

Meridian High School

***“The Best and
Getting Better”***

2009 – 2010

Student Handbook

2009-2010 MERIDIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT HANDBOOK

PEOPLE TO KNOW

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

| | | |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Larry Mynarcik | 435-2723 ext. 15 | Principal |
| Mary Massingill | 435-2723 ext. 18 | Counselor |
| Teresa Sutton | 435-2723 ext. 19 | Librarian |
| Todd Doughty | 435-2723 ext. 17 | Athletic Director |

OFFICE PERSONNEL

| | | |
|---------------|------------------|--------------|
| Leslie Croft | 435-2723 ext. 16 | Secretary |
| Gay Allen | 435-2723 ext. 10 | Front Office |
| Betty Wallace | 435-2731 | School Nurse |

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

| | | |
|-----------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Superintendent of Schools | 435-2081 | Scott Hogue |
| Director of Maintenance | 435-2326 | Russell Crawford |
| High School Principal | 435-2723 | Larry Mynarcik |
| Elementary School Principal | 435-2731 | Kim Edwards |

OTHER PERSONNEL

| | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Peter Elkins | 435-2723 ext. 23 | Band Director |
| Mike Gann | 435-2723 ext. 25 | AG Teacher |
| Ernest Hillburn | 435-6047 | DAEP |
| Bosque County SPED Co-op | 435-6098 | Cluster School |

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

| | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| President | Marie Garland |
| Vice President | Todd Hyatt |
| Secretary | Kristy Kuykendall |
| Trustee | Danny Allen |
| Trustee | Jerry Phelps |
| Trustee | Cynthia Gann |
| Trustee | David Winkler |

The Meridian Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap in providing education services. Scott Hogue has been designated to coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination of Title IX requirements.

Scott Hogue has been designated to coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Required Forms

Acknowledgment Form

My child and I have received a copy of the Meridian High School Student Handbook and *Student Code of Conduct* for 2008–2009. I understand that the handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year and that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the *Student Code of Conduct*.

Printed name of student: _____

Signature of student: _____

Signature of parent: _____

Date: _____

**Acknowledgment of Electronic Distribution of
Student Handbook**

My child and I have been offered the option to receive a paper copy or to electronically access at _____ www.meridianisd.org the Meridian High School Student Handbook and *Student Code of Conduct* for 2008–2009.

I have chosen to:

- Receive a paper copy of the Student Handbook and *Student Code of Conduct*].
- Accept responsibility for accessing the Student Handbook by visiting the Web address listed above.

I understand that the handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year and that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. If I have any questions regarding this handbook, I should direct those questions to the principal at 254-435-2723 or lmynarcik@meridianisd.org.

Printed name of student: _____

Signature of student: _____

Signature of parent: _____

Date: _____

Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information

State law requires the district to give you the following information:

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows the procedures for requesting the information unless the parent or guardian objects to the release of the directory information about the student. If you do not want Meridian ISD to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the district in writing within ten school days of child's first day of instruction for this school year.

This means that the district must give certain personal information (called "directory information") about your child to any person who requests it, unless you have told the district in writing not to do so. In addition, you have the right to tell the district that it may, or may not, use certain personal information about your child for specific school-sponsored purposes. The district is providing you this form so you can communicate your wishes about these issues

For all other purposes, Meridian ISD has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- E-mail address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Most recent school previously attended
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height, if a member of an athletic team
- Enrollment status

Parent: Please circle one of the choices below:

I, parent of _____ (student's name), (**do give**) (**do not give**) the district permission to release the information in this list in response to a request unrelated to school-sponsored purposes.

Note to school administrator: If the district has only one directory information list at FL(LOCAL), revise the above statement to read: "*I, parent of _____ (student's name), (**do give**) (**do not give**) the district permission to release the information in this list in response to a request.*"

Parent signature _____ Date _____

**Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information to
Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education**

Federal law requires that the district release to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, upon request, the name, address, and phone number of secondary students enrolled in the district, unless the parent or eligible student directs the district not to release information to these types of requestors without prior written consent. [See **Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education** on page ____ for more information.]

Parent: Please complete the following only if you do not want your child's information released to a military recruiter or an institution of higher education without your prior consent.

I, parent of _____ (*student's name*), request that the district **not** release my child's name, address, and telephone number to a military recruiter or institutions of higher education upon their request without my prior written consent.

Parent signature _____ Date _____

NOTICES TO PARENTS

Statement of Nondiscrimination

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, Meridian ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The following district staff members have been designated to coordinate compliance with these legal requirements:

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex: Scott Hogue, Superintendent, 204 Second Street, Meridian Tx. 76665, 254-435-2081
- Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Scott Hogue, Superintendent, 204 Second Street, Meridian Tx. 76665, 254-435-2081
- All other concerns regarding discrimination: See the superintendent Scott Hogue, 204 Second Street, Meridian Tx. 76665, 254-435-2081

Asbestos Management Plan

The district's Asbestos Management Plan, designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations addressing asbestos, is available in the Superintendent's office. If you have any questions, please contact the Superintendent.

Pest Management Plan

The district applies only pest control products that comply with state and federal guidelines. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before application. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact the Superintendent.

Additional Notices

Other important notices in the Student Handbook cover the following topics:

- Student participation in a survey, analysis, or evaluation;
- Opting out of surveys and data collection activities;
- Requesting the professional qualifications of teachers and staff;
- Requesting a transfer of your child to a safe public school;
- Assistance to students who have learning difficulties;
- Student records;
- Bacterial meningitis;

- Career and technology programs;
- Homeless students; and
- School lunch programs.

Please take some time to review these notices and other important information contained in the Student Handbook.

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Disclaimer: ANY PORTION OF THE MERIDIAN HIGH SCHOOL HANDBOOK THAT COMES INTO CONFLICT WITH BOARD POLICY, THEN BOARD POLICY WILL TAKE PRECEDENT (EXAMPLE: UPDATE 83).

PREFACE

To Scholars and Parents:

Welcome to school year 2008–2009! Education is a team effort, and we know that scholars, parents, teachers, and other staff members all working together can make this a wonderfully successful year for our scholars.

The Meridian High School Student Handbook is designed to provide a resource for some of the basic information that you and your child will need during the school year. In an effort to make it easier to use, the handbook is divided into two sections:

Section I—REQUIRED NOTICES AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS—with notices that the district must provide to all parents, as well as other information to assist you in responding to school-related issues. We encourage you to take some time to closely review this section of the handbook; and

Section II—INFORMATION FOR SCHOLARS AND PARENTS—organized alphabetically by topic for quick access when searching for information on a specific issue.

Please be aware that the term “the scholar’s parent” is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or any other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a scholar.

Both scholars and parents should become familiar with the Meridian High School *Student Code of Conduct*, which is a document adopted by the board and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. That document may be found [as an attachment to this handbook and available in the principal’s office.

The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with board policy and the *Student Code of Conduct*. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy or other rules that affect Student Handbook provisions will be made available to scholars and parents through newsletters and other communications.

In case of conflict between board policy or the *Student Code of Conduct* and any provisions of the Student Handbook, the provisions of board policy or the *Student Code of Conduct* that were most recently adopted by the board are to be followed.

After reading through the entire handbook with your child, keep it as a reference during this school year. If you or your child has questions about any of the material in this handbook, please contact the principal.

Also, please complete and return to your child’s campus the following required forms

1. Parental Acknowledgment Form;
2. Student Directory Information Form;
3. Release of Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Learning Forms; and
4. Consent/Opt-Out Forms.

Please note that references to policy codes are included so that parents can refer to current board policy. A copy of the district's policy manual is available for review in the school office or online at www.meridianisd.org.

SECTION I: REQUIRED NOTICES AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

This section of the Meridian High School Student Handbook includes several notices that the district is required to provide to you, as well as other information on topics of particular interest to you as a parent.

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, Meridian ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The following district staff members have been designated to coordinate compliance with these legal requirements:

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex: Dr. Eli Casey, Superintendent, 204 Second Street, Meridian Tx. 76665, 254-435-2081.
- Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Dr. Eli Casey, Superintendent, 204 Second Street, Meridian Tx. 76665, 254-435-2081
- All other concerns regarding discrimination: See the superintendent Dr. Eli Casey.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Working Together

Both experience and research tell us that a child's education succeeds best when there is good communication and a strong partnership between home and school. Your involvement in this partnership may include:

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements of the graduation programs with your child, if your child is entering ninth grade.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed.

- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, counselor, or principal, please call the school office at 254-435-2723 for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school.
- Becoming a school volunteer.
- Participating in campus parent organizations.
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve scholar achievement. For further information, see policies at BQA and BQB, and contact campus principal.
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council, assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction. Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations

PARENTAL RIGHTS

Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights

Your child will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation—funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education—that concerns:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the scholar or the scholar’s parent.
- Mental or psychological problems of the scholar or the scholar’s family.
- Sexual behavior or attitudes.
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the scholar has a close family relationship.
- Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the scholar or parents.
- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the scholar’s eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

You will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation. [For further information, see policy EF(LEGAL).]

