

Merrillville Community School Corporation

Elementary Handbook

2016-2017

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Merrillville Community School Corporation Board of School Trustees

Thomas Bainbridge
Ofelia Gregoline

Mark Lucas

James Donohue
Linda Jonaitis

ADMINISTRATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Interim Superintendent Dr. Anthony Lux	650-5300
Assistant Superintendent Ms. Hilda Damianick	650-5300
Director of Secondary Education Ms. Lorri Covaciu, Ed.S	650-5300
Director of Elementary Education Ms. Kara Bonin	650-5300
Henry P. Fieler School Ms. Christine Waugh, Principal	650-5301
Homer Iddings School Ms. Sandra Hillan, Principal	650-5302
Edgar Miller School Ms. Jennifer Griffin, Principal	650-5303
Jonas E. Salk School Ms. Kathy Sapyta, Principal	650-5304
John Wood School Ms. Teri Crussen, Principal	650-5305

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 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. Students find the content of their subjects to be meaningful and applicable to the next stage of their development as 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.

MERRILLVILLE COMMUNITY 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 FOR STUDENTS, PARENTS, and COMMUNITY

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 attitude toward self.
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 structure and to utilize leisure time.

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.

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 extracurricular areas.

SECTION I

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

General Education

The curriculum is aligned with academic standards and provides meaningful instruction in the areas of reading, spelling, handwriting, language, mathematics, social studies, science, health, music, art, and physical education. Through technology students are given opportunities to expand their skills using Word Processing, Database, Spreadsheet, Keyboarding, Internet, and Multi-Media.

Special Education

Through our affiliation with support agencies including the Northwest Indiana Special Education Cooperative, special education and other related services are provided to school age children who have special needs. Serious academic problems will first be addressed by a Response to Intervention Plan. This individualized plan will be implemented and monitored closely for a period of time before a referral for special education services is initiated. Parents, teachers, other school personnel, or the student can initiate a referral by consulting with the building principal.

English Learners (EL)

These services are offered to qualifying students in grades K-12 to improve proficiency in the listening, speaking, reading and writing of English. Certified teachers supervise these services.

Title I/Remedial Reading

The Title I/Remedial Reading program supports the regular classroom program in each building. Teachers identify students with reading problems and provide intensive instruction to correct the problems as early as possible.

Media Centers

The elementary media centers provide an opportunity to expand the child's world through reading, computers, and audio-visual materials. These centers are striving to provide instruction in information retrieval and study skills that benefit the students throughout their school experience and life. It is important that students have a specific time at home to read for at least 20 minutes every day.

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 reading program. All students are required to read and pass tests to accumulate a certain number of points (see below). 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:

2nd Grade	200+ or other books at the discretion of the teacher
3rd Grade	300+
4th Grade	400+

** 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 in grades 2nd-4th must accumulate 10 points per trimester. Each trimester these points will reset to 0. Books read over the summer months will count toward the first trimester.

*All 2nd grade students will begin receiving grades during the second trimester, even though they will be reading and testing in their classrooms during the first trimester.

A student's final testing percentage of the SRC 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.

Classwork

Students who are absent or suspended are required to make up all classwork. If the absence is excused, full credit will be given. It is the student's responsibility to go to the teacher to get assignments. If the student is absent for a number of consecutive days, parents should contact the school office and make arrangements to pick up the assignments.

If a student is found being dishonest in any way, immediate action will be taken. Cheating on any test or other assignment will result in an "F" for that test or assignment.

Grading

Ongoing evaluation of student work and activities provides information to the student and parent about progress and growth toward course objectives. It identifies student strengths, weaknesses, and direction for improvement.

The grading scale for grades 3 and 4 is:

A - Excellent	90%-100%
B - Good	80%-89%
C - Average	70%-79%
D - Below Average	60%-69%
F - Failing	59% and below
P - Passing	
NP - Not Passing	

The four point grading scale for grades 1 and 2 is:

A - Excellent	90%-100%
B - Good	80%-89%
C - Average	70%-79%
NP -Not Passing	69% and below

For Social Studies and Science/Health, the grading scale is:

P - Passing	70% and above
NP - Not Passing	69% and below

Plus and minus may be used to indicate minor variations. Report card grades issued by teachers may include evaluation of the quality of written assignments, class participation, project work, and similar academic activities as well as test results.

Report Cards/Progress Reports

Report cards are issued following the end of each trimester. There are six grading periods for grades K-4. Progress reports will be issued at the end of each 1st, 3rd, and 5th grading periods. Parents can also use the RDS Parent Access to monitor their child's progress.

Kindergarten students receive a report card which uses a check list format instead of grades. The report card lists the required academic standards and personal development skills necessary for success in kindergarten. Student progress is noted on the card each grading period.

Parent-Teacher conferences for all students in grades K-4 are scheduled once each year. Parents or teachers may request additional conferences as necessary.

Honor Roll

Students in grades 3 and 4 may be placed on the Honor Roll at the close of each grading period. The Honor Roll is divided into two segments: the A Honor Roll for all A's, and the A/B Honor Roll for students with A's & B's or all B's. Plus (+) and minus (-) designations count the same as the letter grade for Honor Roll purposes. Honor Roll students must have "P" in Science/Health and Social Studies and well as "S" or "E" in the areas of Art, Music, Physical Education, and Personal Development. Honor Roll Students must have completed their Read to Succeed requirements for each grading period.

Promotion, Retention, and Assignment

Most students are promoted to the next grade level at the end of the school year. However, there are a few students who need additional time and experience to be successful at the next level. The parents of these students will meet with the classroom teacher and/or the principal to discuss the retention decision. This decision may be appealed to the Director of Elementary Curriculum and Instruction. If desired, the Superintendent and the Board of School Trustees may review the decision. An assignment indicates reservation regarding the ability of the student to successfully complete expected work at the next grade level. The receiving teacher and the principal will monitor an assigned student's progress during the succeeding year. Reassignment to the previous grade level is possible if progress is unsatisfactory. Parents will be notified prior to reassignment to the previous grade level.

