impetigo
8. Infectious Mononucleosis
9. Measles (Rubeola)*
10. Meningitis- bacterial and viral *
11. Mumps (Infectious Parotitis)*
12. Pediculosis Capitis (Lice) (students with Pediculosis (head lice) may return to school when the hair is free from active lice)
13. Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
14. Pinworm (Enterobiasis) (may return after 24 hours of treatment)
15. Roseola (Exanthem Subitum) *
16. Rubella (German Measles)*
17. Scabies *
18. Scarlet Fever (may return after 24-48 hours of antibiotic treatments and fever free for 24 hours)
19. Staphylococcal Infections, including MRSA *
20. Streptococcal Infections (may return 24-48 hours of antibiotic treatment and fever free for 24 hours)
21. Temperature of 100 degrees or above (student must be fever, vomiting, and/or diarrhea free for at least 24 hours before returning to school. A temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or above is considered a fever. Temperature should be taken without the use of a fever reducing medication.
22. Tinea Capitis (Ringworm of the scalp) *
23. Undiagnosed skin conditions *

24. Varicella –Zoster Virus (chicken pox) (Exclude until all vesicles have scabbed)
25. Vomiting
26. Any other condition in which the school feels a physician’s note for readmission is necessary to protect the student population.

In addition, a release from the physician will be required for absences due to any extended reason. A physician’s release is needed regarding hospitalization for any reason, and any newly diagnosed condition including, but no limited to: cardiac or heart conditions, orthopedic problems, (including conditions involving a splint, cast, crutches, or use of wheel chair or elevator), diabetes and the use of glucometers, asthma, and seizures. If you are in doubt about the length of time to keep children home after the occurrence of other common childhood diseases, please contact the school nurse. If a child cannot participate in gym class due to physical restrictions per the physician, then he/she may not participate in recess, Field Day and possibly field trips until medically released.

Food Allergies:

Any student with a food allergy must have a Doctor’s note on file with the nurse to support the food allergy. Any changes in food allergies will require a subsequent note from the child’s physician to initiate the change. Due to students with food allergies, NO homemade snacks will be distributed to Merrillville students. Store bought snacks/treats are allowed and MUST have ingredients clearly listed on the label in order to be served to students in the Merrillville Community School Corporation. The snacks/treats MUST meet USDA Smart Snack criteria. Information on snacks are available through the school office or cafeteria. **Visitors and students cannot bring in restaurant food to school.**

Health Screening Procedures:

All screening will be completed in accordance with Indiana state requirements. Vision screening will be completed in 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 8th grades, on all students new to the Corporation, and any students suspected of having vision problems. Modified Clinical Technique vision screening will be completed on all 1st grade students. Hearing screening will be completed in 1st, 4th, 7th, and 10th grades, on all students new to the Corporation, and any students suspected of having a hearing problem. Parents will be notified of any problem identified during the above screening s by a written referral. Please return completed referrals to the child’s school nurse as promptly as possible.

Lice Screening Procedures:

DUE TO THE CDC RECOMMENDATIONS, MERRILLVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION WILL NO LONGER FOLLOW A NO NIT POLICY. IF A STUDENT IS FOUND BY THE SCHOOL NURSE WITH AN ACTIVE CASE OF LIVE HEAD LICE, THE PARENT WILL BE NOTIFIED TO PICK THE STUDENT UP FROM SCHOOL. PARENTS WILL THEN BE INSTRUCTED ON HOW TO TREAT THE LICE, HOUSEKEEPING DETAILS, AND WILL RECEIVE A COPY OF THE MCSC PAMPHLET (ACCORDING TO CDC GUIDELINES). STUDENTS WILL BE RECHECKED BY THE SCHOOL NURSE ONE WEEK AFTER TREATMENT. PARENTS WILL BE INFORMED IF LIVE LICE HAVE BEEN FOUND UPON EXAM AND THE PROCESS WILL REPEAT.