“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities

As a parent, you have a right to receive notice of and deny permission for your child’s participation in:

- Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding.
- School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing or selling that information.
- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the scholar. Exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law. [See policies EF and FF AA.]

Displaying a Scholar’s Artwork and Projects

As a parent, you have a right to provide consent before the district can display your child’s artwork, special projects, photographs taken by your child, and the like on the district’s Web site, in printed material, by video, or by any other method of mass communication.

Requesting Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Staff

You may request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child’s teachers, including whether a teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction; whether the teacher has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived; and undergraduate and graduate degree majors, graduate certifications, and the field of study of the certification or degree. You also have the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to your child.

Reviewing Instructional Materials

As a parent, you have a right to review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum, and to examine tests that have been administered to your child.

Inspecting Surveys

As a parent, you may inspect a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to your child.

Accessing Student Records

You may review your child’s scholar records. These records include:

- Attendance records,
- Test scores,
- Grades,

- Disciplinary records,
- Counseling records,
- Psychological records,
- Applications for admission,
- Health and immunization information,
- Other medical records,
- Teacher and counselor evaluations,
- Reports of behavioral patterns, and
- State assessment instruments that have been administered to your child.

Granting Permission to Video or Audio Record a Scholar

As a parent, you may grant or deny any written request from the district to make a video or voice recording of your child. State law, however, permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission for the following circumstances:

- When it is to be used for school safety;
- When it relates to classroom instruction or a cocurricular or extracurricular activity; or
- When it relates to media coverage of the school.

Removing a Scholar Temporarily from the Classroom

You may remove your child temporarily from the classroom if an instructional activity in which your child is scheduled to participate conflicts with your religious or moral beliefs. The removal cannot be for the purpose of avoiding a test and may not extend for an entire semester. Further, your child must satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by the Texas Education Agency.

Excusing a Scholar from Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags

As a parent, you may request that your child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be in writing. State law does not allow your child to be excused from participation in the required minute of silence or silent activity that follows.

Excusing a Scholar from Reciting a Portion of the Declaration of Independence

You may request that your child be excused from recitation of a portion of the Declaration of Independence. State law requires scholars in social studies classes in grades 3–12 to recite a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during Celebrate Freedom Week unless:

(1) you provide a written statement requesting that your child be excused, (2) the district determines that your child has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or (3) you are a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States government extends diplomatic immunity. [See policy EHBK(LEGAL).]

Requesting Notices of Certain Scholar Misconduct

A noncustodial parent may request in writing that he or she be provided, for the remainder of the school year, a copy of any written notice usually provided to a parent related to your child's misconduct that may involve placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) or expulsion. [See policy FO(LEGAL) and the *Student Code of Conduct*.]

Requesting Transfers for Your Child

As a parent, you have a right:

- To request the transfer of your child to another classroom or campus if your child has been determined by the school board or its designee to have been a victim of bullying as the term is defined by Education Code 25.0341. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the superintendent for information. [See policy FDB.]
- To request the transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the district if your child attends school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds. [See policy FDD(LOCAL).]
- To request the transfer of your child to a neighboring district if your child has been the victim of a sexual assault by another scholar assigned to the same campus, whether that assault occurred on or off campus, and that scholar has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for that assault. [See policies FDD(LEGAL) and (LOCAL).]

Requesting Classroom Assignment for Multiple Birth Siblings

As a parent, if your children are multiple birth siblings (e.g., twins, triplets, etc.) assigned to the same grade and campus, you may request that they be placed either in the same classroom or in separate classrooms. Your written request must be submitted no later than the 14th day after the enrollment of your children. [See FDB (LEGAL).]

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Parents of Scholars with Disabilities

Parents of scholars with learning difficulties or who may need special education services may request an evaluation for special education at any time.

Options and Requirements for Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need or May Need Special Education

If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the person listed below to learn about the district's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links scholars to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Scholars having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all scholars including a process based on Response to Intervention. The implementation of Response to Intervention has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of school districts to meet the needs of all struggling scholars.

At any time, a parent is entitled to request an evaluation for special education services. Within a reasonable amount of time, the district must decide if the evaluation is needed. If the evaluation is needed, the parent will be notified and asked to provide informed written consent for the evaluation. The district must complete the evaluation and the report within 60 calendar days of the date the district receives the written consent. The district must give a copy of the report to the parent.

If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district will provide the parent with a written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parent of his or her rights if the parent disagrees with the district. Additionally, the notice must inform the parent how to obtain a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards—Rights of Parents of Scholars with Disabilities*.

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education is the campus principal.

If a scholar is receiving special education services at a campus outside his or her attendance zone, the parent or guardian may request that any other scholar residing in the household be transferred to the same campus, if the appropriate grade level for the transferring scholar is offered on that campus. [See policy FDB(LOCAL).]

Services for Title I Participants

The Parent Involvement Coordinator, who works with parents of scholars participating in Title I programs is the campus principal and may be contacted at 254-435-2723.

Student Records

Both federal and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible scholars certain rights. For purposes of student records, an "eligible" scholar is one who is 18 or older OR who is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

Virtually all information pertaining to scholar performance, including grades, test results, and disciplinary records, is considered confidential educational records. Release is restricted to:

- The parents—whether married, separated, or divorced—unless the school is given a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a scholar’s education records. Federal law requires that, as soon as a scholar becomes 18 or is emancipated by a court, control of the records goes to the scholar. The parents may continue to have access to the records, however, if the scholar is a dependent for tax purposes.
- District staff members who have what federal law refers to as a “legitimate educational interest” in a scholar’s records. “Legitimate educational interest” in a scholar’s records includes working with the scholar; considering disciplinary or academic actions, the scholar’s case, or an individualized education program for a scholar with disabilities; compiling statistical data; or investigating or evaluating programs. Such persons would include school officials (such as board members, the superintendent, administrators, and principals); school staff members (such as teachers, counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff); a person or company with whom the district has contracted to provide a particular service (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); a parent or scholar serving on a school committee; or a parent or scholar assisting a school official or staff in the performance of his or her duties.
- Various governmental agencies.
- Individuals granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- A school or institution of postsecondary education to which a scholar seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she subsequently enrolls.

Release to any other person or agency—such as a prospective employer or for a scholarship application—will occur only with parental or scholar permission as appropriate.

The principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled scholars at the assigned school. The principal is the custodian of all records for scholars who have withdrawn or graduated.

Records may be inspected by a parent or eligible scholar during regular school hours. If circumstances prevent inspection during these hours, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or scholar to review these records. The records custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records. The address of the superintendent’s office is 204 Second Street, Meridian Tx. 76665.

The address of the principals’ office is 500 CR 2515, Meridian Tx. 76665.

A parent (or eligible scholar) may inspect the scholar’s records and request a correction if the records are considered inaccurate or otherwise in violation of the scholar’s privacy rights. A request to correct a scholar’s record should be submitted to the principal. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information in the record is inaccurate. If the district denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible scholar has the right to request a hearing.

If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the parent or eligible scholar has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the scholar's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a scholar's grade in a course is handled through the general complaint process found in policy FNG(LOCAL).

Copies of scholar records are available at a cost of ten cents per page, payable in advance. If the scholar qualifies for free or reduced-price lunches and the parents are unable to view the records during regular school hours, one copy of the record will be provided at no charge upon written request of the parent.

The district's policy regarding student records found at FL(LOCAL) is available from the principal's or superintendent's office or on the district's Web site at www.meridianisd.org.

The parent's or eligible scholar's right of access to and copies of scholar records do not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records—such as a teacher's personal notes about a scholar that are shared only with a substitute teacher—do not have to be made available to the parents or scholar.

Please note:

Parents or eligible scholars have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe the district is not in compliance with federal law regarding student records. The complaint may be mailed to:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U. S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901

Directory Information

The law permits the district to designate certain personal information about scholars as "directory information." This "directory information" will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it.

However, release of a scholar's directory information may be prevented by the parent or an eligible scholar. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of your child's first day of instruction for this school year.

Directory Information for School-Sponsored Purposes

The district often needs to use scholar information for school-sponsored purposes.

This information will not be released to the public without the consent of the parent or eligible scholar.

Unless you object to the use of your child's information for these limited purposes, the school will not need to ask your permission each time the district wishes to use this information for the school-sponsored purposes listed above.

Release of Scholar Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education

The district is required by federal law to comply with a request by a military recruiter or an institution of higher education for scholars' names, addresses, and telephone listings, unless parents have advised the district not to release their child's information without prior written consent. A form has been attached for you to complete if you do not want the district to provide this information to military recruiters or institutions of higher education.

Bacterial Meningitis

State law specifically requires the district to provide the following information:

- What is meningitis?

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is most common and the least serious. Bacterial meningitis is the most common form of serious bacterial infection with the potential for serious, long-term complications. It is an uncommon disease, but requires urgent treatment with antibiotics to prevent permanent damage or death.

- What are the symptoms?

Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms.

Children (over 1 year old) and adults with meningitis may have a severe headache, high temperature, vomiting, sensitivity to bright lights, neck stiffness or joint pains, and drowsiness or confusion. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body.

The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.

- How serious is bacterial meningitis?

If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases it can be fatal or a person may be left with a permanent disability.

- How is bacterial meningitis spread?

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing, sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes).

The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.

- How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

While there are vaccines for some other strains of bacterial meningitis, they are used only in special circumstances. These include when there is a disease outbreak in a community or for people traveling to a country where there is a high risk of getting the disease. Also, a vaccine is recommended by some groups for college scholars, particularly freshmen living in dorms or residence halls. The vaccine is safe and effective (85–90 percent). It can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

- What should you do if you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis?

You should seek prompt medical attention.

- Where can you get more information?

Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Department of State Health Services office to ask about a meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the Web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov>, and the Department of State Health Services, <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/>.

SECTION II: INFORMATION FOR SCHOLARS AND PARENTS

Topics in this section of the handbook contain important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. Take a moment with your child to become familiar with the various issues addressed in this section. It is conveniently organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick-reference when you or your child has a question about a specific school-related issue. Should you be unable to find the information on a particular topic, please contact the campus principal at 254-435-2723.

ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance is essential for a scholar to make the most of his or her education—to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day’s learning on the previous day’s, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a scholar’s mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the scholar and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Two state laws, one dealing with compulsory attendance, the other with attendance for course credit, are of special interest to scholars and parents. They are discussed below:

Compulsory Attendance

State law requires that a scholar between the ages of six and 18 attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended year program, or tutorial session, unless the scholar is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

A scholar who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 18th birthday is required to attend each school day until the end of the school year and is subject to compulsory attendance laws, if the scholar is under 21 years old. In addition, if a scholar 18 or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester the district may revoke the scholar’s enrollment. The scholar’s presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing. [See FEA]

State law requires attendance in an accelerated reading instruction program when kindergarten, first grade, or second grade scholars are assigned to such a program. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is assigned to an accelerated reading instruction program as a result of the reading diagnosis test.

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A scholar absent without permission from school; from any class; from required special programs, such as additional special instruction (termed “accelerated instruction” by the state) assigned by a grade placement committee and basic skills for ninth graders; or from required tutorials will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action. See Student Code of Conduct.

A court of law may also impose penalties against both the scholar and his or her parents if a school-aged scholar is deliberately not attending school. A complaint against the parent may be filed in court if the scholar:

- Is absent from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, or
- Is absent on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period.

If the scholar is over age 18, the scholar's parents shall not be subject to penalties as a result of their child's violation of state compulsory attendance law. [See FEA(LEGAL)]

If a scholar does not maintain 95% percent attendance then they will not be allowed to attend any school sponsored activity (non UIL) including field trips and senior trip.

Attendance for Credit

To receive credit in a class, a scholar must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A scholar who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may receive credit for the class if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal, that allows the scholar to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class. If a scholar is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the approval of the judge presiding over the case will also be required before the scholar receives credit for the class.

If a scholar attends less than 75 percent of the days a class is offered or has not completed a plan approved by the principal, then the scholar will be referred to the attendance review committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the scholar can regain credit, if appropriate. [See policies at FEC]

In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the attendance committee will use the following guidelines:

- All absences will be considered in determining whether a scholar has attended the required percentage of days. If makeup work is completed, absences for religious holy days and documented health-care appointments will be considered days of attendance for this purpose. [See policies at FEB.]
- A transfer or migrant scholar begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district. For a scholar transferring into the district after school begins, including a migrant scholar, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.
- In reaching a decision about a scholar's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the scholar.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the scholar's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the scholar or the scholar's parent could exercise any control.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the scholar has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The scholar or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit.

The scholar or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board of trustees by filing a written request with the superintendent in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL).

The actual number of days a scholar must be in attendance in order to receive credit will depend on whether the class is for a full semester or for a full year.

Parent's Note After An Absence

When a scholar must be absent from school, the scholar —upon returning to school— must bring a note, signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. A note signed by the scholar, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted unless the scholar is 18 or older.

Doctor's Note After An Absence for Illness

Upon return to school, a scholar absent for more than 3 consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the scholar's extended absence from school. [See FEC(LOCAL).]

Driver License Attendance Verification

To obtain a driver license, a scholar between the ages of 16 and 18 must provide to the Texas Department of Public Safety a form obtained from the school verifying that the scholar has met the 90 percent attendance requirement for the semester preceding the date of application. The scholar can obtain this form at the campus secretary's office.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The school counselor provides scholar s and parents information regarding academic programs to prepare for higher education and career choices.

BULLYING

Bullying occurs when a scholar or group of scholar s directs written or verbal expressions or physical conduct against another scholar and the behavior results in harm to the scholar or the scholar's property, places a scholar in fear of harm to himself or his property, or is so severe that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment.

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit bullying and to respond to reports of bullying. [See FFI(LOCAL).]

CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS

The district offers career and technology programs in Agriculture Science, Computer Technology, and Business/Careers.

Meridian ISD will take steps to ensure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and vocational programs.

CLASS RANK / TOP TEN PERCENT / HIGHEST RANKING STUDENT

For determination of grade point average (GPA), class rank, top ten percent, highest ranking scholar and honor graduate status, including valedictorian and salutatorian, the semester grade for each course will be multiplied by the following weighted standard:

| | |
|--|-------|
| Advanced Placement / Pre-AP / Dual Credit College / Honor Courses | 1.175 |
| Scholar s Regular Courses | 1.00 |

The weighted grades will not be shown on the transcript or report card as semester grades but will be calculated in to arrive at the GPA. The following procedures may be used to convert GPA to a 4.0 scale as weighted or not weighted.

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|
| Not Weighted GPA: | A = 4 | C = 2 |
| | B = 3 | D = 1 |

Add together the indicated points for each final semester grade earned during H.S. and divide by the number of semesters.

Weighted GPA: Take the weighted score used to rank scholar s multiplied by .04

For two school years following his or her graduation, a district scholar who graduates in the top ten percent of his or her class is eligible for automatic admission into four-year public universities and colleges in Texas if the scholar:

- Completes the Recommended or Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program; or
- Satisfies the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks or earns at least a 1500 out of 2400 on the SAT.

Scholar s and parents should contact the counselor for further information about the application process and deadlines.

[For further information, see policies at EIC.]

CLASS SCHEDULES

Scholar s will select classes in the spring of the previous school year, and their schedules will be based on these choices. There will be no schedule change on the first day unless a scholar has no class for a given period. All schedule changes will be completed by the end of the 5th day of class. New scholar s will make their choices upon enrolling. Choices will be honored by availability. Copies of scholar schedules will be available to scholar s prior to the start of school. Notice will be provided in the Bosque County News newspaper or by calling the school at (254) 435-2723. Scholar schedules will only be changed by the counselor or principal

COLLEGE CREDIT COURSES

In addition to the programs offered by the district, scholars in grades 9–12 may earn college credit from the following:

Hill College Hillsboro, Cleburne, Glen Rose, Clifton, Burleson campuses

COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

Usually scholar or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or principal. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the district has adopted a standard complaint policy at FNG(LOCAL) in the district's policy manual. A copy of this policy may be obtained in the principal's or superintendent's office or on the district's Web site at www.meridianisd.org.

In general, the scholar or parent should submit a written complaint and request a conference with the campus principal.

If the concern is not resolved, a request for a conference should be sent to the superintendent. If still unresolved, the district provides for the complaint to be presented to the board of trustees.

COMPUTER RESOURCES

To prepare scholars for an increasingly technological society, the district has made an investment in computer technology for instructional purposes. Use of these computer resources is restricted to scholars working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only.

Scholars and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement (separate from this handbook) regarding use of these resources; violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Scholars and their parents should be aware that e-mail using district computers is not private and will be monitored by district staff. [For additional information, see policies at CQ.]

CONDUCT

Applicability of School Rules

As required by law, the board has adopted a *Student Code of Conduct* that prohibits certain behaviors and defines standards of acceptable behavior—both on and off campus—and consequences for violation of these standards. The district has disciplinary authority over a scholar in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. Scholars and parents should be familiar with the standards set out in the *Student Code of Conduct*, as well as campus and classroom rules.

To achieve the best possible learning environment for all scholars, the *Student Code of Conduct* and other campus rules will apply whenever the interest of the district is involved, whether on or off school grounds, in conjunction with classes and school-sponsored activities.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment—spanking or paddling the scholar —may be used as a discipline management technique in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct* and policy FO (LOCAL) in the district’s policy manual.

Disruptions

As identified by law, disruptions include the following:

- Interference with the movement of people at an exit, entrance, or hallway of a district building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.
- Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to district property.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving district property without authorization from an administrator.
- Disruption of classes or other school activities while on district property or on public property that is within 500 feet of district property. Class disruption includes making loud noises; trying to entice a scholar away from, or to prevent a scholar from attending, a required class or activity; and entering a classroom without authorization and disrupting the activity with loud or profane language or any misconduct.
- Interference with the transportation of scholar s in vehicles owned or operated by the district.