Testing Programs

Assessment of student achievement is an important part of the teaching and learning process. Given at the beginning of the year, assessments help teachers know where to begin and/or identify areas of remediation that must be addressed. Frequent assessments during the year help teachers and students see the progress of learning and help identify problematic areas that need more help or time. Given at the completion of instruction, assessments tell how much has been learned by the end of a unit, by mid-trimester, or by the end of the year. They provide the basis for making judgments on the grades to assign each student.

In addition to the regular classroom assessments, the following assessments are given at specific grade levels to evaluate systemwide instructional programs.

ACUITY

Acuity is computerized assessment designed to improve student achievement in the areas of Reading/Language Arts, Math, and Science. This system diagnoses student strengths and weaknesses relative to state standards. Reports recommend specific actions to improve academic progress and assign engaging, personalized instructional activities to meet individual or class results. Acuity will be used with students in Grades 3 and 4.

ISTEP+

Indiana has mandated a statewide testing program entitled ISTEP+ (Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress). ISTEP+ is given statewide to all students in Grades 3 and 4 in the spring. This test assesses students' abilities in English/Language Arts and Mathematics at Grade 3 and English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science at Grade 4. The test format includes both multiple choice and writing activities.

I-READ (Indiana Reading Evaluation and Determination)

Public Law 109 requires the evaluation of reading skills for students in grade 3 beginning in the Spring of 2012. This legislation was created to ensure that all students can read proficiently before moving on to grade 4. Based on the Indiana Academic Standards, IREAD-3 is a summative assessment that measures foundational reading skills. It is comprised of 3 sessions (40 questions) which may be administered in one/two days. Under normal circumstances, students not passing this assessment are required to be retained in grade 3.

Attendance

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 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 notify the office to report their child's absence prior to the start of the school day. Notes written upon their return should include student name, teacher, grade, exact nature of illness or other reason for absence, date of absence, and parent/guardian signature. Without a parent phone call or note, the student will be considered truant. The following shall be considered valid reasons for student absences:

- A. Personal illness (followed by a doctor's note after 5th absence)
- B. Death in the immediate family
- C. Court attendance required by legal authorities
- D. Dental and medical appointments (must be arranged in advance)
- E. Religious holiday
- F. Other emergency or unusual circumstances as approved by a building administrator

The Merrillville Community School Corporation, however, does recognize that vacations and out-of-town trips do not always coincide with school vacations. However, we strongly recommend that you make every effort to coincide your vacations around the school calendar. In order to be fair to both the school and the pupils involved, parents desiring to have their children absent from school for family visitations or 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 assessed for the absence. If work is not made-up, penalties will be assessed and these penalties could include failing marks.
5. Parents are urged not to remove their child/children for a planned absence 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.

When picking up a child early from school for an appointment, parents must send a note indicating the time they will be picking up their child. When the adult arrives at school, we will call the child down to the office. This allows for maximum learning to take place. Please plan accordingly.

Absences

1. A notification will be sent to parents after 5 unexcused/nonexempt days of absences with a copy of the Indiana Compulsory Law and information concerning the truancy diversion program, the C.A.P.S. (Consistent Attendance Promotes Success) program, collaboration between the Merrillville Town Court and Merrillville Schools.
2. After 9 unexcused/nonexempt absences a thorough review of your child's attendance, along with a review of previous attempts to rectify this problem will be considered before sending a notification to you stating that a citation will be sent to you with a date to appear in Merrillville Town Court.
3. Students who have 10 or more unexcused/nonexempt absences are in violation of the Indiana Compulsory attendance law and will be referred to the Merrillville Truancy Town Court. 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 Protective Services.

Tardies

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. The following should be done upon the student's arrival to school:

1. Students must first report to the office.
2. A tardy slip will be issued before being admitted to class.
3. After 3 tardies in a month, 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.
4. After the 5th tardy, a notice will be sent home citing the record of tardies to remind parents the importance of students arriving to school on time.
5. After 9 tardies, a notice will be sent home stating that the child has been excessively tardy and the parent will be contacted by the school social worker to address this issue.
6. If the above interventions are not effective in remedying the problem and chronic tardies persist, a referral

will be made to the Merrillville Town Truancy Court.

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.

Truancy

A student is considered truant if:

- A. He/she is absent from school without the permission of his/her parents
- B. He/she leaves school during the day without permission.
- C. 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)

Referrals to Attendance Officer

A notice will be sent to parents after 5 absences and a copy of the letter will be forwarded to the MCSC attendance officer and social services personnel assigned to the student's building. A decision to refer a case to the court will be made through the MCSC attendance officer and the building administrator. A referral to the MCSC attendance officer for investigation will be recommended after 9 absences.

SECTION II

CONDUCT and DISCIPLINE POLICIES

PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports)

All the Merrillville elementary schools use a framework called the PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) Program. PBIS is a research-based program dedicated to implementing positive behavior interventions that support children in the school setting. The PBIS framework positively impacts children in the areas of behavior, social-emotional relations, and academic achievement. By designing and implementing positive interventions in these areas, teachers and children maximize instructional opportunities and achieve academic success. There are three expectations or rules everyone in the elementary schools follows:

1. Be Respectful
2. Be Responsible
3. Be Safe

Another important component of the program is the use of consistent, positive reinforcements to celebrate students' successes. Each school has a rewards system in place to acknowledge students when they meet expectations. There are also school-wide rewards and celebrations that are built into the program to celebrate everyone's good behavior.

When students do not meet expectations, there are consequences and interventions which may include recess, lunch, or after school detentions, conferences with parents and students, community service, and other logical consequences. Some students may also be placed into a mentoring program, or a social worker group to provide additional support. Additionally, some students may benefit from their own individualized behavior plan to support positive behavior at school.

5.50 Rights, Responsibilities, and Regulations Concerning School Behavior for Students

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 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 I.C. 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.