IMMUNIZATIONS

1. Indiana code 20-34-4-2 states that all students, pre K-12, enrolling in our corporation are required to be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), measles, mumps, rubella, poliomyelitis, hepatitis B, and varicella. Students in grades 6 through 12 are required to show proof of immunization against meningitis and a booster against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis. Below are the 2013-14 immunization requirements:

Pre-K/3 to 5 years old:	3 Hepatitis B 4 DTaP 3 Polio	1 MMR 1 Varicella
Grade K	3 Hepatitis B 5DTaP 4 Polio	2 MMR 2 Varicella 2 Hepatitis A
Grades 1 to 5	3 Hepatitis B 5 DTaP 4 Polio	2 MMR 2 Varicella

Grades 6 to 11	3 Hepatitis B 5 DTaP 4 Polio	2 MMR 2 Varicella 1 Tdap (Tetanus & Pertussis) 1 MCV4
----------------	---	--

***all above immunizations are required prior to entering 6th grade**

Grade 12	3 Hep B 5 DTaP 4 Polio	2 MMR 2 Varicella 1 Tdap 2 MCV4
----------	---	--

Hepatitis B: **Two doses alternative adolescent schedule (Recombivax HB given at age 11-15 yrs. x 2 doses are acceptable if properly documented).**

DTaP: **Four doses of DTaP/DTP/DT are acceptable if 4th dose was administered on or after the child's fourth birthday.**

Polio **Three doses of polio vaccine are acceptable if the 3rd dose was administered on or after the child's fourth birthday and the doses are all IPV or all OPV**

MMR: **If given as a single antigen, 2 Measles, 2 Mumps, and 1 Rubella required.**

Varicella: **Physician documentation of disease history, including month and year, is required as proof of immunity for children entering preschool through 5th grade.** A signed statement from the parent/guardian indicating history of disease, including month and year is required for the children in grades 6-12.

- Parents must provide documented evidence of all immunizations no later than the first day of school. No child will be permitted to attend school unless he/she is fully immunized or has begun his/her immunization schedule. The only exception to these requirements are children whose parents file each year a written objection based upon religious reasons or a medical exemption signed by a physician.
- Kindergarten students will not be allowed to attend school until the required immunization records are submitted to the school authorities.
- Students transferring from another school may be granted a waiver to attend school for no more than twenty (20) days. If immunization records or a scheduled for these immunizations established by a physician or the Board of health is not received at the end of twenty (20) days, the student will be excluded from school. It is the responsibility of the parent / guardian to see that a documented record of immunizations is provided to the school.
- TB skin testing will be requested for any student pre K-12 who demonstrates one or more of the reasons for TB testing recommended by the Centers of Disease Control.

Medication:

MERRILLVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION - MEDICATION POLICY

- No medication (not limited to prescription medications but including over-the counter medications such as Tylenol or aspirin) shall be administered to a student without the written and dated consent of the student's parent and physician. This includes inhalers, Nebulizers, Epi-Pens, Insulin, etc.
- The consent of the parent and physician shall be valid only for the period specified on the consent form and in no case longer than the current school or program year. The nurse is not able to keep any medication in her office and the medication will not be accepted without an order from the doctor. Please do not drop off any medication unless you have an order from the doctor.
- Prescription medication must be in a prescription bottle labeled with the child's name, doctor's name, name of medication, dosage, and the time to be given. Over-the counter medication must be in the original bottle labeled with the child's name, dosage, and time to be given.
- If the medication is to be terminated prior to the date on the prescription, the written and dated consent of the withdrawal of consent of the parent is required.
- The School Nurse, Principal or his/her designee shall cooperate in giving any medication so prescribed. The school cannot be responsible for the effects of the medication administered as directed or ordered.
- If students are receiving medication at home, parents are encouraged to contact the school principal or school nurse with such information.

7. No student shall be allowed to keep medication at school. Any medication to be administered to a student shall be brought to either the school nurse's office or principal's office where it will be kept in a secure location. Unused medication by students in kindergarten through grade 8 must be sent home only through the student's parents or an individual who is at least 18 years old and is designated in writing by the student's parent to receive the medication. For grades 9 through 12, unused medication may be sent home with the student only with written permission of the student's parents.
8. Exception to rule: A student with a chronic disease or medical condition may possess and self-administer prescribed medication for the disease or condition if the student's physician and parent have filed a written authorization with the school nurse or building principal. The written authorization must be filed annually and must include the following information:
 - a. Physician's statement that the student has an acute or chronic disease or medical condition for which the medication has been prescribed
 - b. The nature of the disease or medical condition requires emergency administration of the prescribed medication.
 - c. The student has been instructed in how to self-administer the prescribed medication.

