

FAMILY HANDBOOK



MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY
HIGHLAND PARK

Click the QR Code below to view the Family/Student Handbook in its entirety.



2025-2026 School Year

MEHP is providing this handbook to help families navigate the school year. Policies, procedures, and information has been included to ensure we have a safe, healthy, and joyful school year.

Family Handbook

2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR

Welcome to Montessori Elementary at Highland Park (MEHP)! This Family Handbook specifies many policies and procedures about school operations. Our team is committed to supporting families in their child's education. MEHP will strive to create an exceptional learning environment for all students. In partnership with parents/guardians, MEHP will collaborate with families to promote continuity between school and home. We hope to work closely with you to develop that relationship.

You can help your child prepare for school in the following ways:

- Ensure that your child attends school daily, on-time, in uniform, and ready to learn.
- Ensure that your child completes all assigned work. Check your child's work regularly.
- Ensure that your child reads and/or you read to your child daily.
- Keep the school informed if your child has any unique needs or has experiences that we should know about to support your child.

There are many other ways that you can be involved with our school!

- Participate in family meetings, educational events, and fun activities at school.
- Attend student performances at school.
- Inform us about community events in which we should participate.
- Carpool with other families.
- Attend Family Conferences with your child's teacher.
- Volunteer at special events or with our Voices of MEHP parent group.

Please sign and return the Commitment form at the end of this handbook stating you have read and understand MEHPs' policies. MEHP looks forward to partnering with families to ensure each student has a great year.

Introduction

The purpose of the Montessori Elementary at Highland Park (MEHP) student and family handbook is to provide a clear and central source of information about everyday aspects of life at MEHP. Students will review this during the first days of school. Students and their families must review this book, as it provides answers to almost any general MEHP question. Parents and students are responsible for upholding the handbook expectations.

“Children are endowed with a power that enables them to reconstruct things which are very complex, and they do so with a great deal of pleasure.” —Maria Montessori, The 1946 London Lectures

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Mission

The mission of Montessori Elementary at Highland Park is to cultivate ambitious, fearless learners through intellectually stimulating, interactive experiences that awaken curiosity, nurture advanced thinking, and promote independence.

Vision

To establish a trajectory for lifelong learning and self-directed discovery that enables children to reach their full potential as intellectually engaged learners and ethically focused leaders.

Core Values

Respect	The basis of the Montessori classroom is mutual respect. A classroom based on mutual trust creates trustworthy children. Respect and trust go hand in hand. By respecting the individual children in their care, Montessori teachers continue to aid the intellect, emotional and moral development of their students.
Responsibility	In Montessori education children take responsibility for their own learning. This style of learning is now referred to as “constructivist.” But children cannot construct their own learning until they are responsible for making their own choices. If they are forced to learn and do not know why they are doing it, they merely go through the motions. They feel as if they have no control over their lives and learning can become something that they endure, rather than something that they accomplish by their own self-effort.
Self-discipline	To accomplish self-discipline is one of the great tasks of life. Responsibility requires discipline. To discipline yourself you must have the freedom to make choices. They must have the opportunity to control themselves, by themselves. They must not be constantly controlled by others, because this imposes discipline from the outside and does not give the child the opportunity to learn by him or herself.
Independence	To be independent, the child must be free to make choices, make mistakes, learn from those mistakes, and have the opportunity to self-correct. We guide them in their growth as we prepare a learning and social environment in which they can make their way toward independence.
Creativity & Innovation	The creative powers of the children help them solve problems throughout their stay in the Montessori classroom. These problems can be social, emotional, intellectual, or physical in nature. By allowing the children to grapple with these problems and ideas we help them enlist their own creativity. When children are not permitted to deal with their own problems as they arise, but have adults solve them for them, they have difficulty experiencing their own creative solutions. To teach children in only one way, and ask for only one answer, will prevent them from using their minds in an inventive way.
Self-motivation	Children are self-motivated when they can make choices and have some sense of control over what they elect to do. This does not mean that they do whatever they please. In the Montessori classroom we are looking for intrinsic motivation as opposed to extrinsic motivation. Children work because they want to – not to get a grade, to please an adult, or because they will get in trouble for failing if they do not do what the teacher requires. (Montessori Today, P.90.)

Collaboration	Montessori students often work collaboratively within their multi-age classroom groupings, learning with and from one another. Because children have different talents, skills, and interests, the groups that form together to help each other are constantly changing. The nature of a collaborative environment is that it feels very reasonable and safe. A child can always turn to another child for help. This is made easier in the multi-aged classroom. It also helps older children when they explain things to younger students. It clarifies their knowledge when they must articulate it to someone else.
Leadership	Children who have been allowed to take responsibility for their work and have developed an essential level of self-discipline and responsibility experience high self-esteem and are prepared for life. They have the requisite skills to go on to higher education, to be successful at what they attempt, and to step forth into the world with the leadership and problem-solving skills that they will need to successfully face the tasks that await them.

Montessori Method

MEHP follows the educational philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori. As the first female doctor to graduate from the University of Rome, Maria Montessori used a scientific approach of observation to develop the Montessori Method. Over time, the new model of education emerging from the “Children’s House” in Rome, Italy became an inspiration to parents and teachers across the globe. There are key elements to a Montessori environment including: fully trained Montessori guides, mixed ages of children in the classrooms, use of specific Montessori multisensory materials, uninterrupted periods of engaged learning where students have some choice in activities and where, when, and how long they work on them. Other components of a Montessori environment include valuing and encouraging concentration, independence, self-expression, and self-direction.

Students are encouraged to study a variety of subjects in liberal arts and science. As students develop their abilities and discover other interests, our guides (the teachers and educational assistants) foster a love of learning while ensuring students receive developmentally appropriate skills. We balance respecting the child’s true natural curiosity with a responsibility to learn basic skills. This is referred to as Freedom within Limits. All humans must have limits to develop self-control. Additionally, students need to take risks to gain confidence in their abilities. In our classrooms, we want to inspire both the risk of trying something new and accountability in completing assigned tasks.

“The child who concentrates is immensely happy.” —Maria Montessori *The Absorbent Mind*

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Anti-Discrimination

MEHP believes in an inclusive, anti-bias environment. MEHP encompasses children of diverse races, religious and ethnic backgrounds as well as learners with different talents, personalities, abilities, and learning styles. While valuing diversity, we embrace all cultures and acknowledge that there are multiple approaches to resolving issues. Staff and families are encouraged to work together to ensure the prevention of discrimination practices.

Attendance Policy

Tennessee law (TCA 49-6-3001) requires that all children between the ages of six (6) and seventeen (17) attend school. Daily attendance must be taken and reported for all students attending PreK- Grade 12. Attendance is a key factor in student achievement, and therefore students are expected to be present and on time each day that school is in session. Students and parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring regular school attendance. Unexcused absences are prohibited by law. MEHP follows [TDOE Student Membership and Attendance procedures Manual](#) and believes that regular attendance is a key factor in academic achievement and social wellness of students.

Excused Absences

Absences for grades PreK-5 shall be classified as either excused or unexcused as determined by the head of school or designee. Excused absences shall include:

- Doctor Notes.
- Illness or incapacitating condition of a family member that requires temporary absence.
- Death in the family.
- Validated court appearances of the student.
- Religious observances (TCA 49-6-3007 and -3017(c));
- One day absence when the parent/guardian or custodian is deployed for military service and one day absence when the parent/guardian or custodian returns from military service.
- Circumstances which, in the judgment of the school, create emergencies over which the student has no control.

MEHP does not accept parent/guardian notes as an excused absence for any reason. Medical/doctor notes are accepted as an excused absence.