Grounds for Suspension and/or Expulsion

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 behaviors 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. Self-defense or reasonable belief that it was necessary to protect some other person does not, however, constitute a violation of this provision.
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 action 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 a like" weapon.
18. Knowingly possessing or using on school grounds during school hours an electronic paging device or a handheld portable telephone 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 violate 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 pre-

scribed 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 control 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.35-41-1-5 or a destructive device. The student will be allowed to return to school at the beginning of the first school trimester 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 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 over pressure 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 by 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.

Consequences for Severely Disruptive Behaviors

Students exhibiting severely disruptive behaviors will be issued consequences in compliance with the progressive discipline plan that corresponds to the degree of severity as well as the number of occurrences for the infraction(s) committed.

<u>1st time</u>	<u>2nd time</u>	<u>3rd time</u>
1-2 in school suspensions	1-2 in school suspensions	1-2 in school suspensions
or	or	or
1-3 out-of-school suspensions	1-5 out-of-school suspensions	3-5 out of school suspensions

8.96 Criminal Gangs and Criminal Gang Activity in Schools

The Board of School Trustees of the Merrillville Community School Corporation prohibits gang activity and similar destructive or illegal group behavior on school property, or school buses, and/or at school-sponsored functions. The Board prohibits reprisal or retaliation against individuals who report gang activity and similar destructive or illegal group behavior. The Board further prohibits reprisal or retaliation of victims, witnesses, bystanders, or other people with reliable information about an act of gang activity and similar destructive or illegal group behavior.

The following definitions apply to this policy:

Criminal Gang means a group with at least three (3) members that specifically:

1. Either
 - a. Promotes, sponsors, or assists in; or
 - b. Participates in; or
2. Requires as condition of membership or continued membership the commission of a felony or an act that would be a felony if committed by an adult or the offense of battery.

Gang activity means a student who knowingly or intentionally actively participates in a criminal gang, or a student who knowingly or intentionally solicits, recruits, entices, or intimidates another individual to join a criminal gang.

Per state law, a school employee shall report any incidence of suspected criminal gang activity, criminal gang intimidation, or criminal gang recruitment to the principal and the director of security. The principal and the director of security may take appropriate action to maintain a safe and secure school environment, including providing appropriate intervention services. Appropriate consequences and remedial actions are those that take into consideration the severity of the offenses and consider both the developmental ages of the student offenders and the students' histories of inappropriate behaviors per the code of conduct.

Any corporation and school employee who promptly reports an incident of suspected gang activity and who makes this report in compliance with the school corporation procedures is immune for a cause of action for damages arising from any failure to remedy the reported incident.

The principal or designee shall conduct a thorough and complete investigation for each report of suspected gang activity. The investigation shall be initiated by the principal or the principal's designee within one school day of the report of the incident. The principal may appoint additional personnel and request the assistance of law enforcement

to assist in the investigation. The investigation shall be completed and the written findings submitted to the principal; as soon as possible, but not later than five school days from the date of the report of the alleged incident of criminal gang activity.

The principal shall take any appropriate disciplinary actions based upon the findings of the investigation, in accordance with the code of conduct. The superintendent of the school corporation is authorized to define the range of ways in which school staff and the principal or the principal's designee shall respond once an incident of criminal gang activity is confirmed, according to the code of conduct. Consequences for a student who engages in gang activity may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

The principal shall provide the parents of the students who were investigated with information about the investigation. The information to be provided to parents includes the nature of the investigation, whether the corporation found evidence of criminal gang activity, and whether consequences were imposed or services provided to address the activity. This information is to be provided in an expedited manner.

As appropriate to the investigation findings, the principal also shall provide intervention and/or relevant support services. The principal shall inform the parents of all student involved in the alleged incidents and discuss the availability of counseling and other intervention services.

Support services may include one or more of the following:

1. Gang awareness education that shows promise of effectiveness based on research. The gang awareness education information should be revised and updated regularly to reflect current trends in gang and gang-like activity.
2. Culturally and/or linguistically appropriate services/supports for parents and families.
3. Counseling coupled with mentoring for students and their families.
4. Community and faith-based organizations and civic groups.
5. Viable, sustainable after-school programs developed in collaboration with other stakeholders.
6. Job training and employment opportunities as both a deterrent to gang involvement and an incentive to leave gang involvement.
7. School sanctioned/facilitated extra-curricular activities.

The principal shall submit the report to the superintendent of the school corporation within ten (10) school days of the completion of the investigation. The superintendent or his/her designee shall report the results of each investigation to the School Board on a quarterly basis during regularly scheduled board meetings.

Each school within the school corporation shall record the number of investigations disposed of internally and the number of cases referred to local law enforcement, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, and gender. Each school shall report this information to the school corporation superintendent who shall submit a written report to the Indiana Department of Education by June 2 of each year.

This policy shall be annually disseminated to all parents who have children enrolled in a school with the school corporation. Notice of this policy must be published in student handbooks and all other publications of the school corporation that set forth the rules and procedures for the schools within the school corporation.

School officials are encouraged to collaborate with stakeholders to provide gang prevention and intervention services and programs, including but not limited to:

1. Providing training for staff and teachers on gang prevention and intervention resources within a jurisdiction on a periodic basis. The gang awareness information should be revised and updated regularly to reflect current trends in gang activity.
2. Create formalized collaboration plans between local school administration and community based prevention and intervention providers (possibly using the existing County Safe School Commissions as points of contact). The formalized collaborations should make effective, coordinated, and maximized use of federal funding a priority.
3. Coordinate resources and funding opportunities to support gang prevention and intervention activities.
4. Consider integrating the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) Program into curricula.

LEGAL REFERENCE: IC 20-26-18
 IC20-33-9-10.5
 IC 35-45-9-1

Presented: June 7, 2016
Adopter: June 21, 2016

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. Suspended students are required to make-up their work. Classroom assignments/tests will be provided by the teacher. 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 receives. 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 charge(s);
 - b. if the charges are denied, a summary of the evidence; and
 - c. the student will be provided an opportunity to explain the 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).