The student is authorized to possess and self-administer the prescribed medication.

LEGAL RESIDENCY

Students who attend Merrillville schools must be legal residents of the school corporation. Legal residency for students requires that parents of students reside in Ross Township. The rare exceptions to this rule involve home construction and incapacitated parents. All exception requests must be submitted to and approved by building principals or designee.

Fraudulent enrollments will be treated as follows:

1. Immediate expulsion.
2. Tuition will be charged for the entire period the student has attended Merrillville Schools (approximately \$3,000 per school year).
3. If tuition payment is not received within thirty days of billing, the bill will be turned over to a professional collection agency for not only payment of tuition, but also for all legal fees and collection agency charges associated with collection of tuition charges. All citizens of Ross Township are requested to assist the school corporation in identifying fraudulent enrollments. If you have reason to believe that a student is not a legal resident of the school corporation, please notify the principal of the school the student is attending or call the Administrative Service Center at 650-5300.

LOCKER REGULATIONS

1. Lockers should contain coats, book bags, lunches, and books only. Students should bring no more money to school than they intend to use on any given day.
2. The school is not responsible for loss to, or damage of a student's personal property.
3. All books and personal belongings are to be kept in a neat orderly fashion.
4. Locker combinations are strictly private information and must not be given out to anyone.
5. When a student's locker does not function properly, he/she should report this immediately to the office.
6. Students are forbidden to share lockers. Students are responsible for all contents in their issued locker.
7. All students are held accountable for school equipment assigned to them, such as lockers.
8. Any person caught tampering, opening, or removing items from any locker other than his/her own without proper authorization, will face strong disciplinary action.
9. A student should never leave his/her locker without making sure it is locked.
10. Electronic equipment is not to be brought to school. Examples: cell phones, CD players, headsets, iPod, or electronic games.

Control of lockers According to Indiana State Law is that school lockers remain the property of the school, and the school authorities have a responsibility and a right to examine the contents of those lockers for reasons of health, safety, and security. Acceptance of a locker by the student is acknowledging this right.

SPORTS EQUIPMENT

Outside sports equipment (ex. basketballs, footballs) is not allowed in the building unless approved by staff and/or administration.

RELEASE OF STUDENT INFORMATION

The school corporation may release certain "student information" including the student's name, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, date of attendance, awards received, and other similar information without parental consent to newspapers, magazines, radio and television, colleges, civic organizations or similar groups, or publish such information in its own publications, programs, yearbooks. Student information/picture may be displayed on school web site, PNN, cable, video production, or by other means unless the parent notifies the school corporation by the third Monday in September of each school year that he/she does not waive any or certain designated student information released to such parties without his/her expressed prior written consent. According to state law, "student information", will be provided to the military.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION POLICY

THE POLICY

1. It is the policy of the Merrillville Community School Corporation to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from sexual harassment. The Merrillville Community School Corporation will not tolerate sexual harassment by employees or students. To assure the Merrillville Community School Corporation is free of sexual harassment in work and study, appropriate sanctions will be imposed on offenders over whom the school corporation has jurisdiction.
2. It shall be a violation of this policy for any employee to harass any student or for any student to harass any other student through conduct or communication of a sexual nature as defined below.

DEFINITION

1. General Prohibitions

A. Unwelcome Conduct of a Sexual Nature

- 1) Conduct of a sexual nature may include verbal or physical sexual advances and/or comments regarding physical or personality characteristics of a sexual nature.
- 2) Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature may constitute sexual harassment when the allegedly harassed student has indicated, by his/her conduct, that it is unwelcome.
- 3) A student who has initially welcomed such conduct by active participation must give specific notice by his/her conduct to the alleged harassed that such conduct is no longer welcome in order for any such subsequent conduct to be deemed unwelcome.