Radios, CD Players, Other Electronic Devices and Games

Scholar s are not permitted to possess such items as pagers, radios, CD players, tape recorders, camcorders, DVD players, cameras, electronic devices or games at school, unless prior permission has been obtained from the principal. Without such permission, teachers will collect the items and turn them in to the principal’s office. The principal will determine whether to return items to scholar s at the end of the day or to contact parents to pick up the items.

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct* and may include confiscation of the device. The school may charge the owner for the release of certain telecommunications devices [See policy FNCE.]

Cell Phones

For safety purposes, the district permits scholar s to possess cell phones; however, cell phones must remain turned off and placed in a secure place where they are not displayed during the instructional day. The use of cell phones in locker rooms or restroom areas, as well as text messaging during the school day is strictly prohibited

The principal will determine whether to return items to scholars at the end of the day or to contact parents to pick up the items. Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct* and may include confiscation of the device. The school may charge the owner for the release of certain telecommunications devices [See policy FNCE.]

With the advent of more sophisticated phones that have recording and photographic options, a new realm of privacy violations has been presented. Any scholar possessing inappropriate pictures, either in an electronic or hard copy format or any audio / video recording, during school or school related activities will face disciplinary action by MISD, in addition to the possibility of charges being filed with the local law enforcement authority. Texas Penal Code 21.15

- 1st Offense:** Call parents / guardians, phone confiscated until the end of the day
- 2nd Offense:** Call parents / guardians, phone confiscated until the end of the day, Parent must come to school and pay \$15 for release of scholar cell phone
- 3rd Offense:** Call parents / guardians, phone confiscated for one six weeks (30 school days), Parents must come to school at the end of the 30 school days and pay \$15 for release of scholar cell phone
- 4th Offense:** Call parents / guardians, phone confiscated for remainder of semester (no less than 60 school days), Parents must come to school at the end of the semester and pay \$15 for release of scholar cell phone

Social Events

School rules apply to all school social events. Guests attending these events are expected to observe the same rules as scholars, and a scholar inviting a guest will share responsibility for the conduct of his or her guest.

A scholar attending a social event will be asked to sign out when leaving before the end of the event; anyone leaving before the official end of the event will not be readmitted.

Public Display of Affection (PDA)

Public Display of affection is defined as the unacceptable contact between two or more individuals on school property or school sponsored activities (both at home and away events). This includes but not limited to hugging, kissing or any other inappropriate contact deemed unacceptable by the campus principal.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES / CONDITIONS

To protect other scholars from contagious illnesses, scholars infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. If a parent suspects that his or her child has a contagious disease, the parent should contact the school nurse or principal so that other scholars who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted.

The school nurse or the principal's office can provide information from the Department of State Health Services regarding these diseases.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

The district permits high school scholars to take correspondence courses—by mail or via the Internet—for credit toward high school graduation. For further information, see policies at EEJC.

COUNSELING

Academic Counseling

Scholars and their parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or principal to learn more about course offerings, graduation requirements, and early graduation procedures.

Each spring, scholars in grades 8 through 11 will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next school year and other information that will help them make the most of academic and vocational opportunities.

To plan for the future, each scholar should work closely with the counselor in order to enroll in the high school courses that best prepare him or her for attendance at a college, university, or training school, or for pursuit of some other type of advanced education.

The counselor can also provide information about entrance exams and application deadlines, as well as information about automatic admission to state colleges and universities, financial aid, housing, and scholarships.

Personal Counseling

The school counselor is available to assist scholars with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, or emotional issues, or substance abuse. The counselor may also make available information about community resources to address these concerns. A scholar who wishes to meet with the counselor should sign up.

Psychological Exams, Tests, or Treatment

The school will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parent's written consent. Parental consent is not necessary when a psychological examination, test, or treatment is required by state or federal law for special education purposes or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and reports. For more information, refer to FFE(LEGAL) and FFG(EXHIBIT).

CREDIT BY EXAM—If a Scholar Has Taken the Course

On approval of the attendance committee, a scholar who has excessive absences may be permitted to earn or regain course credit. To be eligible to receive credit by exam, the scholar must have received a grade of at least 60 in the course failed. To receive credit, scholars must score a 70 or above on the exam. Each exam will cover all of the TEKS for the course tested. Scholars must be enrolled in Meridian ISD and attending class before registering to take credit by exam. For more information see the HS counselor.

A scholar may not use this exam, however, to regain eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities. For further information, see the counselor and policies EEJA.

CREDIT BY EXAM—If a Scholar Has Not Taken the Course

A scholar will be permitted to take an exam to earn credit for an academic course for which the scholar has had no prior instruction. Please see the high school counselor for specific dates and information on which exams are scheduled during the 2008–2009 school year

A scholar will earn credit with a passing score of at least 90 on the exam. If a scholar plans to take an exam, the scholar (or parent) must register with the principal no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date.

If the district agrees to administer a test other than the one chosen by the district, the parent must purchase a test from a university approved by the State Board of Education. For further information, see EEJB(LOCAL).

DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION

The district believes that all scholars learn best in an environment free from dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation and that their welfare is best served when they are free from this prohibited conduct while attending school. Scholars are expected to treat other scholars and district employees with courtesy and respect; to avoid behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop. District employees are expected to treat scholars with courtesy and respect.

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, , gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. [See policy FFH]

Dating Violence

Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other person in the relationship. This type of conduct is considered harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the scholar's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the scholar's academic performance.

Examples of dating violence against a scholar may include, but are not limited to, physical or sexual assaults, name-calling, put-downs, threats to hurt the scholar or the scholar's family members or members of the scholar's household, destroying property belonging to the scholar, threats to commit suicide or homicide if the scholar ends the relationship, attempts to isolate the scholar from friends and family, stalking, or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as any conduct directed at a scholar on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law, that it negatively affects the scholar.

Harassment

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the scholar's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the scholar's academic performance. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office and in the superintendent's office or on the district's Web site.

Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to, offensive or derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment of a scholar by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature. However, romantic and other inappropriate social relationships, as well as all sexual relationships, between scholars and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

Examples of prohibited sexual harassment may include, but not be limited to, touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

Retaliation

Retaliation of a scholar occurs when a scholar receives threats from another scholar or an employee or when an employee imposes an unjustified punishment or unwarranted grade reduction. Retaliation does not include petty slights and annoyances from other scholars or negative comments from a teacher that are justified by a scholar's poor academic performance in the classroom.

Retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report of discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, is prohibited. A person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a district investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline. Retaliation against a person who is participating in an investigation of alleged discrimination or harassment is also prohibited.

Reporting Procedures

Any scholar who believes that he or she has experienced dating violence, discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should immediately report the problem to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other district employee. The report may be made by the scholar's parent. See policy FFH(LOCAL) for the appropriate districts officials to whom to make a report.

Investigation of Report

To the extent possible, the district will respect the privacy of the scholar; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated. The district will notify the parents of any scholar alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct by an adult associated with the district.

In the event prohibited conduct involves another scholar, the district will notify the parents of the scholar alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy.

If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary or corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The district may take disciplinary action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint was not unlawful.

A scholar or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL).

DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLISHED MATERIALS OR DOCUMENTS

School Materials

Publications prepared by and for the school may be posted or distributed, with the prior approval of the principal, sponsor, or teacher. Such items may include school posters, brochures, flyers, etc.

The school newspaper, The Jacket Gazette, and the yearbook are available to scholars.

All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the principal.

Nonschool Materials...from scholar s

Scholar s must obtain prior approval from the campus principal before posting, circulating, or distributing written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any nonschool material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. The decision regarding approval will be made in two school days.

The principal has designated the bulletin board as the location for approved nonschool materials to be placed for voluntary viewing by scholar s. [See policies at FNAA.]

A scholar may appeal a principal's decision in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). Any scholar who posts nonschool material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. Materials displayed without the principal's approval will be removed.

Nonschool Materials...from others

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials not sponsored by the district or by a district-affiliated school-support organization will not be sold, circulated, distributed, or posted on any district premises by any district employee or by persons or groups not associated with the district, except as permitted by policies at GKDA. To be considered for distribution, any nonschool material must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or organization, and be submitted to the campus principal for prior review. The campus principal will approve or reject the materials within two school days of the time the materials are received. The requestor may appeal a rejection in accordance with the appropriate district complaint policy. [See policies at DGBA, FNG, or GF.]

Prior review will not be required for:

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours.
- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD (LOCAL) or a noncurriculum-related scholar group meeting held in accordance with FNAB(LOCAL).
- Distribution for electioneering purposes during the time a school facility is being used as a polling place, in accordance with state law.

All nonschool materials distributed under these circumstances must be removed from district property immediately following the event at which the materials are distributed.