Other Remedies

The Superintendent, Principal, any administrative personnel or any teacher of the school corporation shall be authorized to take any action in connection with student behavior, in addition to the actions specifically provided in this policy, reasonably desirable or necessary to help any student, to further school purposes, or to prevent an interference therewith, such action may include the following:

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 schoolwork or for counseling,
6. Restriction of extracurricular activity,
7. Assignment by the Principal of:
 - a. A special course of study
 - b. An alternative educational program; or
 - c. An alternative school
8. Removal of a student from school sponsored transportation,
9. Referral to the juvenile court having jurisdiction over the student

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.

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, and/or
 - 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 second semester of any school year must be reviewed prior to the beginning of the second semester. Any expulsion that will remain in effect during the first semester 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 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 charges, a summary of the evidence against the student; and (3) 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 administrator 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 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.

5.50A Bullying

1. Bullying committed by students toward other students is strictly prohibited. Engaging in bullying conduct described in this rule by use of data or computer software that is accessed through any computer, any computer system, or any computer network is also prohibited.
2. For purposes of this rule, bullying is defined as overt, unwanted, repeated acts or gestures, including verbal or written communications or images transmitted in any manner including electronically or digitally, physical acts committed, aggression, or any other similar behaviors that are committed by a student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the targeted student and create for the targeted student an objectively hostile school environment that:
 - a. places the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to the targeted student's person or property;
 - b. has a substantially detrimental effect on the targeted student's physical or mental health;
 - c. has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's academic performance; or
 - d. has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, and privileges provided by the school.
3. This rule may be applied regardless of the physical location of the bullying behavior when a student committing bullying behavior and the targeted student attend a school within the school corporation and disciplinary action is reasonably necessary to avoid substantial interference with school discipline or prevent an unreasonable threat to the rights of other students to a safe and peaceful learning environment.
4. Any student or parent who has knowledge of conduct in violation of this rule or any student who feels he/she has been bullied in violation of this rule should immediately report the conduct to the School Principal who has responsibility for all investigations of student misconduct including bullying. A student or parent may also report the conduct to a teacher or counselor who will be responsible for notifying the School Principal. This report may be made anonymously.
5. The School Principal shall investigate all reports of bullying made pursuant to the provisions of this rule. Such investigation must include any action or appropriate responses that may be taken immediately to address the bullying conduct wherever it takes place. The parents of the bully and the targeted student(s) shall be notified on a regular, periodic basis of the progress and the findings of the investigation and of any remedial action that has been taken.
6. The School Principal will be responsible for working with the school counselors and other community resources to provide information and/or follow-up services to support the targeted student and to educate the student engaging in bullying behavior on the effects of bullying and the prevention of bullying. In addition, the school administrator and school counselors will be responsible for determining if the bullying behavior is a violation of law required to be reported to law enforcement under Indiana law based upon their reasonable belief. Such determination should be made as soon as possible and once this determination is made, the report should be made immediately to law enforcement.
7. False reporting of bullying conduct as defined in this rule by a student shall be considered a violation of this rule and will result in any appropriate disciplinary action or sanctions if the investigation of the report finds it to be false.
8. A violation of this rule prohibiting bullying may result in any appropriate disciplinary action or sanction, including suspension and/or expulsion.
9. Failure by a school employee who has a responsibility to report bullying or investigate bullying or any other duty under this rule to carry out such responsibility or duty will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment with the school corporation.
10. 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 bullying.
11. Educational outreach and training will be provided to school personnel, parents, and students concerning the identification, prevention, and intervention in bullying.
12. 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.
13. The Superintendent or designee will be responsible for developing detailed administrative procedures consistent with the Indiana Department of Education guidelines for the implementation of the provisions of this

rule.

This Board Policy 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.

SECTION III **NON-ACADEMIC INFORMATION**

School Day

The school day for students in kindergarten and grades 1-4 begins at 7:55 A.M. and ends at 2:25 P.M. Students should not arrive before 7:45 A.M. or later than 7:55 A.M. Students getting a ride home after school must be picked up at 2:25 P.M. Any student not picked up by 2:40 P.M. will be taken to daycare at the parents' expense. Elementary students will be dismissed at 1:25 every Thursday for Professional Development. This begins the first Thursday after Labor Day.

Change in Start or End of School Day

Should some unusual situation force a late start or early dismissal of school, please instruct your child where to go if you will not be at home. An Emergency School Closing form is provided at the start of the school year. This should be completed and returned to the school office as soon as possible. In the event of an emergency or severe weather, early dismissals or school closings will be reported on local radio stations, Chicago radio stations, TV stations, and posted at www.cancellations.com and emergencyclosings.com. Families may also receive an automated phone message.

Recess

Fresh air and outdoor exercise are important to strong, healthy children. Therefore, we urge parents to see that children are suitably dressed with necessary boots, hats, gloves, etc., so that they may play outside during the winter months. Students will remain indoors when the "real feel" temperature is 15 degrees or less. Children who are ill should be kept at home. Requests to stay inside during recess for more than 3 days must be accompanied by a note from the doctor.

Dress Code

The learning environment must focus 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:

1. Clothes must be of a length and size that is safe for movement in all settings. Pants that drag on the floor may not be worn. Skirts and shorts above the finger length may not be worn. Skirts may not have slits that extend beyond finger length.
2. Clothes may not be worn that are sheer, see-through, expose the midriff, or expose underwear.
3. Pants must fit at the waist or a belt must be worn to avoid them from falling.
4. Any clothing with words or pictures that promotes violence, alcohol, drugs, tobacco, vulgarities, or is distracting to other students in the classroom is prohibited.
5. All students are required to wear or bring tie or Velcro gym shoes (full shoes - not backless or open-toed) and slacks, shorts, or sweats on those school days which include physical education.
6. Any clothing or accessories such as make-up, nails, colored hair, or hats, etc. that causes distraction or interferes with the educational process are inappropriate for school.
7. For the safety of students, flip-flops or other similar footwear are not allowed on the playground equipment.