B. Sexual Harassment

For the purposes of this policy, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or sexual conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- 1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's participation in a school sponsored education program or activity;
- 2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic decisions affecting that individual; or
- 3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

2. Reporting, Investigation, and Sanctions

A. It is the express policy of the Merrillville Community School Corporation to encourage persons who believe that they are victims of a sexual harassment to come forward with such claims. This may be done through the following procedure:

- 1) A student who believes that he/she has been sexually harassed as defined in Section 11 A of this policy should report the unwelcome conduct to the principal of the school which he/she attends or if the principal is the offending person, the report should be made to the Superintendent.
- 2) Any student who disagrees with the decision of the building principal (level hearing decision) may file a written request within 30 days of the level I decision with the Superintendent for a level II hearing. The decision of the Superintendent or his/her designee (level II decision) may be appealed to the Board of Trustees. The party who appeals from the level II decision must file a written request for a hearing before the Board of Trustees within 15 days after receipt of the level II decision.
- 3) Confidentiality will be maintained and no reprisals or retaliation will be allowed to occur as a result of the good faith reporting

of charges of sexual harassment.

- B. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct, and the context in which the alleged conduct occurred will be investigated. The Superintendent has the responsibility of investigating and resolving complaints of sexual harassment.

STUDENT SERVICES

The Social Work services are available to students and parents throughout the day. It is advisable to make an appointment in advance to assure ample conference time. Periodic contacts with students may be made, both on a group and an individual basis.

Students who wish to see any person in the office must first go to their next period teacher, secure a written pass, and then come to the office. If a student is in the office beyond the tardy bell without a pass, he/she will be counted tardy (unexcused). The only exception would be before and after school.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMNESTY PROGRAM

STUDENT SELF-REFERRAL:

1. If a student discloses to a teacher, counselor, administrator that he/she uses drugs/alcohol: no expulsion.
2. If a student voluntarily reveals that he/she is in possession or under the influence of drugs/alcohol: expulsion proceedings are suspended on condition that student immediately begins, within 24 hours, substance abuse therapy.
3. A required police report would be held by the police without processing, as long as the student is faithful to a therapy program and no further substance abuse incident occurs.
4. If student and family refuse treatment, or discontinue treatment prematurely, then expulsion procedures continue and police report is processed.

Protocol for addressing students who exhibit Suicidal/Homicidal Ideations

In accordance with the established school district protocol for addressing students who exhibit suicidal/homicidal ideations, statements made with the intent to do serious bodily harm to self or others will be assessed for the need for disciplinary action(s) and/or mental health/medical assistance. Parents will be immediately notified to pick up the student if it is determined that the student presents a danger to self or others. Parents must provide a written document indicating that the student has been evaluated by a mental health/medical professional and cleared for return to school.

TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

The intended use of technology in the Merrillville Community School Corporation is to a) enhance the educational experience of students by direct interaction with technology, and to b) indirectly enhance the educational experience of students by allowing faculty and staff to access and process important information in a more timely and efficient fashion. The use of technology is expressly limited to school/educational assignments.

Each student must pledge that as a computer user, he/she agrees to follow the Acceptable Use Policy in all of his/her work with computers while attending Merrillville Community School Corporation. The following activities and uses of MCSC technology are prohibited:

SERIOUS VIOLATION

1. The use of computer related technology with the intent to damage, harm, or make unusable any services, information, data, data storage system, or computer resource.
2. The use of computer related technology with the intent to "hack", "break into" or gain unauthorized access to any computer system, network, network resource, database, or data storage system regardless of who owns said system and regardless of the intent of said "break in" or "hacking."
3. To attempt to bypass or defeat any security device or system related to computer related technology.
4. The deliberate physical destruction of, or damage to, any computer related technology.
5. To use or cause another to use, any computer related technology for any purpose, which is inconsistent with or in non-compliance of applicable copyright laws.

LESSER VIOLATION

1. The deliberate use of computer related technology for any purpose that violates any individual school or MCSC rule or regulation.
2. The use of any computer related technology outside of or off school property for any purpose that would be considered to be a violation of a school rule or regulation if it had been committed on school property.