DRESS AND GROOMING

The district's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, and minimize safety hazards. Scholars and parents may determine a scholar's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the dress code guidelines.

It is essential that school guidelines be such that an atmosphere for learning is created. Dress and groom regulations should discourage the extremes and the fads that may lead to disruptions. Such regulations should provide appropriate standards for the general appearance of scholars, should foster both physical and mental health, and should train scholars in proper dress habits.

The policy governing campus dress and grooming shall be enforced uniformly and fairly by the faculty and administration. It shall be the responsibility of professional staff to determine the appropriateness of proper dress for all school occasions.

The dress code guidelines apply when scholars are on school property or while attending a school sponsored activity (both at home and away games). On days of pep rallies, cheerleaders are permitted to wear their uniforms to school with appropriate leggings as determined by the sponsor and the campus principal.

General guidelines:

- Examples of acceptable dress for male scholar s: jeans, slacks, shorts, sport shirts, dress shirts, golf or polo shirts, spirit shirts, **T-shirts**, shoes, sneakers, tennis-type shoes, sandals, or boots
- Examples of acceptable dress for female scholar s: jeans, shorts, Capri pants, slacks, sweater, **T-shirts**, blouse, sneakers, sandals, heels, or boots
- Shorts, skirts, dresses, splits or slits must be worn within 5 inches of the knee. Measurements will be determined when the waist is at the top of the hipbone and loose fitting.
- Articles of clothing with pictures, emblems, or writings that are lewd, offensive, vulgar, or obscene, or advertise or depict tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs, or any other substance prohibited under FNCA (local) are not allowed. This includes hats, scarves, jackets or any other article of clothing.
- Suspenders and overalls must be fastened at all times (both straps)
- Scholar s must wear shoes at all times. Shoes with rollers, rubber or plastic shower shoes and house shoes are prohibited
- No cutoff shorts, sliders, biker shorts, or running shorts.
- Shirts must be buttoned within one button of the top
- Hats, caps, and hoods may not be worn inside the school building during the school day. They may be worn at school sponsored events as determined appropriate by the campus principal. Exception: hat days, spirit days, homecoming or any other motivational activity (ex: TAKS celebration).
- Doo rags, bandanas, sunglasses and visors are not to be worn to school or school sponsored activities.
- Undergarments must be worn and appropriately covered by a scholar's clothing
- Any gang related attire, as determined by the campus principal, is prohibited
- Unofficial military attire worn as clothing shall not be permitted. Camouflage material is allowable as long as it meets the dress code guidelines.
- Any depiction of the American flag worn on an article of clothing shall be displayed in a respectful manner.
- No chains of any kind shall be worn or carried except for jewelry deemed acceptable by the campus principal.
- Hair must be of natural color (including highlighting), neon colors or distracting bright colors is prohibited. No shaved heads or Mohawk style or styles determined by the campus principal as distracting will be allowed. No symbols or designs may be shaved or displayed in the hair.
- No grilles are allowed

- Tattoos must be covered and are not allowed to be displayed at school or school sponsored activities.

Girls dress and grooming:

- Shirts, blouses, tops and dresses
 - Shall not be cut below the armpit in the front or back
 - No strapless garments shall be worn to school or school sponsored activity
 - No tank tops, halter tops, low cut dresses or spaghetti strap type shirts or tops are to be worn at school or school sponsored activity
 - Shirts, blouses and tops must be long enough so that not midriff area shows when both arms are extended above the head
 - All shirts must be tucked in pants or skirts if they extend beyond the end of the scholar's fingertips
 - Cardigan sweaters, pullover sweaters, and sweatshirts may be worn outside of the pants or skirts.
 - No short shorts or excessively tight clothing
 - Shirts, blouses, tops and dresses should not show any cleavage.
- Hair
 - Must not be rolled, tied in a scarf or other hair covering, or covered by a hat, bandana, or cap.
 - Piercings: body piercings other than normal ear piercings is strictly prohibited

Boys dress and grooming

- Shirts or tops
 - Must have sleeves and be buttoned
 - No oversized clothing.
 - All shirts must be tucked in pants if they are made to be worn tucked in or they extend beyond the end of the scholar's fingertips. Cardigan sweaters, pullover sweaters, and sweatshirts may be worn outside of the pants
 - Square bottomed tailored shirts and T shirts are allowable and do not have to be tucked in.
 - Underwear type shirts such as tank tops or muscle shirts, are not acceptable and may only be worn with T-shirts under them.
- Hair
 - Must be neat, well groomed and in good taste. Hair may not be dyed to extremes and haircuts which are bizarre or unusual will not be allowed.

- Any facial hair including mustaches, beards, goatees or excessively long side-burns shall be prohibited.
- Length: hair will not be allowed below the eyebrow, bottom of the ear, and bottom of the shirt collar, when combed straight down.
- No tails of any kind are permitted.
- Earrings
 - Earrings or other piercings are not allowed
- Pants
 - Cannot wear other articles of clothes over or under jeans, pants or shirts to meet the dress code
 - Jeans and pants with holes are not permissible unless they have factory/designer attached patches under the holes and no skin is showing
 - Clothes should fit and be worn appropriately - No sagging pants or oversized clothing, pants worn at the waist with a belt and sufficiently tightened (if the pants have belt loops)

When scholars are found in violation of the dress code they will either be given a change of clothing and the parent / guardian notified or the parent / guardian will be notified and requested to bring appropriate clothing to school. If parents cannot come to school with a change of clothes, then the scholar will be assigned to ISS or suspended for the remainder of the day or until the problem is corrected.. Absences due to inappropriate dress and grooming will be considered unexcused.

ALL DRESS CODE ISSUES, AND THE DECISIONS AS TO THE APPROPRIATENESS OF DRESS AND GROOMING, WILL BE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CAMPUS PRINCIPAL.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

Participation in school-related activities is an excellent way for a scholar to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships with other scholars; participation, however, is a privilege, not a right.

Eligibility for participation in many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL)—a statewide association overseeing interdistrict competition. The following requirements apply to all extracurricular activities:

- A scholar who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class—other than an advanced placement or international baccalaureate course; or an honors or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or a foreign language—may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.

- A scholar with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible scholar may practice or rehearse.
- A scholar is allowed in a school year up to 10 absences not related to post-district competition, a maximum of 5 absences for post-district competition prior to state, and a maximum of 5 absences for state competition. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions.
- An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.

Please note: Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups such as the band, choir, and drill and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior—including consequences for misbehavior—that are stricter than those for scholars in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the *Student Code of Conduct* or by local policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization's standards of behavior.

[For further information, see policies at FM and FO.]

FEES

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds at no charge to a scholar. A scholar, however, is expected to provide his or her own pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks and may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including:

- Costs for materials for a class project that the scholar will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or scholar organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Security deposits.
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.
- Voluntarily purchased student accident insurance.
- Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance, when uniforms are provided by the district.
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the scholar.
- Parking fees and scholar identification cards.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.

- Fees for optional courses offered for credit that require use of facilities not available on district premises.
- Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.
- A reasonable fee for providing transportation to a scholar who lives within two miles of the school.
- A fee not to exceed \$50 for costs of providing an educational program outside of regular school hours for a scholar who has lost credit because of absences and whose parent chooses the program to meet the 90 percent attendance requirement.

The fee will be charged only if the parent or guardian signs a district-provided request form.

Any required fee or deposit may be waived if the scholar and parent are unable to pay. Application for such a waiver may be made to the campus principal. [For further information, see policies at FP.]

FUND-RAISING

Scholar groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. An application for permission must be made to the campus principal at least 10 days before the event. See policies at FJ and GE.

GRADE CLASSIFICATION

After the ninth grade, scholars are classified according to the number of credits earned toward graduation.

| Credits Earned | Classification |
|----------------|----------------------|
| 5 | Grade 10 (Sophomore) |
| 10 | Grade 11 (Junior) |
| 15 | Grade 12 (Senior) |

GRADING GUIDELINES

In grades 7–12, achievement is reported to parents as: Verbal notices, written notices, email messages, progress reports, phone conversations, and report cards.

GRADUATION

Requirements for a Diploma

To receive a high school diploma from the district, a scholar must successfully complete the required number of credits and pass a statewide exit-level exam.

The exit-level test, required for scholars in grade 11, covers English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies and requires knowledge of Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, Integrated Chemistry and Physics, English III, and early American and United States History, World History, and World Geography. A scholar who does not pass the exit-level assessment will have additional opportunities to take the test.

Graduation Programs

The district offers the graduation programs listed below. All scholars entering grade 9 are required to enroll in the Recommended High School Program or Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program. Permission to enroll in the Minimum Graduation Program will be granted only if an agreement is reached among the scholar, the scholar's parent or person standing in parental relation, and the counselor or appropriate administrator. [See policy EIF(LEGAL).]