Unexcused Absences

MEHP's attendance policy for absences is as follows:

- Third Absence - Parent/student conference
- Fourth Absence - Parent/student conference with the school counselor
- Fifth Absence - Legal Notice mailed to parent/guardian. Conference with administration per TDOE, MEHP and HCDE attendance policy.
- Sixth Absence and Seventh Absence- Attendance Contract
- Eighth Absence (Tier 2) and Ninth Absence - Referral to School Truancy Officer and counselor. Failure to fulfill Tier 2 requirements will result in immediate referral to HCDE Truancy Board.
- Tenth Absence – Certified letter will be mailed to student's home stating that the family MUST attend the HCDE Truancy Board hearing.
- Eleventh Absence and above – Petition filed.

Pre-Arranged Absences

Pre-arranged absences are unexcused. Students may make up work. Parents of students who need to arrange for a planned absence for their child must make a formal request in writing to the principal a week prior to absence. If the principal agrees to the planned absence, the student is given a form that each of her teachers must sign. Students who have pre-arranged absences are responsible for making up work. They must get their

make-up work done before the date of pre-arranged absence. Decision for due date will be made at the discretion of administration.

Appeals

Disputes over whether an absence is excused or unexcused shall be decided by the principal (or designee). After meeting with the parent/guardian, the principal will send the parent/guardian a letter confirming his or her decision and ensure that the student's attendance record is adjusted accordingly. The principal's decision can be appealed to the operator's designee, as specified in the principal's decision confirmation letter.

Make-up work

Students are excused for the day(s) of absence, not the material covered in his/her classes. Therefore, it is the student's responsibility to request make-up work in all subject matter covered during his/her absence. All missed class work or tests (whether from excused or unexcused absence) may be made up provided both that the student makes the request immediately upon returning to school and that class time is not disproportionately taken from other students. If a student is absent two days, work must be turned in within two school days of absence. The make-up work policy only applies to work assigned during the period of absence. If work was due on the day of absence, it must be turned in on the day of return.

School responsibilities: The Head of School / Designee Shall Be Responsible for Ensuring

- Parents are notified of attendance laws (via this handbook), expectations, and consequences for absences.
- Monitoring and documenting attendance, tardiness, and absences daily, including written verification of excused absences and tardiness (including from official sources, such as doctors, if necessary).
- Communicating with families regarding absences.
- Updating the school's student information system for reporting to the district and state.
- Unexcused absence procedures are implemented, including timely parent communication, developing attendance intervention plans, and required notifications.
- Providing parents or students with trustworthy contacts at the school with whom they may speak regarding attendance issues resulting from other personal issues.

Unexcused Absence Procedures & Law Enforcement

If a student is absent without an excuse, the school may implement varying parent communications and school-based interventions to encourage regular attendance. Once a student who is kindergarten-age or above accumulates 10 unexcused absences in a single school year, s/he is considered "truant" and his/her attendance record will be reported to the TN Department of Education, as well as the family. Each successive accumulation of five unexcused absences shall also be reported. If a parent or legal guardian fails to take appropriate action within three days of truancy notification, the case may be referred to Juvenile Court, the District Attorney's Office, and/or the Department of Children's Services for appropriate legal action.

Unexcused Absences and PreK-aged Students

MEHP will consider 10 accumulated days of unexcused absences as grounds for dis-enrollment from the free, voluntary PreK program. We will maintain attendance policies appropriate for state, district, and federal funding, and if a family is unwilling or unable to meet our attendance policy, we must consider offering the PK placement to another family in need. MEHP will make reasonable efforts to communicate with and assist families prior to dis-enrolling a PreK student for truancy.

Tardy Policy

Tardiness can have a significant negative effect on students in terms of missed learning opportunities (e.g. 15 minutes late every day is equal to missing 45 hours - over an entire week of school - over the year). It can also be highly disruptive to the class when one or more children arrive late. If a student accumulates three (3) tardies it is equivalent to one (1) unexcused absence. Also, please be reminded that upon the sixth absence (18 tardies), the student will be placed on an attendance contract.

Early Dismissal

Unless there is an emergency, no early dismissal is allowed after 2:00 pm. Any student who has valid permission to leave the school grounds during the academic day (between 7:50 am and 3:15 pm) must always be signed out by a parent, legal guardian or the documented designee. In order to minimize waiting time, a note should be sent to the office the morning of a student's early dismissal. If a signed-out student returns during the same school day, she must be signed in by a parent, legal guardian or the documented designee.

Absence Due to Illness

Parents/ guardians are asked to keep their child at home if:

- His/her temperature is 99.9 degrees or above.
- There is any vomiting or diarrhea.
- He/she tests positive for strep throat: In this case, students must stay home for 24 hours after being given an injection or started on oral medicine.
- He/she has a contagious illness (i.e., pink eye, ringworm, rash etc.).

If your son/daughter has any of these symptoms, please do not send her to school for at least a 24-hour period after the symptom(s) have been absent -- even if your child says he/she would like to return to school. Students must also remain home 24 hours after being given an injection or starting oral medication. Students with the above symptoms will be sent home.

Students who are absent three (3) or more consecutive days must have a written doctor's excuse upon returning to school.

Illness During School Hours

Students who become ill and need medical assistance during school hours will be sent to the clinic. Front office personnel will call the student's parents and they must be picked up within two (2) hours if deemed necessary.

Cell Phones, Electronics, and Toys

Toys, stuffed animals, Pokemon or other trading cards, and play trinkets are not allowed in school. Please do not allow your child to bring any "toy" or "play" objects to school. Electronic devices (included but not limited to smart watches, MP3 players, gaming devices, and cell phones) are NOT allowed during the school day from arrival - dismissal. Telephones must be in the OFF mode during school hours (and in a backpack or purse) before entering the building. If a student has a phone in view, this will result in a referral and cell phone consequences. Any student caught with a cell phone/any electronic device during school hours during the school day, will have the following consequences applied:

Cell Phone Possession Consequences

1. First Referral • The phone returned after three (3) school days to the guardian. Administrative Detention – one (1) day
2. Second Referral • Phone returned after two (2) weeks to the guardian. Administrative Detention – two (2) days
3. Third Referral • The cell phone will not be returned until the end of the school year. Saturday School will be issued. *Parents must pick up the phone in the main office at the end of the three (3) days, two (2) weeks, or school year.

Phones will not be released to students. Parents should not text or call a student's cell phone during school hours but should contact the main office at (423) 541-9822 to leave a student message. *Refusing to give teacher/staff a cell phone will result in restrictive attendance and Evening School assignment.

Change of Information

Whenever there is a change in telephone number, address, and other vital information, parent/guardian must contact the registrar by calling the front office. Inability to contact a parent or legal guardian during emergency situations may result in contacting the appropriate authorities.

Classroom Expectations

A responsible classroom is one in which a teacher exhibits an attitude of respect for students; has a positive influence in helping students develop good citizenship traits; plans a challenging curriculum to meet the needs of all students; and provides instruction using various methods, deliveries, and strategies.

The teacher is responsible for creating a positive classroom climate conducive to learning. This is done through the establishment of clear expectations and consistent classroom practices.

Strategies for creating a positive classroom include:

- Awareness of individual student needs (academic, physical, social, and emotional)
- Clear and concise classroom rules
- Consistent reinforcement of rules
- Appropriate responsiveness from administrators and support staff
- Clear documentation of classroom concerns when referrals are made to administrators and support staff.

Classroom Schedules

See your child's teacher for the classroom schedules posted.

Dress Code and Uniforms

The wearing of uniforms is a requirement at MEHP. Uniforms must be clean and in good condition. The school will notify parents in writing of the uniform, cost, and recommended vendor for uniform purchase. Parents are strongly advised to use the suggested uniform site to ensure your child's uniform is acceptable attire for school. By not following the recommended uniform site parents may risk having their child in unacceptable attire. Our goal of our uniform policy is to create a respectful learning environment, eliminate distractions, and enable children to be independent. A school administrator is the final decision maker regarding the appropriateness of student's dress and appearance.