Violations of the dress code will result in being required to change clothing. Repeated offenses for dress code violations may result in a parent conference, detention, or suspension.

Transportation

All students in grades K-4 are provided with free transportation to and from school. Students are expected to ride only the school bus to which they have been assigned. However, a student needing to go home in a manner different than usual, must bring a note from his/her parent. This note should be approved by the principal. Phone calls to

the school to make transportation changes must be received before 1:00 p.m.

Transporting children is of much concern to us. Doing so safely is of primary importance, for your child is precious both to you and to us. It must be remembered that the bus driver's job is one of great responsibility and he/she needs the complete cooperation of the passengers for safety's sake. The school bus driver has control over the children on the bus just as the teacher has in the classroom.

It is important for the parents and guardians of a school child to be aware of the general rules for all children. The rules are as follows:

1. Students must follow all school rules and behave appropriately while waiting for the school bus. The student shall be waiting at his/her boarding station 5 minutes before the bus is expected to arrive. The bus will not be able to return for a child if he/she misses the bus.
2. Students must remain sitting in their assigned seat the entire ride.
3. Students must keep their hands, feet, and other objects to themselves. Student must use appropriate language and speak softly and kindly.
4. Students shall not tease, scuffle or make loud noises while on the bus.
5. Students are not allowed to open windows or doors unless directed by the driver.
6. No student shall enter or leave the bus until it has come to a full stop.

Consequences for bus rules violations are as follows and will be based on a leveled system as described below:

Level 1: Behaviors include, but are not limited to: Out of seat, shouting or yelling, bothering others, eating on the bus, etc.

Level 2: Behaviors include, but are not limited to: Non-compliance to adult direction after repeated warnings (disrespect), inappropriate language or gestures, verbal harassment, name calling/teasing, physical confrontation-no injury, theft (minor), etc.

Level 3: Behaviors include, but are not limited to: Aggressive behaviors/fighting, sexual harassment, severe defiance of authority, possession/use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, weapons, continual/extreme harassment (bullying), theft (major) or vandalism, etc.

Consequences for Level 1 Referrals:

Level 1 (1st and 2nd referrals): The driver will call parent, discuss the issue, and give the child a warning. It is hoped that this will correct the problem.

Level 1 (3rd referral): The driver will call the parent and the student will receive 1 day of bus suspension.

Level 1 (4th referral): The driver will call the parent and the student will receive 2 days of bus suspension.

Level 1 (5th referral): The principal will call the parent and the student will receive 3 days of bus suspension.

Level 1 (6th referral): The driver and the principal will meet with the parent and the student. The number of days of bus suspension will be determined by the principal at this meeting.

Consequences for Level 2 Referrals:

Level 2 (1st referral): The driver will call the parent, discuss the issue, and give the child a warning.

Level 2 (2nd referral): The driver will call the parent and the child will receive 1 day of bus suspension.

Level 2 (3rd referral): The driver will call the parent and the child will receive 2 days of bus suspension.

Level 2 (4th referral): The principal will call the parent and the child will receive 3 days of bus suspension.

Level 2 (5th referral): The driver and the principal will meet with the parent and the student. The number of days of bus suspension will be determined by the principal at this meeting.

Consequences for Level 3 Referrals:

Level 3 referrals will automatically be referred to the principal. The principal will determine the number of days of bus suspension.

Automatic Suspension or Serious Clause:

In cases that are unusual, deviation from this plan will be determined by the administration. Such examples may include, but would not be limited to, a child exiting the bus through the emergency door, physically interfering with the driver's ability to control the bus, throwing objects out of the windows, etc.

Missing the bus or being denied the privilege of riding the bus is not a legitimate reason for being absent from school. In these cases, it is the responsibility of the parent to see that his/her child gets to school by some other means.

Food Services

Schools offer students a hot nutritious, well-balanced meal program (breakfast and lunch) at a reasonable cost. Menus are available from each school and on the school web site.

The Merrillville Schools use a computerized point of sale that makes the meal experience easier and more convenient for students and parents. This system can be accessed at SendMoneyToSchool.Com. Students can also buy complete lunch for \$2.10 and a complete breakfast for \$1.50 or just milk for \$.40. Every student has an account with the cafeteria. You will need your child's I.D. number to set up the account and make deposits using a credit or debit card. The funds will be added to the account within 20 minutes. This is the safest and easiest way to ensure that your child's lunch money is being used for lunch. You may put as much money as you wish into your child's account. The computer will keep track of your child's transactions and balance. When your child's account becomes low you will be notified with a note and/or phone call to your home. This system keeps children from forgetting their money and eliminates the need for having money every day. Your child's account will only be debited when your child makes a purchase.

Money or checks sent to school should be placed in an envelope with the student's name, teacher's name, and the amount enclosed. The envelope should also indicate how much of the money is to be used for meals, milk or extra purchases. Checks should be made out to the Merrillville Community School Corporation with your driver's license number included in the memo portion of the check. All students in the school will have an I.D. card. Any balance left on the account will carry over to the next year.

Merrillville Schools participate in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. Children from households that meet the Federal Income Guidelines are eligible for free meals or reduced price meals. If a reduced student meets the eligibility guidelines he/she will be eligible for a no cost breakfast and lunch. Parents are encouraged to complete the free and reduced lunch application at any time of the year. Students on the Free and Reduced Lunch and Breakfast Programs will also have an account with the cafeteria. Only the cafeteria manager or the food service director's office can identify the paid, free or reduced lunch and breakfast students.

The National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs are subsidized by the U.S.D.A. with cash reimbursements and food commodities. The U.S.D.A. has taken a stand against students charging meals. As a result, the Merrillville elementary schools will limit students' charges to \$6.30. After a student has charged \$6.30, no further charges for lunch or breakfast will be allowed until all past charges have been paid.

Charging of meals should only be done in an emergency and is strongly discouraged. Should a student need a charge, it should be repaid immediately. Because we do not want any child to go without a lunch, when a student reaches the charge limit of \$6.30, the cafeteria will provide that student with an alternate meal for a \$.60 charge.