3. The deliberate use of computer related technology for any purpose contrary to the specific instructions of teachers, faculty or staff of the MCSC.
4. To access or use computer related technology in a manner not having the express permission and supervision of a teacher, faculty or staff member of the MCSC.
5. The use of computer related technology for the sole purpose of entertainment.
6. The use of computer related technology contrary to any and all posted rules or guidelines.
7. The unauthorized use of computer related technology for commercial purposes not specifically authorized by the school board or the superintendent.
8. The use of computer related technology and/or the use of MCSC-provided Internet access to transmit, upload, download, view or distribute pornography.
9. The use of computer related technology and/or the use of MCSC-provided Internet access to transmit, upload, download, view, or distribute any material that is not directly and specifically related to assigned and authorized educational purposes. For example, but not limited to, the downloading of audio, video and image files are prohibited unless specifically authorized for use in a related class.
10. The use of computer related technology for the purpose of plagiarism.
11. To share or allow others to make use of the student's passwords or other access control mechanisms or security appliances.
12. To share or allow access to computer related technology for or by any other person without the express authorization to do so.
13. The unauthorized use of computer related technology to access any email system not provided by the MCSC.
14. The unauthorized use of any "Instant Messaging" or similar services.
15. To misappropriate, or otherwise misuse or waste consumable supplies.
16. To misappropriate or otherwise misuse or waste any computer related technology resources.
17. To knowingly allow, promote, or otherwise assist, or cause any other person or persons to violate any provision of this policy.
18. The use of any computer related technology for the purposes of gambling.
19. The wired or wireless connection of any non-MCSC owned technology to any computer related technology without the express authorization of the MCSC Director of Technology or officially designated representative.
20. The use or installation of any non-MCSC owned software on any computer related technology.
21. Except during an emergency, the use of any MCSC provided classroom telephone by a student is prohibited. (An emergency is defined as a situation that represents a threat to the life, safety or well-being of a person).

Violations of the Acceptable Use Policy summarized above will be dealt with seriously. This summary document above shall not supersede the complete copy of the Acceptable Use Policy including definitions of terms, computer lab rules, and sanctions for violations at <http://www.mvsc.k12.in.us/AUPstudents.pdf>. Additionally, copies of the complete Acceptable Use Policy are available in the schools main office and the Administrative Services Center.

Discipline Guidelines:

VIOLATION	FIRST TIME	SECOND TIME	THIRD TIME
Acceptable Use Policy Serious Violation	Loss of computer related technology privileges for remainder of year, and permanent computer probation.		
Acceptable Use Policy-Lesser Violation	Detention	Detention; loss of computer related privileges for a minimum of one week	Loss of computer related privileges for remainder of the semester

TOBACCO POLICY

Tobacco products have been medically diagnosed as cancer causing agents that are life threatening. State law has determined that "A

person less than 18 years old commits a Class C Infraction if they purchase, accept or possess tobacco. The fine is up to \$500. Selling or distributing tobacco to a person less than 18 years old is a Class C Infraction. The person who sells or distributes the tobacco can be fined up to \$500. Any student under the age of 18 caught in possession of a tobacco product on school grounds will be subject to already existing school disciplinary procedures as well as being subject to being reported to the police as being in violation of the State Tobacco Laws. The police will issue that student a ticket, which will require an appearance with their parent(s) before the Merrillville Town Court and carry with it a possible monetary fine and/or a requirement to attend a smoking cessation clinic. In addition, dissolvable spitless tobacco products which contain lethal toxicity are also included in this policy.

Note: A student found to be in possession of a lighter or matches will be assigned a minimum of two Saturday Detentions.

TRESPASS AND VANDALISM

To help eliminate vandalism on school property, the Board of School Trustees has passed a resolution, which states:

“The buildings and their grounds are dedicated to the use and enjoyment of the young people of our community. They are for their use during daylight hours only. And they are closed to all persons from dusk to dawn unless attending an approved program.”

Damaged or unauthorized tampering with computers, telephones, or any other technology will be considered vandalism with appropriate disciplinary action applied.

“The use of motorized vehicles on school property is forbidden.”

Any person or persons found on school property during these restricted hours without approval of school officials will be arrested by the Merrillville Police and will be charged with violation of the trespass laws of the State of Indiana.

With respect to those individuals caught engaging in acts of vandalism, school officials will prosecute to the full extent of the law. In addition, parents are responsible for the intentional or willful or malicious act or acts of a minor in their custody. Indiana Code 31-5-10-1 provides the following:

“Respecting any minor under the age of eighteen (18) years, the parent or parents with whom such minor is living and having custody of such minor, shall be liable for the actual damages sustained but not exceeding the sum of seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750) plus the court costs of the action, to any person, firm, associations, corporation and the State of Indiana and its political subdivisions, including but not limited to cities and towns, for any and all damages purposely caused by the injury to or destruction of any property, real, personal, or mixed by the intentional or willful or malicious act or acts of such minor.” (Note: This does not include the liability of a parent or parents as exists under other laws of the State of Indiana.)