MEHP Shirts

- Approved school polo shirt with MEHP logo in white, gray, teal, or navy.
- Shirts must be tucked-in for 1st grade and up.
- Children may wear a MEHP navy, teal or gray solid-colored sweater, fleece, pullover, or cardigan.
- Coats are not to be worn in the classrooms.

Pants / Skirts / Bottoms

- Solid-colored navy or khaki uniform pants, shorts, skort, skirts or dress.
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses should be at least knee-length.
- Leggings, tights, or shorts are permitted in solid navy or black underneath skirts or dresses.
- No markings, logos, patterns, textures (including no “distressed” garments, etc.)
- No sweatpants, athletic gear, or jeggings as pants.
- Pants must be worn at the waist; no sagging of pants will be permitted.
- All students wearing pants with belt loops must wear a belt with their uniform in 1st grade and up.

Footwear

- Children should have two pairs of shoes. One pair must be play shoes that are appropriate for outdoor play, P.E., and recess. Play shoes will get dirty!
- Indoor shoes should have non-slip soles and be closed around the foot.
- Shoes should be easy for children to put on and remove independently.
- Shoes must be always worn, either indoors or outdoors.
- Students may not wear crocs, boots, heels, “heelys,” flip flops, sandals, open toed shoes, skates, etc.
- Socks or tights must be plain and solid colored.

Accessories

MEHP Students May Wear Modest Jewelry.

- One pair of stud earrings only.
- For safety, no rings, chains, or bracelets may be worn to school by students.
- Hats and hoodies may not be worn inside the school building.
- If a headband is worn, it must be plain and unadorned (e.g., no cat ears, unicorn horns, etc.)

Change of clothes

PreK and Kindergarten children are required to have one emergency change of pants and underwear kept at school.

****Medical or religious exemptions to this policy must be approved by the principal.***

MEHP reserves the right to require students to call home and get a change of clothes if any item of clothing is deemed unacceptable.

Enrollment Preferences and Procedures

MEHP will admit students based on a first come, first served basis. Completing the application and submitting the required supplemental documentation within the priority application period ensures your place in line. If we receive more completed application packets than the number of open student seats available for the current school year, we will initiate a lottery as mandated by the state of Tennessee.

Pre-K Enrollment

PreK is available on a limited basis, prioritizing need, as informed by state policy and program funds. Publicly funded PreK seats have no tuition. Children must be 4 years old but not 5, by August 15th; a limited number of 3 years old may participate based on need and availability of seats in our program. Applicants are invited to an enrollment screening process, which includes income eligibility information. If there are more eligible applicants than seats available, admissions are based on a review of eligibility and at-risk factors below and preferences outlined here.

PRE-K INCOME ELIGIBILITY

We prioritize among applicants based on need. 90% of PreK seats are targeted for income eligible students. The gross income threshold by household size to be considered income eligible is as follows:

Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
2	\$3,228
3	\$3,988
4	\$4,805
5	\$5,574
6	\$6,343
7	\$6,487
8	\$6,631

Other Pre-K at-risk factors to screen for prioritization may include:

- ❖ Educationally at-risk based on educational assessment, or residence in priority zone
- ❖ Circumstances of abuse or neglect
- ❖ Parent deployed in active military duty
- ❖ TN Early Intervention (not qualifying for special education); or Speech or developmental delay
- ❖ Participating in public support program, e.g. WIC, SSI, Even Start; prior Head Start participant
- ❖ Being raised by a teenage parent, or other than biological parent, a guardian, or in state custody
- ❖ Identified as English Language Learners; other language, or multiple languages, spoken at home

Family and Community Engagement

MEHP is committed to engaging parents as partners to be lead participants in their child's academic and social development and be involved in the school's operations and governance.

- Families are encouraged to support their child academically by engaging in planned classroom events and activities.
- As part of the enrollment guidelines, parents and/or guardians are required to attend registration, transition meetings, conferences, STEM night and all other parent meetings scheduled by MEHP.

Failure to meet MEHP family and community engagement expectations may result in a student not being allowed to attend MEHP the next academic school year.

Homework Policy

MEHP strives to partner with parents in their learning and development. First and foremost, homework should always include reading to and with your child every day. Please set aside time to read and discuss books with

your children for a minimum of 20 minutes every day. Independent readers should also engage in reading as a daily practice at home. Additional homework and homework policies will be sent by your teachers.

Medications / Immunizations / Health Survey

Medications

Parents must bring prescription and/or over the counter medicine to the front desk upon their arrival so that it can be stored safely and self-administered. A medication authorization form must be completed and on file in the main office.

Prescription medicines must be in the original container accompanied by a completed prescription form from your physician indicating the time it is to be administered, permission to dispense the medicine, and the diagnosis. A medical authorization form signed by the doctor must be submitted to the clinic.

Over the counter medicines must be kept in the clinic with directions for use and must be in the original container. The parent permission form does not have to be signed by a physician, however, must be completed by the parent/guardian and submitted to the clinic with the medicine.

Students are not allowed to carry or administer medication. All medications must be kept in the clinic. Students in possession of over the counter or prescription medication will be subject to disciplinary consequences.

MEHP Grading Policy

Teachers use observation, formative assessments, summative assessments and rubrics (example below) to measure student mastery on each standard.

Grades K-2

Report Card Code	Definition	Numerical Equivalent
E	Excellent	90-100
S	Satisfactory	80-89
P	Progressing/Needs Improvement	70-79
N	Needs More Practice	Below 69

Grades 3-5

Report Card Grade	Definition
90-100	Excellent

Report Card Grade	Definition
80-89	Satisfactory
70-79	Progressing/Needs Improvement
Below 69	Needs More Practice

Parent Communication

Effective communication between home and school is essential to the success of your child here at school. Each child has a Weekly Communication folder. Important information such as permission forms, homework, etc. is sent home in the children's communication folders. Please send this folder with your child every morning and check it each night to ensure timely communication. Notes to teachers can go back to school in this folder. The folders are checked every day and sent home every afternoon. Additionally, all teachers will use Class Dojo for both class and school wide announcements. Instructions on how to access Class Dojo will be shared in the first week of school.

Additionally, parents will receive phone calls to update them on upcoming events throughout the school year. These will be sent each Sunday night and then as necessary. If you believe that you are not receiving these calls, please reach out to the school so that we can correct the issue.

Parent Concerns Process

MEHP considers parent and community support and input vital to school accountability and success. If a MEHP parent or other community member has a concern, they should use the following procedure.

First, directly contact the relevant school faculty or staff member: Please communicate any concerns or complaints directly to the teacher or staff member with whom you have a concern. Please assume that the person may not know about your concern until you have clearly conveyed it.

Second, escalate your concern to relevant leaders: If the individual staff member with which you communicated was unable to resolve your concern, please contact the principal or director of the school, via email. Most concerns can be resolved at the school level.

Third, if school leaders are unable to resolve your concern, contact our Board of Trustees: Montessori Elementary at Highland Park is governed by a nonprofit Board of Trustees, and is subject to oversight by its authorizer. Please note that the Board will generally not hear grievances that have not first been channeled through school staff.

Fourth, contact the Hamilton County District (HCD). If a parent has a concern that a school has violated the law, applicable district policy, a charter contract or student safety responsibilities, and parents' efforts to solve the problem directly with school leadership and board of trustees fails to satisfactorily address a parent's concern, then the parent may appeal to the HCD for assistance resolving the issue. Please note that, for most concerns, the HCD does not have authority to overturn the decisions of charter school boards regarding student services and staff. If warranted, the sole actions that the HCD has the authority to take beyond

informing and influencing a charter operator to resolve an inadequately addressed Tennessee statute-defined violation on its own are to modify the expansion or replication of a school or revoke the charter.

Where a concern involves a criminal violation of the law (e.g., a parent believes that his or her child has been physically abused by a school employee or another student), the parent should immediately contact the local police department and the TN Department of Children's Services (DCS). School and district personnel who suspect student abuse are required to notify DCS and shall immediately do so upon notification or substantiated suspicion that a student has been abused.