Birthday Treats

To limit the loss of instructional time, student birthday treats will be distributed to students during the lunch period in the cafeteria. No homemade snacks will be distributed to Merrillville students. All snacks must meet the USDA smart snacks requirements. Information on smart snack treats are available in the school office. Individual, pre-packaged treats are required. Flowers, balloons, party hats, etc. will not be permitted.

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. Principals, nurses, and office personnel are the only people who have the authority to send students home for apparent sickness and /or injury. The nurse should not be used as a personal physician and should be utilized 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 (exclude until diarrhea is gone)
3. Fifth Disease (may be excluded if fever persists)
4. Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease*
5. Herpes Zoster (Shingles)*
6. Hepatis A*
7. Impetigo
8. Infectious Mononucleosis
9. Measles (Rubeola)*
10. Meningitis - bacterial and viral*
11. Mumps (Infectious Parotitis)*
12. Pediculosis Capitis (Lice) (student with pediculosis (head lice) may return to school when the hair is free from active lice)

13. Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
14. Pinworm (Enterobiasis) (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 treatment and fever free for 24 hours)
19. Staphylococcal Infections, including MRSA*
20. Streptococcal Infections (may return after 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. Temperatures should be taken without the use of a fever reducing medication.
22. Tinea Capitis (Ringworm of the scalp)*
23. Undiagnosed skin condition*
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 not limited to: cardiac or heart conditions, orthopedic problems (including conditions involving a splint, cast, crutches or use of a wheelchair 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 until medically released.

Merrillville Community School Corporation Medication Policy

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. If the medication is to be terminated prior to the date on the prescription, the written and dated consent of withdrawal of consent of the parent is required.
5. 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 medication administered as directed or ordered.
6. 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 medicine 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 student in 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 the 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 has 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.
 - d. The student is authorized to possess and self-administer the prescribed medication.

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 are allowed and must have ingredients clearly listed on the label in order to be served to students in the Merrillville Community School Corporation.

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 student suspected of having a hearing problem.

Parents will be notified of any problem identified during the above screenings by 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. All 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 current immunization requirements:

Pre-K/3 to 5 years old:	3 Hepatitis B 4 DTaP 3 Polio	1 MMR 1 Varicella
Kindergarten:	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 10	3 Hepatitis B 5 DTaP 4 Polio	2 MMR 2 Varicella 1 Tdap (Tetanus & Pertussis) 1 MCV 4
* All above immunizations are required prior to entering 6th grade.		
Grades 11 & 12	3 Hepatitis B 5 DTaP 4 Polio	2 MMR 2 Varicella 1 Tdap (Tetanus & Pertussis) 2 MCV4 (Meningoccal)*

Hepatitis B: Two doses alternative adolescent schedule (Recombivax HB given at age 11-15 yrs. x2 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 birth-

day and doses are all IPV or all OPV.

*The 4th dose of Polio vaccine must be administered on or after the fourth birthday. This applies to K, 1st, and 2nd grades for.

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.

Tdap: A Tdap booster can be given as early as 1 year after TD vaccination.

MCV4*: One dose is required for grades 6-10. Two doses are recommended for grades 11 & 12. Individuals who receive dose 1 after their 16th birthday only need 1 dose to be up-to-date.

2. 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.
3. Kindergarten students will not be allowed to attend school until the required immunization records are submitted to the school authorities.
4. 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 schedule 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.
5. 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 Center of Disease Control.

Emergency Drills

Schools practice emergency drills on a regular basis. Fire drills are conducted once each month. Severe weather drills and lock-down drills are conducted at least twice per school year. The Merrillville Community School Corporation also has a written district-wide Crisis Guide. This guide assists administration and staff in the event that one of our schools should experience an incident requiring emergency guidelines to be followed.

Field Trips/Chaperones

During the course of the school year, parents may be called upon to chaperone class field trips. All adults volunteering to assist with this responsibility should strictly follow the chaperone guidelines below:

1. You are responsible for the children in your group. It is important that you assume responsibility. Do not wait for teachers to correct the students. Assume appropriate parental discipline methods.
2. Control student behavior from the time they leave school until they return, requiring appropriate behavior on the bus to and from the field trip site. Assist in keeping the students seated on the bus.
3. Always stay together, especially in restrooms. Wait outside the door when necessary.
4. Support the goals and decisions of the teachers. If students have been assigned a task, assist them toward its successful completion. When a student misbehaves, encourage the student to understand the problem and correct the behavior.
5. Notify the teacher of anyone in the group who constantly misbehaves or who is injured or too ill to remain with your group.
6. Watch the time and return your group on time for departure.
7. Do not smoke, drink alcoholic beverages, or use profanity while on the field trip. Cell phones should not be used during a field trip except in the case of an emergency.
8. Only students in the class for which the field trip is planned can participate in the field trip. Other children, including preschoolers, are not permitted to go on these trips.
9. Parents/Guardians are invited to be chaperones--not cousins, brothers, uncles, or other relatives. Requests for an exception should be made directly to the principal with the reasons for such a request.
10. A criminal background check must be completed before any adult can chaperone a school trip.

School and Family Support Services

The School and Family Support Services Program is made up of counseling professionals who are able to provide a variety of services to children, families, and school personnel. In cooperation with the home, school, and community, the Support Worker provides greater opportunities for children to successfully meet their fullest potential.

School Visitation

The Merrillville Community School Corporation welcomes visits to school by parent/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 be arranged in advance with the building principal when possible.
2. Every visitor to a school must register at the school office and 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. Any person who does not register with the school office is on school property illegally and they will be asked to identify themselves properly, get a Visitor's Pass, or leave the school's grounds.
5. Use of cell phones is prohibited during the instructional day.