In addition, it is a misdemeanor for any person who enters or returns to school property to cause a disturbance or to interfere with school purposes. Law enforcement officials may remove a person who refuses to leave school property upon order of the principal, assistant principal, or teacher. It is also a misdemeanor to counsel or encourage or incite another person or persons to remain on the property for the purpose of interfering with the lawful use of such property. Citizens of Ross Township are asked to notify the police of any violation or suspected violation of the trespass or vandalism laws. Such information will be kept confidential by the Merrillville Police Department.

RIGHTS

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT OF 1974

On August 21, 1974, the United States Congress adopted an amendment to the General Education Provision Act called “Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974” to deal with student records. In a broad outline, this Act provides for the following:

1. The Act concerns the student records of both elementary and secondary schools.
2. The parent’s rights under this Act extend until the student is 18 years of age, or is enrolled in a post-high school institution; thereafter, only the student himself may exercise the rights.
3. Parents have a right to examine their children’s records at reasonable times.
4. The parent has a right to have a record corrected if it “is inaccurate, misleading, or is otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of students.”
5. A record must be kept with each student record showing who examined it, the date on which it was examined, and the purpose of the examination.
6. Certain persons may examine student records without a parent’s consent. These include school officials, including teachers who have “legitimate educational interests,” officials of other schools or school systems where a transfer is made, and certain representatives of the state and federal government with various limitations.

7. Any person may receive the records if the parents execute a written consent specifying the records to be released, the reasons for such release, and the person to whom they are to be released. A copy will be sent to the parents in such case, if requested. The parents may also request and receive a copy of any student record forwarded to another school or school system with a transfer.
8. A copy may also be furnished pursuant to a court order or subpoena, but only if the parents are given advance notice. The Board of School Trustees has adopted a policy implementing the provisions of this Act. A copy of this policy and the Act are on file and available for inspection at the office of the Superintendent of Schools and the principal's office of all school corporation schools.
9. This federal law requires strict confidentiality of students' privacy which will not allow us to share video images from our school video cameras with parents/or guardians.

POLICY STATEMENT FOR SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

It is the policy of the Merrillville Community School Corporation to provide a free and appropriate public education to each student with a disability within its jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability.

It is the intent of the school corporation to ensure that students who have a disability within the definition of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are identified, evaluated and provided with appropriate services. Students may be disabled under this policy even though they do not require services pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Due process rights of the students with disabilities and their parents under Section 504 will be enforced. The Superintendent or designee is the coordinator of Section 504 activities. The Superintendent or designee can be reached at 219-650-5300 or 6701 Delaware Street, Merrillville, IN 46410.

For this policy, a student who may need special services or programs within the intent of Section 504 is one who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity; or
- Has a record of such impairment; or
- Is regarded as having such impairment.

1. Compliance Plan for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The Compliance Plan serves students, parents, employees, applicants for employment and programs within the Merrillville Community School Corporation.

1. Merrillville Community School Corporation assures students, parents, applicants for employment, and employees that it will not discriminate against any individual.
2. The Superintendent or designee is the Section 504 compliance coordinator.
3. Parents are provided procedural safeguards which are included in the *Notice of Parental Rights*
4. An impartial hearing and appeal are provided upon request. Procedures are detailed in the *Notice of Parental Rights*.
5. Notice to students, parents, employees, and general public of non-discrimination assurances and parent/student rights and identification, evaluation and placement will be disseminated annually in the following manner:
 - a. Public Service announcement in local newspapers;
 - b. Announcement in local school system; and
 - c. Posted notice in each public school building

Additionally, the notice will be included in the Merrillville Community School Corporation professional handbook and disseminated to each principal. Notice of non-discrimination assurances in accordance with Section 504 shall be included in student/parent handbooks.