Photography / Video / Social Media

The following rules apply to students, parents, and their guests. These rules apply to any forms of media, including but not limited to photographs, videos, captions, texts, social media programs, third-party websites, or other online forums.

- At school sponsored events, do not take any media of other children as the main subject without expressing the content of the other children's parents. Respect and honor requests from other parents or children to remove or censor media that include other people's children and have been made publicly available.
- It is forbidden to digitally share or post any media that include the images of other students without the express consent of the other children's parents. Consensual media should only be for personal use, such as recording important events and sharing privately among family and close friends. Media used outside of the context to which the depicted individual originally consented, is considered non-consensual and a prohibited use.
- All media must follow the school's harassment policy. Any media made, used, or shared with the intent to or has the effect to harass, sexually harass, or embarrass another individual is also considered non-consensual and a prohibited use, regardless of whether that media was created on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event.
- No media should be made in any facilities considered "private," where a person has a reasonable expectation of privacy such as a bathroom or depicting any area on an individual's body considered private. If it is reported that a student has media of a private nature on his or her electronic device, the police will be contacted, and the phone will be surrendered to the police for further investigations. School administrators are not permitted to look at media of this nature on students' devices.
- Media on private social media accounts that depict the school, faculty, or other students in a defamatory manner are prohibited.
- Any media shared on social media or otherwise that have the tendency to disrupt regular school activities are prohibited, regardless of whether that media was created on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event.
- Students should at no time be involved in texting or accessing social media during the school day. Students involved in texting or accessing social media, including on school devices, at school face a consequence according to the code of conduct and disciplinary guides.
- Any prohibited use of media will be subject to the student disciplinary policy, up to and including expulsion and/or legal action.
- All school community members are advised in general to use good judgment when making photos or videos outside of school hours and off school property. As a general reminder, anything put on the internet may be permanent.

- Be aware that children are vulnerable, and by making media of them available to the public, the children may be put inadvertently at risk.
- Parents should inform family members and guests invited to school events of these guidelines. The school also encourages all parents and families to exercise good judgment when making photographs, images, or videos outside of school hours and away from school property. All parties are strongly encouraged to monitor the privacy settings on their own social media and to apply the settings that provide the most privacy possible to their accounts.

Please note that student photos, etc., used in official school publications are covered by separate guidelines and will be handled with permission.

Progress Report and Report Card

Progress reports for Kindergarten and Elementary students consist of the student's current grade, absences, conduct, and any comments the teacher wishes to make. The dates of progress reports are:

- First Nine Weeks: August 28, 2025 and September 25, 2025
- Second Nine Weeks: November 7, 2025 and December 5, 2025
- Third Nine Weeks: January 30, 2026 and February 27, 2026
- Fourth Nine Weeks: May 1, 2026

Remember that end of quarters and report cards are as follows:

- First Quarter Report card: October 21, 2025
- Second Quarter Report card: January 9, 2026
- Third Quarter Report card: March 27, 2026
- Fourth Quarter Report card: June 1, 2026 (mailed)

Report cards and conference dates will be posted on the Master Calendar on the school's website. Requests for parent-teacher conferences can be made through your child's teacher via email.

PowerSchool Reporting

Students will receive a traditional numerical grade in PowerSchool. Grades in PowerSchool will be entered at the end of the course. The numerical grade will depend on standards mastered throughout the year. The numerical grade entered by PowerSchool will account for 85% of the student's overall grade.

To earn an A: Students must average 3.6 – 4.0.

To earn a B: Students must average 2.8 – 3.5.

To earn a C: Students must average 2.4 – 2.7.

To earn a D: Students must average 2.1 – 2.3.

To earn an F: Students must average 2.0 or less.

Students and parents will receive login credentials to MEHP Learning and PowerSchool to continually track student progress.

Required Assessment

MEHP students will have a minimum of three (3) universal screeners throughout the year to assess student's performance, inform planning and drive instruction. Parents/guardians will receive a letter, report and information regarding assessments and how they are used in the school. Additionally, benchmark assessments will be given quarterly in grades 3-5 to measure the progress of students' mastery of grade level standards. These assessments will be given to grades Kindergarten through 2nd twice per year.

School Day

The school day is 8:00 am - 3:15 pm. Parents are encouraged to bring their children to breakfast which begins at 7:35 am. All students are expected to arrive at the cafeteria by 7:45 am if eating breakfast. Breakfast ends at 7:55 am. Students arriving after 8:00 am and not in their assigned classroom, must have a parent or guardian escort them in and sign in with office personnel.

School Calendar

See MEHP website for updated calendar.

School Meals

Breakfast

MEHP contracts with a local vendor to provide meals to students during the school day. Breakfast ends at 7:55 am. If your child needs breakfast, please arrive at the school between 7:20 and 7:55 am. PreK 3&4 students should be dropped off at the doors and walked to their classroom by staff. Elementary (K-5) students who walk to school should be dropped off at the cafeteria entrance for breakfast no later than 7:50 am.

Lunch

The food vendor adheres to the federal lunch guidelines. Per guidelines, fast food items are not allowed during lunch. Healthy eating habits should start early! Students will learn how to prepare certain snacks as part of their work in the Montessori classroom (i.e. peeling a carrot, slicing an apple, etc), and as our gardening program develops, children will learn how to harvest vegetables and fruits we grow at school. All families are welcome to participate in our school food program. However, some families may choose to send their child with a lunch or snack. We ask that they follow these guidelines:

- Please only pack lunches that can be served at room temperature; we cannot heat up lunches for children. Furthermore, the lunches will not be refrigerated during the school day, so please do not send food that could spoil at room temperature.
- No drinks other than water are permitted in home-packed lunches. Milk is available in the cafeteria for any child and children are always welcome to get water from our filtered water fountains. In addition, children may choose to bring a plain, reusable water bottle to class. Juice and other sugary drinks can be unhealthy and can spill which can leave a sticky mess. Please leave juice and other sugary drinks at home.
- While we honor any dietary preferences or restrictions that your family may follow at home, please restrain from bringing junk food into the school.

Example of lunch healthy lunch choices:



Due to individual student allergies and other safety concerns, students may not share items brought from home with other students. Students are expected to follow the lunchroom guidelines and expectations.

Snacks and Food Allergies

To maintain a safe school environment for our students with life-threatening food and other allergies, MEHP asks all families whose children have documented food allergies to tell the school immediately! Please help keep all students safe by following these procedures. If your child's classroom notifies you that it is nut-free, snacks must be free of nuts or nut butters, such as peanut butter or Nutella.

If you would like to send something with your child for a special occasion (i.e., birthday, holiday), you are strongly encouraged to send non-food items for your child to share with the class. Colorful pencils, erasers, or play dough make good non-food treats. If you choose to send a food item for the class to share, it will need to be store-bought with an intact ingredient label (in case there are nuts, etc., that we need to be aware of). Allergy information on the label should ensure that the treat is free of all nuts and nut ingredients. Ask the school administration for guidance before sending in treats for the classroom.

School Safety/Health

MEHP has a physician on site daily that may treat students for minor illnesses and/or make referrals if needed. Parents must complete the permission form for their child to visit the physician.

Elevator Usage

Students are expected to always use the stairs. Usage of the elevator and lift is reserved for students with a written medical excuse issued by a physician. Students caught using the elevator without proper permission will face disciplinary actions, including suspension.

Immunizations

All students must have updated shot records on file to complete the registration and admission process. Students can receive the immunizations by their doctor or at the health department. Religious reason is exempted with the proper documents provided by parents/guardians.

Health Survey

The school may disclose personally identifiable information from an education record to appropriate parties in connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

The school will maintain an accurate record of all requests to disclose information from or to permit access to a student's education records. Such records should include: What information and access were requested, and whether the information or access was provided; The name of the person or agency that makes the request; The interest the person or agency has in the information; and the date the person or agency makes the request.