Classroom Visitation

1. Visits to classrooms are to be arranged in advance with the teacher and/or building principal.
2. Visits shall be limited to adult visitors to minimize classroom disruption.
3. Visits shall be limited to one hour per teacher per visit unless the teacher feels a longer visit is warranted.
4. Visitors should arrive between classes or class activities so their entry will be as unobtrusive as possible.
5. It is inappropriate for visitors to speak out, make statements or ask questions of the students or teacher during a visit.
6. Visitors who wish to discuss their visit or any issue with the teacher should make an appointment to meet during non-class time.
7. Visitors other than parents/guardians must have written permission from the parents/guardians before visiting the classroom.
8. Visitors shall sign a confidentiality agreement before an observation.

Lunch Visitation

On occasion, parents may eat lunch with their child in the cafeteria. Procedures for lunch visitation are as follows:

1. Visitors must register at the school office and obtain a Visitor's Pass.
2. Lunch visitors are asked to visit only the cafeteria.
3. Visitors who wish to discuss their visit or any issue with the teacher or principal, should make an appointment to meet during non-class time.

School Safety/Security

In order to maintain a safe and orderly environment for students and staff, video cameras have been installed at the main entrances to the buildings and on all school buses. Periodically administrators or selected personnel shall be required to review various incidents that occur during the school year. To ensure student privacy and confidentiality, only individuals directly involved with the incident are authorized to review these video tapes. In addition, security doors are also in place at the main entrance area of each school. Visitors are required to sign-in at the school office and obtain a visitor's pass.

The Merrillville Community School Corporation has a written district-wide School Crisis Guide. This guide assists administration and staff in the event that one of our schools should experience an incident requiring emergency guidelines to be followed.

To create a safer building for all children, we need your cooperation in following a few safety rules:

1. If you would like to go to your child's classroom for any reason, we ask that you make special arrangements in advance with your child's teacher.
2. If you are dropping something off for your child, office personnel will make sure that the item gets to your child.
3. If you have a message for your child, office personnel will make sure that the message gets to your child.
4. If you need to see your child for some reason and it's something with which the office cannot help you, we ask that you wait in the office where we will ask the teacher to send your child.
5. Cell phones should not be used in the school building except in case of an emergency.

Our reason for these rules is twofold. First, we have the safety of all children in mind, and we hope that these measures will make our building more secure. We also hope to reduce the loss of instructional time that occurs when there is an unexpected visitor to a classroom.

We appreciate your support and cooperation with these policies in our continued efforts to make our school the best place it can be.

Student Enrollment

It is the policy of the Merrillville Community School Corporation that students who attend Merrillville schools must be legal residents within the district. Every parent/guardian enrolling a student in the Merrillville Community School Corporation must provide a driver's license or other government issued picture identification card along with other proof of residency to be photocopied. Children must be five years old on or before August 1 of the year they start school. Complete registration information follows:

Homeowners

Two (2) of the following three (3) are required:

1. Utility bills (NIPSCO, water, sewer)
2. Deed, contract, or mortgage statement
3. Lake County Tax bill

Pending Homeowners

Pending is defined as 30 days prior to occupancy

1. Letter on realtor letterhead of pending purchase and projected date of move-in. It must include the name and address of the purchasing family.
2. Letter on contractor letterhead validating pending construction of home and projected move-in date. It must include the name and address of the purchasing family.
3. Offer to Purchase/Purchase Agreement/Contract

Renters/Leasers

One (1) of the following two (2) must be provided:

1. Lease Agreement: Must include parent/guardian name on the agreement and the names of all school age children on the agreement as tenants. It must include the name and phone number of the manager/landlord and have a beginning and ending date of agreement.
2. Rent Agreement: Must include parent/guardian name on the agreement and the names of all school age children on the agreement as tenants. It must include the name and phone number of the manager/landlord and have a beginning and ending date of agreement.

In addition, one (1) of the following items is required:

1. Utility bills (NIPSCO, water, sewer)
2. Vehicle Registration
3. TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) letter for State of Indiana

The school maintains the right to contact the landlord to confirm residency.

Book Rental

All students are required to pay book rental for textbooks, consumable workbooks, testing materials, and supplementary materials. Payment should be made at the designated times. Delinquency in book rental payment beyond the final due date established by the Corporation will be handled through a collection agency. Students are responsible for all books issued to them and will be subject to replacement costs if any books are lost or damaged.

Student Withdrawal

Parents or guardians wishing to withdraw a student from school need to stop in at the school office to sign the necessary forms. At that time, a transfer form will be issued to be presented to the new school where the child will enroll. All bills owed the school must be paid and all textbooks must be returned.

Reregistration

Students are required to re-register before entering grades 1,3, 5, 7, 9 and 11. In addition, all families regardless of grade level who have registered with an Addendum (living in the home of someone else) will need to reregister as well. Current proof of residency information will be necessary to complete this process. If the registration does not take place prior to the first day of the new school year, the only procedure allowed by the State is to initiate expulsion proceedings on the basis of residency.

SECTION IV

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The following points will be most helpful when assisting your child with school work. The building principals will assist in obtaining this 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 qualifications 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.

SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT

Complete knowledge of:

- Daily schedules and routines of your child's school day
- Special classes such as music, art, physical education, remedial reading
- P.T.O. meetings
- Calendar of events (for the month and the year)
- The teaching staff and their curriculum

HOME-SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT (HOMEWORK)

Planning a Schedule

- Parents and students should design a study schedule on a consistent regular basis at home
- Create a place to work
- Arrange time to talk with your children
- A master schedule is then drawn up and posted so that anyone may refer to it whenever there is need

Commitment to a Schedule

- Must have quiet study time
- There should be no television during the study time, no radio, no stereo, no friends visiting, etc.
- Parents should be involved in the study time (reading the newspaper and magazines, hobbies, etc.)

Perseverance

- The schedule should not be broken
- A schedule may be modified occasionally

Weaknesses and reluctance to do homework can be overcome when the entire family plans, commits themselves, and perseveres in scheduling a quiet time in the daily routine of family life. These points will be very helpful when working with your child and the school.

HOMEWORK POLICY

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 ap-

plication.

3. Introduction of New Materials: 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. Amount of Homework:

The amount of homework should be related to student age and type of program being pursued.