Scholars who entered the ninth grade during the 2005–2006 school year must meet the following credit requirements for graduation:

- Minimum Program 28 credits
- Recommended Program 28 credits
- Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program 28 credits

Scholars who entered the ninth grade during the 2006–2007 school year must meet the following credit requirements for graduation:

- Minimum Program 28 credits
- Recommended Program 28 credits
- Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program 28 credits

Beginning with the 2007–2008 school year, a scholar entering the ninth grade must meet the following credit requirements for graduation:

- Minimum Program 28 credits
- Recommended Program 28 credits
- Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program 28 credits

Please be aware that not all courses are offered at every secondary campus in the district. A scholar who wants to take a course not offered at his or her regular campus should contact the counselor about a transfer or other alternatives. If the parents of at least 22 scholars request a transfer for those scholars to take a course in the required curriculum other than fine arts or career and technology, the district will offer the course for the following year either by teleconference or at the school from which the transfers were requested.

Certificates of Coursework Completion

A certificate of coursework completion will be issued to a senior scholar who successfully completes state and local credit requirements for graduation but fails to perform satisfactorily on the exit-level tests.

Students with Disabilities

Upon the recommendation of the admission, review, and dismissal committee, a scholar with disabilities may be permitted to graduate under the provisions of his or her individualized education program (IEP).

A scholar who receives special education services and has completed four years of high school, but has not met the requirements of his or her IEP, may participate in graduation ceremonies and receive a certificate of attendance. Even if the scholar participates in graduation ceremonies to receive the certificate of attendance, he or she may remain enrolled to complete the IEP and earn his or her high school diploma; however, the scholar will only be allowed to participate in one graduation ceremony.

[See FMH(LEGAL)]

Graduation Activities

Graduation activities will include:

- Commencement Exercise
- Project Graduation

Graduation Expenses

Because scholars and parents will incur expenses in order to participate in the traditions of graduation—such as the purchase of invitations, senior ring, cap and gown, and senior picture—both scholar and parent should monitor progress toward completion of all requirements for graduation. The expenses often are incurred in the junior year or first semester of the senior year.

State Scholarships and Grants

- Under the Texas Early High School Graduation Scholarship Program, scholars who complete the Recommended or Advanced/Distinguished Achievement High School Program may earn financial credits in varying amounts to apply toward college tuition. The amounts depend on the number of consecutive months in which the scholar completed graduation requirements and the number of early college credits earned and may be used at public or private higher education institutions within the state. The counselor can provide additional information about meeting the program's eligibility requirements.
- Scholars who have a financial need according to federal criteria and who complete the Recommended High School Program or Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program may be eligible under the T.E.X.A.S. Grant Program for tuition and fees to Texas public universities, community colleges, and technical schools, as well as to private institutions. [For further information, see the principal or counselor and policy EJ(LEGAL).]

HARASSMENT

See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 20.

HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS

Physical Activity for Scholars in Elementary and Middle School

In accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, and FFA, the district will ensure that scholars in kindergarten through grade 5 engage in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day or 135 minutes per week.

Scholars in middle or junior high school shall engage in 30 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity per day for at least four semesters OR at least 225 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity within a two-week period for at least four semesters.

For additional information on the district's requirements and programs regarding elementary, middle, and junior high school scholar physical activity requirements, please see the principal.

School Health Advisory Council

During the preceding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council held 4 meetings. Additional information regarding the district's School Health Advisory Council is available from the school nurse. [See also policies at BDF and EHAA.]

Physical Fitness Assessment

Annually, the district will conduct a physical fitness assessment of scholars in grades 3–12. At the end of the school year, a parent may submit a written request to the campus principal to obtain the results of his or her child's physical fitness assessment conducted during the school year.

Vending Machines

The district has adopted policies and implemented procedures to comply with state and federal food service guidelines for restricting scholar access to vending machines. For more information regarding these policies and guidelines see the campus principal.

[See policies at CO and FFA.]

Other Health-Related Matters

Tobacco Prohibited

The district and its staff strictly enforce prohibitions against the use of tobacco products by scholars and others on school property and at school-sponsored and school-related activities. [See the *Student Code of Conduct* and policies at FNCD and GKA.]

Asbestos Management Plan

The district's Asbestos Management Plan, designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations, is available in the superintendent's office. If you have any questions, please contact the Superintendent.

Pest Management Plan

The district applies only pest control products that comply with state and federal guidelines. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before application. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact the superintendent.

HOMELESS STUDENTS

For more information on services for homeless scholars, contact the district's Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths, Dr. Eli Casey, Superintendent, 204 Second Street, Meridian Tx. 76665, 254-435-2081.

IN SCHOOL SUSPENSION

Scholars who are placed in In-School Suspension or suspended from school will not be allowed to participate in any extra-curricular or co-curricular activities on those days. Scholars will be eligible to participate in extra-curricular or co-curricular the first day after ISS (as long as they are passing their coursework).

IMMUNIZATION

A scholar must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical reasons or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, the scholar will not be immunized. For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Immunization Branch, can be honored by the district. This form may be obtained by writing the DSHS Immunization Branch P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347; or online at <https://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/immco/affidavit.shtm>. The form must be notarized and submitted to the principal or school nurse within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one scholar in the family, a separate form must be provided for each scholar.

The immunizations required are: diphtheria, rubeola (measles), rubella (German measles), mumps, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis (polio), hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and varicella (chicken pox). The school nurse can provide information on age-appropriate doses or on an acceptable physician-validated history of illness required by the Department of State Health Services. Proof of immunization may be established by personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation. If a scholar should not be immunized for medical reasons, the scholar or parent must present a certificate signed by a U.S. licensed physician stating that, in the doctor's opinion, the immunization required poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the scholar or member of the scholar's family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a life-long condition. [For further information, see policy FFAB(LEGAL) and the Depart. of State Health Services Web site: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm>.]

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Questioning of Scholars

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a scholar at school, the principal will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation. In other circumstances:

- The principal will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the scholar at school.
- The principal ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection. The principal ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.

Scholars Taken Into Custody

State law requires the district to permit a scholar to be taken into legal custody:

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
- To comply with the laws of arrest.
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the scholar has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the scholar has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.
- By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Family Code relating to the scholar's physical health or safety.
- To comply with a properly issued directive to take a scholar into custody.

Before a scholar is released to a law enforcement officer or other legally authorized person, the principal will verify the officer's identity and, to the best of his or her ability, will verify the official's authority to take custody of the scholar.

The principal will immediately notify the superintendent and will ordinarily attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other authorized person raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents. Because the principal does not have the authority to prevent or delay a scholar's release to a law enforcement officer, any notification will most likely be after the fact.

Notification of Law Violations

The district is required by state law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a scholar who has been arrested or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.
- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a scholar who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors.[For further information, see policy GRA(LEGAL).]

MAKEUP WORK

Routine and In-depth Makeup Work Assignments

For any class missed, the teacher may assign the scholar makeup work based on the instructional objectives for the subject or course and the needs of the individual scholar in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject or course requirements.

A scholar will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. [For further information, see policy EIAB (LOCAL).]

A scholar who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

A scholar will be permitted to make up tests and to turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence. Teachers may assign a late penalty to any long-term project in accordance with time lines approved by the principal and previously communicated to scholars.

DAEP or In-school Suspension Makeup Work

A scholar removed to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) during the school year will have an opportunity to complete, before the beginning of the next school year, coursework needed to fulfill the scholar's high school graduation requirements. The district may provide the opportunity to complete the coursework through an alternative method, including a correspondence course, distance learning, or summer school. The district will not charge the scholar for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FOCA (LEGAL).]

A scholar removed from the regular classroom to in-school suspension or another setting, other than a DAEP, will have an opportunity to complete before the beginning of the next school year each course the scholar was enrolled in at the time of removal from the regular classroom. The district may provide the opportunity by any method available, including a correspondence course, distance learning, or summer school. [See policy FEA (LEGAL).]

Scholars and their parents are encouraged to discuss options with the teacher or counselor to ensure the scholar completes all work required for the course or grade level.

MEDICINE AT SCHOOL

District employees will not give a scholar prescription medication, nonprescription medication, herbal substances, anabolic steroids, or dietary supplements, with the following exceptions:

- Only authorized employees, in accordance with policies at FFAC, may administer:
 - Prescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent, along with a written request.
 - Prescription medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified district employee from the original, properly labeled container.
 - Nonprescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request.
 - Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent only if required by the scholar's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a scholar with disabilities.
- In certain emergency situations, the district will maintain and administer to a scholar nonprescription medication, but only:
 - In accordance with the guidelines developed with the district's medical advisor; and when the parent has previously provided written consent to emergency treatment on the district's form.

A scholar with asthma or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may be permitted to possess and use prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school or school-related events only if he or she has written authorization from his or her parent and a physician or other licensed health-care provider. The scholar must also demonstrate to his or her physician or health-care provider and to the school nurse the ability to use the prescribed medication, including any device required to administer the medication.

If the scholar has been prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication for use during the school day, the scholar and parents should discuss this with the school nurse or principal.

In accordance with a scholar's individual health plan for management of diabetes, a scholar with diabetes will be permitted to possess and use monitoring and treatment supplies and equipment while at school or at a school-related activity. See the school nurse or principal for information. [See policy FFAF(LEGAL).]