The need to maintain confidentiality implies that records should be stored in a safe and secure location. Student records are kept in a locked file cabinet or another location with equivalent security, such as a password-protected electronic information system.

“Personal health is related to self-control and to the worship of life in all its natural beauty; self-control bringing with it happiness, renewed youth, and long life.” —Maria Montessori

Technology Usage

The Internet and email provides invaluable resources and communications to MEHP staff and students. Employees and students accessing the Internet are representing the Hamilton County School System and MEHP, and therefore have a responsibility to use the Internet in a productive manner that meets the ethical standards of an educational institution.

Our goal is to provide Internet and e-mail access to facilitate resource sharing, innovation, and communication as a tool to promote educational excellence. As a condition of using Hamilton County Department of Education's and MEHP's telecommunications equipment, I understand that access to telecommunication networks (e.g., e-mail, the internet) is a privilege, and agree to abide by the [Technology Responsible Use Policy](#).

The use of technology is an essential component of the school program and the educational process. The Hamilton County Department of Education and MEHP do not allow students to access MEHP's wireless network using personally owned devices. However, students are allowed to access the wireless network using MEHP issued devices, such as Chromebooks and iPads. The use of MEHPs' network is a privilege not a right and may be revoked at the discretion of the administration. Therefore, it is important that students use their devices responsibly, respect the property of others, and demonstrate that this use benefits them academically and helps build good digital citizens.

Students are expected to adhere to the Responsible Use Policy. When a student is unable to do so, he/she could lose the privilege of using school laptops as well as any personal computers or electronic devices. Students using social media sites or other sites without permission from a teacher during the school day will receive an office referral AND the computer will be returned to the IT department indefinitely.

Cell phones must remain off and in students' backpacks throughout the day.

Transportation

Bus Rider

MEHP uses a contracted bus service that will pick students up from designated locations in Chattanooga and bring them to school Monday through Friday. All bus riders will arrive at school in time to eat breakfast each morning. If there is an available bus stop in your area, students may be eligible for bus service. Bus stop locations will be posted on the website.

Students who earn bus referrals may be suspended from bus privileges for an extended period. Bus transportation to school is a privilege. State law does not require that schools provide transportation. Students should plan to arrive approximately 10 minutes prior to the scheduled arrival time of their bus. The drivers strive to stay on schedule however, traffic and/or weather conditions can affect their actual arrival time at your stop. If students are planning to ride a different bus home, they must bring a note from their parents or legal guardian giving permission to ride another bus. The student must bring the note to the front office before 9:00 AM and must receive a permission form before they will be allowed on the bus.

Car Rider

ALL CAR RIDERS MUST BE RELEASED TO A PARENT/ GUARDIAN WITH A LAMINATED MEHP DISMISSAL NUMBER!

Families wishing to drive their children to and from MEHP may follow the periodically published guidelines for car access. School staff will indicate flow of traffic using appropriate signage. You may turn off the vehicle and wait but **remain in the car**. If leaving your vehicle, it must be parked in designated parking. Our faculty members will greet children at their cars in the morning, and escort children to their cars in and out of the door. Your cooperation will enhance student safety and allow bus traffic to flow without delays.

All car riders will be dismissed from the designated parking area location. Parents are expected to pick up their student in the designated car rider line. Parents are expected to pick up their child no later than 3:30 p.m. After 3:45 p.m. the student must report to the office or should already be in their designated aftercare programs. If parents/guardians arrive after 3:45 pm, they must enter the building to sign out their child. MEHP does not offer aftercare for students not picked up by 3:45 pm and reserves the right to report safety concerns and issues to Child Protective Services if students are not picked up on time.

Walkers

All walkers will only be released to a parent or guardian or an approved adult listed on their school information.

Visitors / Volunteers

All visitors/volunteers should have made prior arrangements to visit/volunteer at the school and **MUST** present a valid state issued ID, sign in at the main reception desk, and always wear a visitor's badge. Volunteers are required to complete a volunteer packet and a background check prior to volunteering. Background checks are good for 5 years.

Parents or guardians that need to request a conference with a school administrator must schedule an appointment in advance. Administrators are not available for walk-in conferences! Appointments can be scheduled by calling the front office. Administration reserves the right to ask a visitor to leave if they become

a disruption to the learning environment. For the safety of our students and staff, MEHP will hold minimal visitors/volunteers in the building during school hours for the 2025-2026 school year.

Individuals who come onto school property or who contact employees on school business are expected to behave accordingly. Specifically, actions that are prohibited include, but are not limited to:

- Cursing and use of obscenities.
- Disrupting or threatening to disrupt school or office operations.
- Acting in an unsafe manner that could threaten the health or safety of others.
- Verbal or written statements or gestures indicating an intent to harm an individual or property.
- Physical attacks intended to harm an individual or substantially damage property or the school.

Universal Emergency Procedures

Students are expected to follow the universal emergency procedures during drills and actual emergencies. If a student refuses to comply with teachers and staff, his/her parents will be contacted for assistance or the student will have disciplinary consequences.

CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

Context and Overview

A safe and orderly school starts with a student code of conduct and a fair and consistent application of consequences. The MEHP discipline plan relies heavily on the Hamilton County Schools' Code of Acceptable Behavior and Discipline (COAB). The MEHP Code of Conduct also includes a daily classroom behavior management plan that each teacher may use to maintain safety and provide equal opportunities for all children to learn. Teachers may create their own daily classroom management plan.

The Student Code of Acceptable Behavior and Discipline (COAB) from Hamilton County Schools is grounded in the collaborative commitments of a diverse group of stakeholders. It is consistent with State Board policy, state legislation, and the most recent court decisions. It should prove to support the aspirations and goals of everyone involved: students, parents, and school employees. The MEHP Code of Conduct relies heavily on this code, but may vary to meet the specific needs of MEHP students and our community. This code is reviewed annually and revised, as necessary, by a committee composed of educators, board members, students, and parents. In essence, the COAB accomplishes the following:

1. It is integrated with the school-wide behavior and whole-child supports to foster a positive and nurturing environment within our schools.
2. It affords each student an uninterrupted opportunity to pursue academic excellence.
3. It provides guidance for behavior standards and expectations for students.
4. It provides information and structures designed to support the safety and welfare of the students.
5. It assures due process and fair treatment for every student, giving each an opportunity to be heard.

This COAB is intended to support the systems and structures of the teachers and school leaders with regard to the maintenance of acceptable conduct and order.

A special acknowledgement to Metro Nashville Public Schools for serving as an excellent example in developing this Code of Acceptable Behavior and Discipline for Hamilton County Schools.

Teacher Daily Classroom Management Behaviors

- First Offense - Warning
- Second Offense - Parent contact, teacher assigned detention and assigned isolated seating until detention is served.
- Third Offense - Parent contact, teacher submits administrative referral, teacher must contact administration immediately.
- Severe Clause: If a student continues to disrupt class on a daily basis, teacher and administrator may develop an individual behavior plan.

Behavior Response Table

Descriptions of response levels can be found below in the next section, titled *Response Levels*..