1. Elementary: In general, daily minutes of homework should be approximately equal to ten times the grade level. Completion of unfinished daily classroom assignments will be in addition to assigned homework.

C. 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.

D. Conclusion:

Educational research has shown that homework has a definite correlation with student success in school and that increased home study can improve student performance. The ultimate benefit of homework rests in its training of students to become self-reliant, lifelong learners ready to meet life's challenges. However, to effectively achieve these results, three persons must meet specific responsibilities: the teacher, the student, and the parent.

SECTION V POLICIES

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 the 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 their express prior written consent. This written documentation will be added to the student's cumulative file. According to state law "student information" will be provided to the military.

3.4 NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

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 Act of 1973, Title IX (1972 Education Amendments), and 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 through the Superintendent's office 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, Citigroup Center, 500 W. Madison Street, Suite 1475, Chicago, IL 60661-4544, telephone 312-730-1560, fax 312-730-11576, TDD 877-521-2172, email OCR.Chicago@ed.gov.

FAMILY EDUCATION 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 broad outline, this Act provides for the following:

1. The Act concerns the student records of both elementary and secondary schools.
2. The parents' 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 parent 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.
9. As an educational institution we may disclose personally identifiable information from an education record to appropriate persons in connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

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 at the principal's office of all schools in the corporation.

3.43 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 handicapped student within its jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the handicap.

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

Due process rights of the handicapped students and their parents under Section 504 will be enforced. The coordinator of Section 504 activities will be through the Superintendent's office.

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, including learning; 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 compliance coordinator for Section 504 is through the Superintendent's office.
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 handicapped individuals (ages 0 to 21) who reside within the participating school districts.
7. Merrillville Community School Corporation will inform all handicapped persons 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 Procedures 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 through the Superintendent's office of the Merrillville Community School Corporation

6701 Delaware Street, Merrillville, IN 46410

PH: 219-650-5300 FX: 219-650-5320

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 a 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.

MERRILLVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION CIVILITY POLICY

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 (either in person or through electronic means); threatens the health and safety of anyone through harassment or bullying (in person or electronically); 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 (in person or electronically), 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 (in person or electronically) 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 3.42111).

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 subjected to sanctions for misconduct set forth in paragraph 5 of this policy.

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

CRIMINAL HISTORY INFORMATION (School Board Policy 3.24)

To ensure a safe learning environment for students it is the policy of the Merrillville Community School Corporation to require and collect a criminal history on all individuals having a direct or indirect contact with students or hired for employment. The inquiry into the criminal history must be not more than three (3) months old.

For the complete policy, contact your building principal.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION POLICY

- A. 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 of students or employees by members of its faculty or staff, or by other agents of the school corporation, and will respond in a suitable manner to every complaint. 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.
- B. It shall be a violation of this policy for any member of the Merrillville Community School Corporation staff to harass another staff member or student through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined in Section A or Section B. It shall also be a violation of this policy for students to harass other students or staff through conduct or communication of a sexual nature as defined in Section A. This policy similarly applies to non-employee volunteers who work subject to the control of school authorities.

SCHOOL CORPORATION SMOKING PROHIBITIONS

Effective August 24, 1994, smoking inside any school corporation building or vehicle and in any outdoor seating area is prohibited.

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 creative digital 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 any 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.

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 issues and special exemptions granted to some twelfth-grade students under limited circumstances. All exception requests must be submitted to and approved by building principals or assistant principals.

Fraudulent enrollments will be treated as follows:

1. Recommendation for 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 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.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

- A. The Merrillville Community School Corporation exists for the education of the resident pupils. It is the policy of the Board not to accept transfer students who reside within the boundaries of other school corporations.
- B. Children who enroll in the Merrillville Community School corporation during the school year shall be in the same grade in which they were previously enrolled unless the principal determines that the child would be inappropriately placed if enrolled at the same grade level.
- C. Students who move from the school corporation may, at the election of the parents or at the election of the student (if eighteen years of age) continue attending school corporation schools without charge until the end of the semester.
- D. In the case of a student who has completed the eleventh grade, the parents of such student or the student (if eighteen years of age) may elect to complete the twelfth year of high school in the Merrillville School system without charge if the school corporation is notified prior to relocation from the school district.
- E. House Bill 1056 provides that a student in good standing may transfer to a Merrillville school if the student's parent is an employee of the Merrillville Community School Corporation and the school corporation has the capacity to accept the student.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR MERRILLVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS COMPUTERS USERS

The intended use of technology in the Merrillville 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.

As a computer user, I agree to follow the Acceptable Use Policy in all of my work with computers while attending Merrillville Community School Corporation. The following activities and uses for 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 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 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 noncompliance of applicable copyright laws.

Lesser Violations

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 mechanism 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 Merrillville Community School Corporation.
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 computer related technology for the purpose 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.

Violation of the Acceptable Use Policy

Violation of the policy summarized above will be dealt with seriously. This summary document above shall not supercede 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.

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

Discipline Guidelines

<u>Violation</u>	<u>First Time</u>	<u>Second Time</u>	<u>Third Time</u>
Serious Violation	Loss of computer related technology privileges for the remainder of year and permanent computer probation		
Lesser Violations	Detention	Detention, loss of computer related technology privileges for minimum of one week, and computer probation	Loss of computer related technology privileges for remainder of semester

NOTES

Please cut on the line and return the forms to the school.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND VERIFICATION

I acknowledge and verify that I have received and am aware of the information contained in the Elementary School Handbook, Parent Expectation Guidelines, and the school discipline plan.

Student's Signature

We as parents or guardians of _____

Student's Name

Grade

acknowledge and verify that we have received and are aware of the policies and regulations contained in the Elementary School Handbook, Parent Expectation Guidelines, and the school discipline plan.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date _____

TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Student's Signature

Date _____

We, as parents or guardian of _____

Student's Name

Grade

have read and discussed the Technology Acceptable Use Policy for the Merrillville Community School Corporation Computer Users with our child.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date _____