Psychotropic Drugs

A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication. It is intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior and is commonly described as a mood- or behavior-altering substance.

Teachers and other district employees may discuss a scholar's academic progress or behavior with the scholar's parents or another employee as appropriate; however, they are not permitted to recommend use of psychotropic drugs.

A district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a scholar be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate

PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE

Each school day, scholars will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge.

One minute of silence will follow recitation of the pledges. Each scholar may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others. See policy EC(LEGAL).

PRAYER

Each scholar has a right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other activities of the school. The school will not encourage, require, or coerce a scholar to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

A scholar will be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level. To earn credit in a course, a scholar must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-level or grade-level standards.

In grades 7 - 11 promotion is based on EIE(LOCAL) and include promotion standards for the respective grade levels.

In addition, at certain grade levels a scholar—with limited exceptions—will be required to pass the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), if the scholar is enrolled in a public Texas school on any day between January 1 and April 15 and is a Texas resident during the week that the TAKS is administered the first time.

- In order to be promoted to grade 4, scholars must perform satisfactorily on the reading section of the grade 3 assessment in English or Spanish.
- In order to be promoted to grade 6, scholars enrolled in grade 5 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 5 assessment in English or Spanish.
- In order to be promoted to grade 9, scholars enrolled in grade 8 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 8 assessment in English.

Parents of a scholar in grade 3, 5, or 8 who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her exams will be notified that their child will participate in special instructional programs designed to improve performance. Such scholars will have two additional opportunities to take the test. If a scholar fails a second time, a grade placement committee, consisting of the principal or designee, the teacher, and the scholar's parent, will determine the additional special instruction the scholar will receive.

After a third failed attempt, the scholar will be retained; however, the parent can appeal this decision to the committee. In order for the scholar to be promoted, based on standards previously established by the district, the decision of the committee must be unanimous. Whether the scholar is retained or promoted, an educational plan for the scholar will be designed to enable the scholar to perform at grade level by the end of the next school year. [See policies at EIE.]

Certain scholars—some with disabilities and some with limited English proficiency—may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing. For more information, see the principal, counselor, or special education director.

A Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) will be prepared for any scholar in a middle school or beyond who did not perform satisfactorily on a state-mandated assessment or is determined by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year following enrollment in grade 9. The PGP will be designed and implemented by a guidance counselor, teacher, or other staff member designated by the principal. The plan will, among other items, identify the scholar's educational goals, address the parent's educational expectations for the scholar, and outline an intensive instruction program for the scholar. For additional information, see the counselor or principal.

RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL

Because class time is important, doctor's appointments should be scheduled, if possible, at times when the scholar will not miss instructional time.

A scholar who will need to leave school during the day must bring a note from his or her parent that morning and follow the campus sign-out procedures before leaving the campus. Otherwise, a scholar will not be released from school at times other than at the end of the school day. Unless the principal has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a scholar will not be released before the end of the instructional day.

If a scholar becomes ill during the school day, the scholar should receive permission from the teacher before reporting to the school nurse. The nurse will decide whether or not the scholar should be sent home and will notify the scholar's parent.

REPORT CARDS / PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES

Report cards with each scholar's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued to parents at least once every 6 weeks.

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, parents will be given a written progress report if their child's performance is near or below 75, or is below the expected level of performance. If the scholar receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the principal and are designed to reflect each scholar's academic achievement for the grading period, semester, or course. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the district's grading policy. See policy EIA (LOCAL).

Questions about grade calculation should first be discussed with the teacher; if the question is not resolved, the scholar or parent may request a conference with the principal in accordance with FNG (LOCAL).

The report card or unsatisfactory progress report will state whether tutorials are required for a scholar who receives a grade lower than 70 in a class or subject.

Report cards and unsatisfactory progress reports must be signed by the parent and should be returned to the school within 3 days.

RETALIATION

See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 20

SAFETY

Scholar safety on campus and at school-related events is a high priority of the district. Although the district has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of scholars is essential to ensuring school safety. A scholar should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the scholar or other scholars at risk.
- Follow the behavioral standards in this handbook and the *Student Code of Conduct*, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the principal, teachers, or bus drivers.
- Remain alert to and promptly report to a teacher or the principal any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a scholar or staff member.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other district employees who are overseeing the welfare of scholars.

Accident Insurance

Soon after the school year begins, parents will have the opportunity to purchase low-cost accident insurance that would help meet medical expenses in the event of injury to their child.

Drills: Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergencies

From time to time, scholars, teachers, and other district employees will participate in drills of emergency procedures. When the alarm is sounded, scholars should follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

Fire Drill Bells

| | |
|---------|--------------------------|
| 3 bells | leave the building |
| 1 bell | halt; stand at attention |
| 2 bells | return to the classroom |

Tornado Drill Bells

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| 1 continuous bell | move quietly but quickly to the designated locations |
| 2 bells | return to the classroom |

Emergency Medical Treatment and Information

If a scholar has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent cannot be reached, the school would need to have written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment, and information about allergies to medications, foods, insect bites, etc. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up-to-date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the school nurse to update any information that the nurse or the teacher needs to know.

Emergency School-Closing Information

For school closing information listen to radio stations: WACO (**100 FM**), KNFO (**95.5 FM**), KGO (**95.7 FM**), KWTX (**97.5 FM**), KBRQ (**102.5 FM**), WBAP (**820 AM**), KWTX (**1460 AM**) or TV stations KWTX (**Ch. 10**), KCEN (**Ch. 6**), KXXV (**Ch. 25**), and KXAS (**Ch. 5**).

SAT, ACT, AND OTHER STANDARDIZED TESTS

Many colleges require either the American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for admission. Scholars are encouraged to talk with the counselor early during their junior year to determine the appropriate exam to take; these exams are usually taken at the end of the junior year.

(Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most scholars must take a standardized test, such as the Texas Higher Education Assessment [THEA]).

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Use By Scholars Before and After School

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to scholars before and after school for specific purposes. scholars are required to remain in the area where their activity is scheduled to take place.

The following areas are open to scholars before school, beginning at 7:30 a.m.

- Commons area
- Classroom Tutorials
- Detention
- ISS

Unless the teacher or sponsor overseeing the activity gives permission, a scholar will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus.

After dismissal of school in the afternoon, and unless involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher, scholars must leave campus immediately.

Conduct Before and After School

Teachers and administrators have full authority over scholar conduct at before- or after-school activities on district premises and at school-sponsored events off district premises, such as play rehearsals, club meetings, athletic practices, and special study groups or tutorials. Scholars are subject to the same rules of conduct that apply during the instructional day and will be subject to consequences established by the *Student Code of Conduct* or any stricter standards of behavior established by the sponsor for extracurricular participants.

Use of Hallways During Class Time

Loitering or standing in the halls during class is not permitted. During class time, a scholar must have a hall pass to be outside the classroom for any purpose. Failure to obtain a pass will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

Cafeteria Services

The district participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers scholars nutritionally balanced lunches daily. Free and reduced-price lunches are available based on financial need. Information about a scholar's participation is confidential. See Food Service Director to apply.

The district follows the federal and state guidelines regarding foods of minimal nutritional value being served or sold on school premises during the school day. [For more information, see policy CO(LEGAL).]

Library

The library is a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other materials available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading or listening pleasure. The library is open for independent scholar use during the following times with a teacher permit or librarian's approval:

Meetings of Noncurriculum-Related Groups

Scholar-organized, scholar-led noncurriculum-related groups are permitted to meet during the hours designated by the principal before and after school. These groups must comply with the requirements of policy FNAB(LOCAL).

SEARCHES

In the interest of promoting scholar safety and attempting to ensure that schools are safe and drug free, district officials may from time to time conduct searches. Such searches are conducted without a warrant and as permitted by law.

Scholars' Desks and Lockers

scholars' desks and lockers are school property and remain under the control and jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual scholar.

Scholars are fully responsible for the security and contents of their assigned desks and lockers. Scholars must be certain that their lockers are locked, and that the combinations are not available to others.

Searches of desks or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by policy, whether or not a scholar is present.

The parent will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the scholar's desk or locker.

Vehicles on Campus

Vehicles parked on school property are under the jurisdiction of the school. School officials may search any vehicle any time there is reasonable cause to do so, with or without the permission of the scholar. A scholar has full responsibility for the security and content of his or her vehicle and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others. [See also the *Student Code of Conduct*.]

Trained Dogs

The district will use trained dogs to alert school officials to the presence of prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and alcohol. At any time, trained dogs may be used around lockers and the areas around vehicles parked on school property. Searches of classrooms, common areas, or scholar belongings may also be conducted by trained dogs when scholars are not present. An item in a classroom, a locker, or a vehicle to which a trained dog alerts may be searched by school officials.