Tier 1 Behaviors

Behavior	Definition	Response K-2nd	Response 3rd-5th
Agitating Other Students	Unwanted and/or unreciprocated picking on or bothering other students.	A	A
Dress Code Violation	Wearing clothing that does not comply with the school's Standard School Attire policy or requirements for appropriate dress.	A	A
Noncompliance With a Reasonable Request	Not following the reasonable request of a teacher, administrator or staff member.	A	A
Possession of Fireworks	Knowingly possessing fireworks. Fireworks will be confiscated and not returned.	A	A
Profane or Indecent Language	Using profane or indecent language, such as cursing. If directed at teacher, staff member or administrator, see (Profane Language Towards Teacher or Staff.)	A	A
Tardy to School, Bus or Class	Arriving late to school, bus, class or activity.	A	A
Minor Damage or Defacement of School Property	This includes computers, iPads, curricular materials, and any school facility.	A	A
Unauthorized Use of School Equipment	This includes computers, iPads, curricular materials, and any school facility.	A	A

Tier 2 Behaviors

Behavior	Definition	Response K-2nd	Response 3rd-5th
Cutting Class/ Skipping Class	While on school property, failing to attend a scheduled class or activity without authorization. If a student is not attending any classes while in the building for the entire school day for five days, truancy protocol should be triggered.	A, B	A, B
Disruption of Classroom	Continuously and intentionally disrupting the classroom learning environment to the extent that the learning of other students or the routine functioning of the class is significantly impaired. The discipline referral must describe the significant impairment to the learning or routine functioning of the class.	A, B	A, B
Drug Paraphernalia	Possessing any material used to produce or consume illegal drugs. Drug paraphernalia includes, but is not limited to, bongs, roach clips, miniature spoons and pipes used to consumed illegal drugs. All items will be confiscated and not returned.	A, B, T	A, B, C, D, T
Cell Phones and/or Electronic Devices	Using a cell phone, electronic device, or the internet for non-educational purposes or without the permission of the classroom teacher or school administrator.	A, B, T	A, B
Gambling	Betting on games or activities for money or things of value.	A, B, T	A, B, T
Inappropriate Physical Contact with Other Students	Engaging in unwanted minor physical contact with another student such as pushing, bumping or touching	A, B, T	A, B, T
False activation of a fire alarm or report to 911		A, B, T	A, B, T
Destruction or theft of school property, including graffiti (under \$500)		A, B, T	A, B, T
Recurring Level 1 Offense		A, B	A, B

Tier 3 Behaviors

Behavior	Definition	Response K-2nd	Response 3rd-5th
Falsifying School Records	Falsifying or altering school records, including, but not limited to, written, electronic or digital school records. This does not include cheating.	A, B, C	A, B, C
Fighting	Mutual participation in an incident involving physical violence.	A, B, C, D, T	A, B, C, D, T
Alcohol or Drug-Like Substance: Use or Possession, Under the Influence	Possessing, using or being under the influence of substances that have the potential to intoxicate. A collaborative referral may be required.	A, B, C, D, T, F	A, B, C, T
Gang Activity: Recruitment, Display or Possession of Symbols or Paraphernalia	Displaying gang symbols, gang paraphernalia or participating in the recruitment/initiation of a student into a gang (violent or disruptive group).	A, B, C, T	A, B, C, D, T
Inappropriate Sexual Behavior	Engaging in mutual activity of a sexual nature that does not meet the criteria of harassment or sexual assault. First offense for sexual intercourse should range between 2-4 days of OSS including a Restorative Conference with guardians upon returning to school. <i>*A referral to DCS will be made.</i> <i>Elementary OSS may only be used to allow time to create a safety plan to meet the needs of the students involved.</i>	A, B, C, T	A, B, C, D, T
Inappropriate Use of Electronic Devices	Viewing or distribution of sexually explicit images/videos and/or fights (i.e., airdrop, social media post, etc.) If a student's rights are perceived to be violated, this may rise to the level of a Title IX investigation/incident. and standard Title IX procedures should be followed.	A, B, C, T	A, B, C, T
Indecent Exposure	Intentionally exposing body parts generally considered private. For shirts exposing cleavage, use Dress Code.	A, B, C, T	A, B, C, T
Leaving School Grounds or Bus Without Authorization	Leaving school grounds without the permission of school officials. Exiting the bus at an unauthorized stop or	A, B, C, D, T	A, B, C, D, T

Behavior	Definition	Response K-2nd	Response 3rd-5th
	jumping from exit doors or windows		
Noncompliance With an Administrative Directive or an Assigned Disciplinary Response	Repeatedly refusing to follow an administrative directive or to comply with an assigned disciplinary response. Repeated could be defined as repeated defiance happening in one event or multiple incidents over a period of time.	A, B, C, D, T	A, B, C, D, T
Offensive Touching	Engaging in unwanted or offensive touching of areas generally considered private.	A, B, C, D, T	A, B, C, D, T
Possession of a Non-Lethal Weapon or Replica of a Lethal Weapon	Possessing a non-lethal weapon, including but not limited to weapon replica, stun gun, BB gun, air gun, airsoft gun, pellet gun, cap gun, Orbitz gun, realistic toy gun, etc. Water guns are excluded, but not encouraged to have on school campuses.	A, B, C, D, T	A, B, C, D, T
Possession of Other Weapons	Possessing an instrument capable of causing serious bodily injury, including but not limited to ammunition, knife, taser, and/or pepper spray. Weapons will be confiscated and turned over to the appropriate authorities. Use of taser and/or pepper spray may result in higher level codes (i.e. Extreme Disruption or Reckless Endangerment)	A, B, C, D, T	A, B, C, D, T
Theft Under \$500	Taking the property of another individual or the school without permission, with the intent of depriving the owner of the property. The value of the property taken is under \$1000. A child's willingness to return or replace items taken or make restitution will be taken into account in determining the appropriate level of response.	A, B, C, D, T	A, B, C, D, T
Threats, Class 1	A threat to cause harm to students, staff or school in which no plan exists to carry out the threat. The threat must be one that would cause a person to reasonably fear bodily injury. A Building Level Threat Assessment must be completed.	A,B, C, D, T	A, B, C, D, T
Trespassing on School Grounds	Entering and remaining on school property or during school-sponsored	A, B	A, B, C

Behavior	Definition	Response K-2nd	Response 3rd-5th
	activities without authorization. Parents will be called. If a student remains on campus, law enforcement may be contacted.		
Use of Tobacco Products	Using any tobacco products, including but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, vapor or e-cigarettes, or chewing tobacco. For the first offense, a B response will be used. All items will be confiscated and not returned.	A, B, C, D, T	A, B, C, D, T

Tier 4 Behaviors

Behavior	Definition	Response K-2nd	Response 3rd-5th
Harassment of School Staff	Repeated incidents of intentional verbal, electronic, sexual, or physical harassment or intimidation directed at teachers, administrators or school staff. Documentation of incidents must be included in the referral.	A, B, C, D	A, B, C, D, E
Assault of a Student	Intentionally, knowingly or recklessly committing an unprovoked physical attack on another student. Minor physical contact, such as pushing or shoving, does not constitute assault. Students may not receive the same disciplinary consequences for their involvement in an altercation if the school administrator determines they acted in self-defense to protect themselves from physical harm (TCA 49-6-3401). <i>Response E may be used if the assault or the resulting injuries are severe. When response E is used, evidence documenting the incident's severity and any resulting injuries must be included in the discipline referral.</i>	A, B, C, D, E, T	A, B, C, D, E, T
Under the Influence of Illegal Drugs	Being under the influence of any illegal drug(s) while on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities. <u>1st offense:</u> Mandatory collaborative referral for substance abuse will be made for any student found in violation of this	A, B, C, D	A, B, C, D, E

Behavior	Definition	Response K-2nd	Response 3rd-5th
	code up to 1-2 days suspension for elementary school. <u>2nd offense:</u> Required to attend Counseling and up to 5 days suspension for elementary. If a student does not attend, the student may be expelled.		
Threats, Class 2	A threat to cause harm to students, staff or school. The threat must be verbal or written and include a detailed plan. Evidence must support that the threat is actually or potentially harmful or lethal to the safety of other students in the student's school as determined by the results of a Building Level Threat Assessment . The Building Level Threat Assessment must be completed within 24 school-day hours from when school administrators are made aware and the student returns to school.	A, B, C, D, E, T	A, B, C, D, E, T
Threats by Electronic Transmission	A student who transmits, by an electronic device, a credible threat to cause bodily injury or death to another student or school employee and creates actual disruptive activity at the school that requires administrative intervention. The Building Level Threat Assessment must be completed within 24 school-day hours from when the school administrator is made aware and the student returns to school.	A, B, C, D,	A, B, C, D, E, T
Bullying/Hazing	Any intentional act that is severe, persistent, or pervasive and substantially interferes with a student's educational benefits, opportunities or performance, and has the effect of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physically harming a student or damaging a student's property - Knowingly placing a student(s) in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to the student's property - Causing emotional distress 	A, B, C, D, E, T	A, B, C, D, E, T