6. Merrillville Community School Corporation will conduct an extensive annual “child find” campaign with the goal to locate and identify all Section 504 qualified individuals with disabilities (ages 0 to 21) who reside within the participating school district boundaries.
7. Merrillville Community School Corporation will inform all students with disabilities or some other limitation and their parents or guardian of the district’s responsibilities and procedural safeguards under Section 504, as well as those under Indiana Special Education Regulations (Article 7) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

2. Grievance Procedure for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Merrillville Community School Corporation has established the following local grievance procedure to resolve complaints of discrimination arising under Section 504:

1. An alleged grievance under Section 504 must be filed in writing setting out the circumstances giving rise to such grievance.
2. Such claims must be made in writing and filed with the Superintendent or designee.
 1. Merrillville Community School Corporation
 2. 6701 Delaware Street, Merrillville, IN 46410
 3. PH: 219-650-5300 FX: 219-650-5320
 4. Email: superintendent@mvsc.k12.in.us
3. A hearing will be conducted according to the procedures outlined in the regulations based upon the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and due process rights that are afforded to the student and family who filed the grievance.
4. The Coordinator will appoint an impartial hearing officer who will conduct the hearing within a reasonable time after the request was received.
5. The coordinator shall give the parent, student, or employee reasonable advance notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing.
6. The hearing must be conducted by any impartial individual who is knowledgeable about Section 504 and who does not have a direct interest in the outcome of the hearing.
7. Merrillville Community School Corporation shall give the parent, student or employee full and fair opportunity to present evidence relevant to the issues raised. The parent, student, or employee may, at their own expense, be assisted or represented by individuals of their choice, including an attorney.
8. The impartial individual shall make his/her decision in writing within fifteen (15) days after the hearing.
9. The decision must be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing and shall include a summary of the evidence and reasons for the decision.

Revised and Presented: 02/07/2017

ADOPTED: 02/21/2017

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

It is the policy of the Merrillville Community School Corporation not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, marital status, national origin, limited English proficiency, age, handicap, or disability in its educational programs, activities, or employment policies as required by the Indiana Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Pay of 1973, Title IX (1972 Education Amendments), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American with Disabilities Act and any other applicable Federal or State nondiscrimination law.

Inquiries regarding compliance with Title IX, Section 504 and the American with Disabilities Act should be directed to the Superintendent of the Merrillville Community School Corporation, 6701 Delaware Street, Merrillville, IN 46410, 219-650-5300, superintendent@mvs.c.k12.in.us or to the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.

MERRILLVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION CIVILITY POLICY

(To be considered inclusive for harassment, bullying and use of profane language)

This policy requires mutual respect, civility and orderly conduct among MCSC students, parents, employees and the public. Civility does not deprive any person of his/her right to freedom of expression, but serves only to maintain, to the extent possible and reasonable, a safe, harassment-free workplace for students and staff.

In the interest of presenting adults as positive role models to the children of this school corporation, as well as the community, MCSC encourages positive communication and will not tolerate volatile or hostile actions and/or abusive language by any student, parent, guardian, employee or patron (here after known as "person").

Any person who disrupts or threatens to disrupt normal school and/or office operations; threatens the health and safety of anyone through harassment or bullying; willfully causes property damage; uses offensive language; or who otherwise establishes a continued pattern of unauthorized entry on school property, will be dealt with either according to student disciplinary procedures, or if an adult, will be asked to cease such behavior or be directed to leave school property.

If any person uses obscenities or speaks in an abusive manner, the administrator or employee to whom the remarks are directed will politely request that person to communicate in a courteous manner.

If corrective action is not taken by the person, the employee will verbally notify him/her that the meeting, conference or telephone conversation is terminated and will refer the person to the building principal or designee. For students, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken according to the school handbook¹. For adults, the Superintendent or designee will inform the person that he/she will not be allowed on school property for an amount of time commensurate with the violation of this policy.

Verbal harassment or disrespect targeting a student or employee on the basis of race, religion or handicap will not be tolerated. Any person claiming to have experienced such harassment shall follow the same reporting procedures set apart for sexual harassment (School Board Policy 3.42 III).

Bullying of students, either verbal or physical, shall not be tolerated. Any report of bullying shall be reported to a school administrator and investigated. Student disciplinary procedures shall be enforced. Any employee or student who knowingly files false charges against an employee or a student in an attempt to demean, harass, abuse or embarrass that individual shall be subject to sanctions for misconduct set forth in paragraph 5 of this policy.

¹ For employees, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken in accord with negotiated agreements.

Presented: 8/03/04

Adopted: 8/19/04

STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge receipt of and understand the contents of the Merrillville Intermediate School Student Handbook.

Signature of Student _____ Grade Level _____

Printed Name of Student _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian _____

Phone Number _____

E-Mail Address _____

Date _____