SEMESTER TEST EXEMPTIONS

Scholars may be granted an exemption from final exams based on the following guidelines:

A in the class, E or S in citizenship, 2 or less absences, 3 or less tardies

B in the class, E or S in citizenship, 1 or less absences, 2 or less tardies

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The district provides special programs for gifted and talented scholars, homeless scholars, bilingual scholars, migrant scholars, scholars with limited English proficiency, dyslexic scholars, and scholars with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations. A scholar or parent with questions about these programs should contact the counselor or campus principal.

STEROIDS

State law prohibits scholars from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for medical use only, and only a physician can prescribe use.

Body building, muscle enhancement, or the increase of muscle bulk or strength through the use of an anabolic steroid or human growth hormone by a healthy scholar is not a valid medical use and is a criminal offense.

Scholars participating in UIL athletic competition may be subject to random steroid testing. More information on the UIL testing program may be found on the UIL Web site at http://www.uil.utexas.edu/athletics/health/steroid_information.html.

STUDENT SPEAKERS

The district provides scholars the opportunity to introduce the following school events: High School Graduation. Scholars are eligible to introduce these events if the scholar was not assigned to disciplinary placement at any time during the school year.

A scholar who is eligible and wishes to introduce one of the school events listed above should submit his or her name to the principal during the first week of the fall semester and/or spring semester. The names of all scholars who volunteered will be randomly drawn. If the selected scholar speaker declines or becomes ineligible, then no scholar introduction will be made at that event. The selection of scholars to introduce school events will occur at the beginning of each semester.

As determined by the principal, scholars who have been selected for special honors, such as captain of an athletic team, scholar council officers, leaders of school-sponsored organizations, homecoming king or queen, or prom king or queen may also address school audiences at designated events.[See FNA(LOCAL)]

TAKS (TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS)

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, scholars at certain grade levels will take state-mandated tests (such as TAKS: the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills) in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3–11
- Reading, annually in grades 3–9
- Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades 4 and 7
- English language arts in grades 10 and 11
- Social studies in grades 8, 10, and 11
- Science in grades 5, 8, 10, and 11

Any scholar who does not pass one or more portions of the TAKS Test will be required to attend a remedial class (either summer school or tutorial classes offered by the district) before they take TAKS test again.

TARDINESS

Meridian High School tardy policy for the 2008-2009 school year will be as follows:

1. 1st and 2nd tardies – no consequences
2. 3rd tardy – 1 swat (corporal punishment) or 1 day of Saturday School
3. 4th tardy – 2 swats (corporal punishment) or 2 day of Saturday School
4. 5th tardy or more – 3 swats (corporal punishment) or 3 days of ISS

The tardy policy starts over at the beginning of each six weeks. If a scholar is 20 minutes late for a class then they will be assigned an unexcused absence in accordance with the attendance policy.

TEXTBOOKS

State-approved textbooks are provided to scholars free of charge for each subject or class. Books must be covered by the scholar, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. A scholar who is issued a damaged book should report the damage to the teacher. Any scholar failing to return a book issued by the school loses the right to free textbooks until the book is returned or paid for by the parent; however, the scholar will be provided textbooks for use at school during the school day.

TRANSPORTATION

School-Sponsored Trips

Scholars who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event.

The principal, however, may make an exception if the parent makes a written request that the scholar be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent.

Buses and Other School Vehicles

The district makes school bus transportation available to all scholars living two or more miles from school. This service is provided at no cost to scholars. Bus routes and any subsequent changes are posted at the school.

A parent may also designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated facility or residence must be on an approved stop on an approved route. For information on bus routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, you may contact 254-435-2723.

See the *Student Code of Conduct* for provisions regarding transportation to the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP).

Scholars are expected to assist district staff in ensuring that buses remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. When riding in district vehicles, scholars are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the *Student Code of Conduct*.

Scholars must:

- Follow the driver’s directions at all times.
- Enter and leave the bus or van in an orderly manner at the designated stop nearest home.
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the bus, van, or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the bus or van.
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco on school buses.
- Observe all usual classroom rules.
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Fasten their seat belts.
- Wait for the driver’s signal upon leaving the bus or van and before crossing in front of the vehicle.

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*; bus-riding privileges may be suspended.

VANDALISM

The taxpayers of the community have made a sustained financial commitment for the construction and upkeep of school facilities. To ensure that school facilities can serve those for whom they are intended—both this year and for years to come—littering, defacing, or damaging school property is not tolerated.

Scholars will be required to pay for damages they cause and will be subject to criminal proceedings as well as disciplinary consequences in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

VIDEO CAMERAS

For safety purposes, video/audio equipment may be used to monitor scholar behavior on buses and in common areas on campus. Scholars will not be told when the equipment is being used.

The principal will review the video/audio recordings routinely and document scholar misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

General Visitors

Parents and others are welcome to visit district schools. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the principal’s office and must comply with all applicable district policies and procedures.

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher and only so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct; disruptive behavior will not be permitted.

WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL

A scholar under 18 may be withdrawn from school only by a parent. The school requests notice from the parent at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. The parent may obtain a withdrawal form from the principal's office.

On the scholar's last day, the withdrawal form must be presented to each teacher for current grade averages and book clearance; to the librarian to ensure a clear library record; to the clinic for health records; to the counselor for the last report card and course clearance; and finally, to the principal. A copy of the withdrawal form will be given to the scholar, and a copy will be placed in the scholar's permanent record.

A scholar who is 18 or older, who is married, or who has been declared by a court to be an emancipated minor, may withdraw without parental signature.

GLOSSARY

Accelerated instruction is an intensive supplemental program designed to address the needs of an individual student in acquiring the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level.

ACT refers to one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams: the American College Test. The test may be a requirement for admission to certain colleges or universities.

Alternative assessment instrument, developed by the state, may be given to students in special education and students identified as limited English proficient.

ARD is the admission, review, and dismissal committee convened for each student who is identified as needing a full and individual evaluation for special education services. The eligible student's parents are part of the committee.

Attendance Review Committee is sometimes responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent of the days the class is offered. Under guidelines adopted by the board, the committee will determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences and whether the student needs to complete certain conditions to master the course and regain credit lost because of absences.

DAEP stands for disciplinary alternative education program, a placement for students who have violated certain provisions of the *Student Code of Conduct*. Students in the DAEP will be separated from students not assigned to the program. The DAEP will focus instruction on English language arts, mathematics, science, history, and self-discipline, and provide for students' educational and behavior needs, as well as supervision and counseling.

FERPA refers to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act that grants specific privacy protections to student records. The law contains certain exceptions, such as for directory information, unless a student's parent or a student 18 or older directs the school not to release directory information.

IEP is the written record of the Individualized Education Program prepared by the ARD committee for a student with disabilities who is eligible for special education services. The IEP contains several parts, such as a statement of the student's present educational performance; a statement of measurable annual goals, with short-term objectives; the special education and related services and supplemental aids and services to be provided, and program modifications or support by school personnel; a statement regarding how the student's progress will be measured and how the parents will be kept informed; modifications to state or districtwide tests, etc.

ISS refers to in-school suspension, a disciplinary technique for misconduct found in the *Student Code of Conduct*. Although different from out-of-school suspension and placement in a DAEP, ISS removes the student from the regular classroom.

NCLB Act is the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) is recommended for all students entering grade 9 and is required by state law for any student in middle school or higher who fails a section on a state-mandated test or is identified by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year after he or she begins grade 9.

SAT refers to one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams: the Scholastic Aptitude Test. The test may be a requirement for admissions to certain colleges or universities.

Section 504 is the federal law that prohibits discrimination against a student with a disability, requiring schools to provide opportunities for equal services, programs, and participation in activities. Unless the student is determined by an ARD committee to be eligible for special education services, appropriate regular educational services will be provided.

State-mandated tests are required of students at certain grade levels and in specified subjects. Successful performance sometimes is a condition of promotion, and passing the grade 11 exit-level test is a condition of graduation. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests if necessary for promotion or graduation.

Student Code of Conduct is developed with the advice of the district-level committee and adopted by the board; identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from the classroom or campus. It also sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a DAEP. It outlines conditions for out-of-school suspension and for expulsion, and states whether self-defense is a consideration in suspension, DAEP placement, or expulsion. The *Student Code of Conduct* also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student's violation of one of its provisions.

TAKS is short for the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, the state's standardized achievement test currently given to students in certain subjects in grades 3–11.

UIL refers to the University Interscholastic League, the statewide voluntary nonprofit organization that oversees educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests.

**APPENDIX I:
Acknowledgment Form—Amendment**

My child and I have received a copy of the *Meridian High School Student Handbook* dated _____.

Print name of student: _____

Signature of student: _____

Signature of parent: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX II: Use of Student Work in District Publications

Occasionally, Meridian High School wishes to display or publish student artwork or special projects on the district's Web site and in district publications. The district agrees to only use these student projects in this manner.

Parent: Please circle one of the choices below:

I, parent of _____ (student's name), **(do give)**
(do not give) the district permission to use my child's artwork or special
project on the district's Web site and in district publications.

Parent signature: _____

Date: _____