Behavior	Definition	Response K-2nd	Response 3rd-5th
	<p>to a student(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating a hostile educational environment <p>Bullying incidents must be reviewed for civil rights violations. If bullying is repeated over time and persists after documented administrative intervention, expulsion may result.</p> <p><i>*Elementary student OSS only if repeated over time and persists after documented administrative intervention.</i></p>		
Cyberbullying	<p>Using technology, including, but not limited to email, cell phones, voicemails, texts, photos, video messages, instant messaging, defamatory websites, social networking sites, online personal polling sites or journals to bully another student. See the definition of bullying above.</p> <p><i>*Elementary Restrictive Attendance only if repeated over time and persists after documented administrative intervention.</i></p>	A, B, C, D, E, T	A, B, C, D, E, T
Extreme Disruption of the School Environment or Bus	<p>Disrupting the school environment or bus to the extent that the safety of other students is at risk. The discipline referral must include evidence of actual disruption and actual risk of harm. Starting a fire or igniting fireworks constitutes extreme disruption. Using technology to access and alter student records or electronically tampering with HCS technology systems and services (including but not limited to electronic records, databases, networks, and cloud services) in a manner that impairs normal school functioning constitutes extreme disruption.</p> <p><i>*Elementary administrators should use a crisis response team.</i></p>	A, B, C, D, E, T	A, B, C, D, E, T
Fighting: Repeated	<p>An elementary student who participates in multiple fights during the current year should receive progressive consequences for their actions. A single suspension should not exceed 5 days and for any student who has participated in more than 3 fights a conference should be held with the RTI2B team and SEAD office to consider other</p>	A, B, C, D, E, T	A, B, C, D, E, T

Behavior	Definition	Response K-2nd	Response 3rd-5th
	support and options.		
Group Fighting	Three or more students engaging in a physical altercation. The altercation may include more students against a few students or multiple one on one fights.	A, B, C, D, E, T	A, B, C, D, E, T
Gang Intimidation	A gang-involved student behaving in a way that would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury to any person. Evidence must be provided in the referral showing that a student is gang-involved and intimidation is gang-related.	A, B, C, D, E, T	A, B, C, D, E, T

Response Levels Descriptions

Level A: teacher, student, parent, school staff

1. All relevant stakeholders (the teacher, student(s), or any other adult) involved in the behavior incident share their perspective on what happened and how they were impacted. The intent is to achieve resolution through mutual understanding and respect. Classroom expectations should be discussed and reiterated at this time.
2. The teacher will check-in with the student periodically to ensure the relationship has been restored and to encourage continual relationship building
3. Parent(s) should be notified to:
 - Alert them of the infraction
 - Get parental perspective on solutions (parent voice)
 - Share the outcome of the restorative intervention
 - To encourage at home support for the identified classroom expectation
 - To discuss, if necessary, the need for additional supports for the student (ex: social worker, 504 Team, restorative assistant, counselor, psychologist, or support team)
 - Additional supports may also be needed to support the classroom environment and/or teacher
4. Interventions will be documented in PowerSchool.

Level B: Administrative Referral

1. The administrator will hear the student's side of the story and provide an opportunity to write a statement or have a staff member write the statement on behalf of the student.
2. The administrator will provide the student an opportunity to right the wrong and repair the harm.
3. A formal plan will be created to support the students' needs through providing interventions and support. Staff determines whether to involve a school social worker, nurse, school guidance counselor, psychologist, behavioral analyst, 504 Team, IEP Team, or support team.
5. All interventions should be documented in PowerSchool and provided to the parent or guardian.

6. The Administrator should have a conversation with the parent or guardian to discuss the student's needs and how to best support the student.
7. If necessary, administrative detention, Saturday School, or up to four (4) days Evening School may be used for elementary students.

Level C: In School Suspension Option

1. Steps one through five are repeated from Level B.
2. If necessary, administrator may:
 - Give elementary students up to five (5) days of Evening School. A formal restorative conference must occur upon return from (Evening School) with all necessary parties to establish or modify the student's Plan of Support. Restorative conferences/re-entry meetings must be documented in PowerSchool. Parents/guardians, student, teacher(s), relevant support staff and community support must be invited.

Level D: Restrictive Attendance Option

1. Same as Level C, except that administrator may:
 - For elementary students, give up to eight (8) days of Restrictive Attendance.
2. When choosing a higher-level response within the range of possible responses, an administrator must consider:
 - The student's age, health, disability, decision-making ability and prior intervention history.
 - The student's willingness to repair the harm.
 - The seriousness of the act.
 - The harm caused or the potential to cause harm, including any injuries caused.
 - The extent of actual disruption to the learning environment.
 - The schools ability to support a change of behavior.
3. Upon return from Restrictive Attendance, a restorative conference must occur and a collaborative referral must be made. A plan of support for the student must be created.

Level E: Expulsion Option

1. Same as level D. ***Elementary students should not receive more than ten (10) days suspension, except for Type 5 Behaviors.***
2. Expulsion Documentation: All interventions utilized prior to expulsion must be clearly documented in PowerSchool. All reasons for expelling a student rather than using a lower level of response must be clearly detailed.
3. Upon return from expulsion, a formal restorative conference must be held with appropriate individuals including parent/guardian, student, teacher(s), relevant support staff and community support.

****Expulsion is a measure of last resort. Prior to expulsion, all of the following factors must be considered:**

- the student's age, health, disability, decision-making ability and prior intervention history
- the student's willingness to repair the harm

- the seriousness of the act
- the harm caused or the potential to cause harm, including any injuries caused
- the extent of actual disruption to the learning environment
- whether the act was intentional

Zero Tolerance Offenses as defined by state law require a level E response. All Zero Tolerance offenses require a mandatory expulsion of 180 school days.

Level T: Transportation Suspension Option

For certain behaviors occurring on the bus affecting student safety, a student may be suspended from the bus for a maximum of five (5) days. The T response may only be used for behavior occurring on the bus. When a student is suspended from the bus, they may still attend school but parents are responsible for transportation. If a student receiving exceptional education services is suspended from the bus, the IEP team will need to meet to address the transportation needs of the student in the student's IEP. Recognizing that some students do not have alternate transportation when suspended from the bus, a bus suspension will only be used if the bus driver has not been able to address the student's behavior by reminding the student about behavioral expectations on the bus, having a restorative conversation with the student, changing the student's assigned seat, and calling a parent/guardian to address the concern. The bus driver will utilize restorative approaches to behavior when the bus is in a safe and secure location prior to initiating a referral to school administration. The driver's discipline referral to the school will include interventions tried prior to referral.

Consequence Information and Details

1. Hours Administrative Detention 3:30 - 5:30 pm
2. Saturday School 8:30 - 12:00 pm • Saturday School will operate every Saturday (unless otherwise assigned) from 8:30 am - 12:00 pm
3. Evening School 1:30 - 5:30 pm
4. Students that are tardy will be assigned an additional day.
5. If the student has been referred to Saturday School and/or Evening School and is unable to attend, the parent or guardian must contact the Principal the day before the absence
6. Administration reserves the right to assign additional Saturday school for unexcused absences
7. If a student refuses to attend Saturday School, they will be subject to additional disciplinary action
8. Saturday School takes precedence over weekend athletic or school related activities
9. Students must adhere to all MEHP expectations including the school uniform policy Evening School
10. If a student refuses to attend Evening School, they will be subject to additional disciplinary action
11. Days of absence will be added to the length of the assignment regardless of if the absence is an excused or unexcused absence
12. Students and parents will receive the Evening School expectations during the restrictive attendance meeting
13. Students that misbehave during Evening School will be reported to the MEHP discipline board and will attend a tribunal hearing.

Harassment, Bullying and Intimidation

"Harassment" means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal, or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that:

- Places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits; or
- Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school.

"Bullying" means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students and may involve:

Teasing	Physical violence
Social exclusion	Theft
Threat	Sexual or racial harassment
Intimidation	Public humiliation
Stalking	Destruction of property

The definitions of "bullying" and "harassment" include Retaliation against a student or school employee by another student or school employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying or harassment. Reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not made in good faith is considered retaliation.

Perpetuation of conduct by an individual or group with intent to humiliate, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause physical harm to a student or school employee, by:

- Incitement or coercion.
- Accessing or knowingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the district school system; or
- Acting in a manner that has an effect substantially like the effect of bullying or harassment.

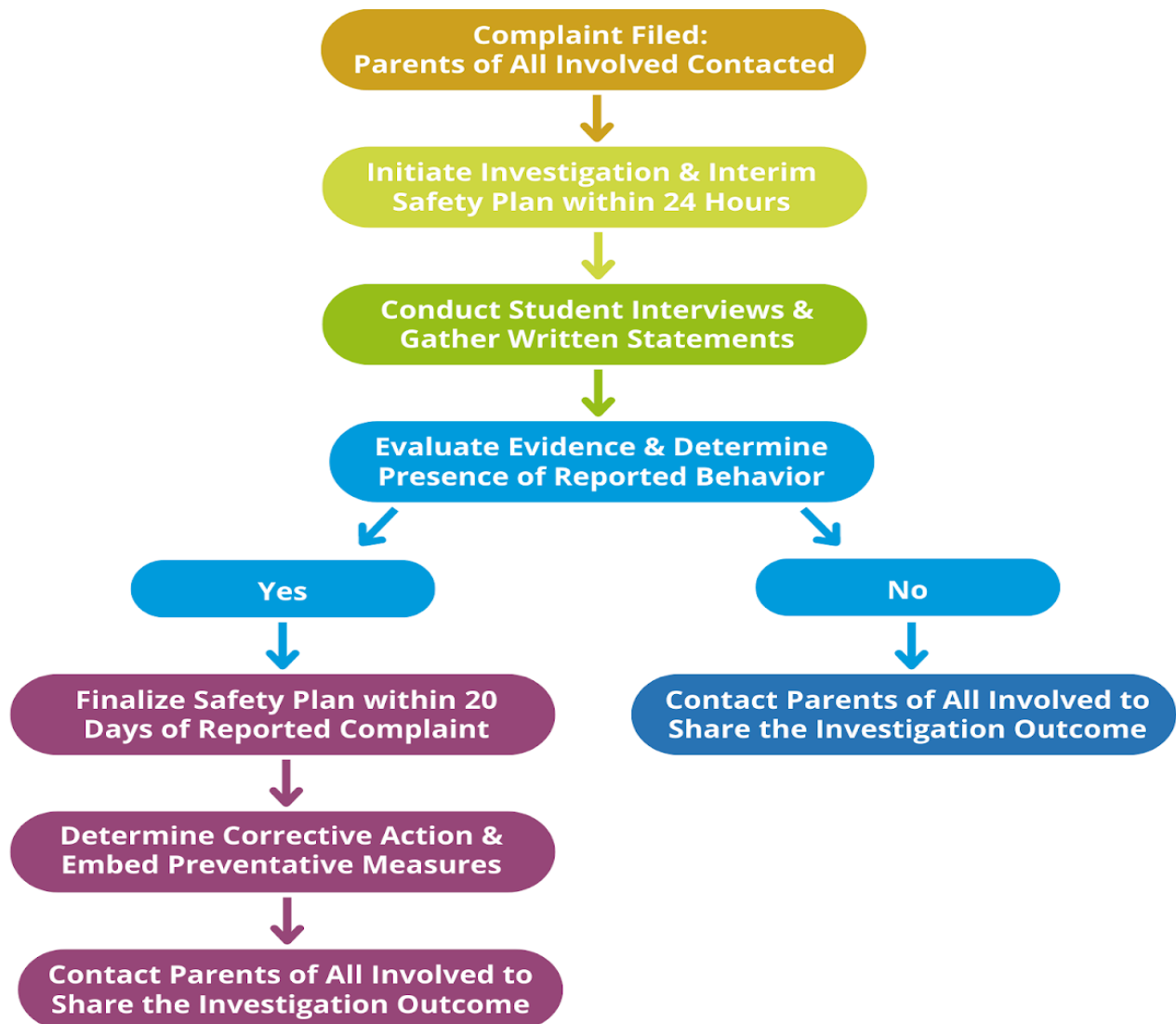
CONFLICT	RUDE	MEAN	BULLYING
Occasional	Occasional	Once or Twice	Is REPEATED
Not planned; in the heat of the moment	Spontaneous: unintentional	Intentional	Is planned and done on purpose
All parties are upset	Can cause hurt feelings; upset	Can hurt others deeply	The target of the bullying is upset
All parties want to work things out	Based in thoughtlessness, poor manners or narcissism	Based in anger; impulsive cruelty	The bully is trying to gain control over the target
All parties will accept responsibility	Rude person accepts responsibility	Behavior often regretted;	The bully blames the target
An effort is made by all parties to solve the problem			The target wants to stop the bully's behavior; the bully does not
Can be resolved through mediation	Social skill building could be of benefit	Needs to be addressed/ should NOT be ignored	CANNOT be resolved through mediation

Source: Jennifer Astles, DASA Newsletter, January 2014, TST BOCES

Alleged victims (or their parents or guardians) of harassment, intimidation, bullying shall report such incidents immediately to the Executive Director or Principal. Any reports made to staff should be forwarded to one of

these authorities immediately, but no later than 24 hours of the expressed concern. Anonymous reports may be made; however, disciplinary action may not be based solely on an anonymous report.

BULLYING & HARASSMENT INVESTIGATION FLOW CHART



MEHP shall enact and enforce policy as an act of commitment to (1) ensuring that all students have the right to attend school free from sex-based discrimination which includes sexual harassment, (2) maintaining a safe school environment that is free from harassment and discrimination where students are treated with civility and respect, (3) eliminating sex-based discrimination, harassment, and misconduct and repairing the harm it causes

to individuals and to school communities through age-appropriate preventative and responsive strategies that empower survivors of harassment, ensure school safety, and support positive behavioral change; (4) providing support and encouragement to victims of sexual harassment in reporting potential violations of district policy; and (5) providing due process to those accused of violating this policy.

Suicide Prevention

MEHP is committed to protecting the health and well-being of all students and understands that physical, behavioral, and emotional health are integral components of student achievement. All faculty and staff are expected to be proactive in maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment and to immediately report to the building principal any indications that a student may be in danger of harming themselves or others. Students are strongly encouraged to report if they, or another student, are feeling suicidal or in need of help. A summary of available resources shall be annually updated and posted for students.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

School personnel are required by state laws to watch for signs of child abuse and neglect. They are also required by law to report any information or suspicions to the proper authorities.

**Help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
Call 855-CRISIS-1 (855-274-7471) or Text "TN" to 741-741**

EXCEPTIONAL LEARNING

All students eligible for exceptional education services must receive an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment under the guidelines of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Eligibility for exceptional services will be determined through identification and evaluation. Each eligible Prester's educational program is determined annually by an assessment team (A-Team) composed of the students, the parents (should they choose to attend), the resource teacher, and at least one of the Student's regular classroom teachers, as well as any other professionals or advocates whose input is vital to the success of the Students. Eligible students are M-Teamed for either a full credit program with a goal of a regular diploma, or a non-credit program with the goal of a diploma of specialized education. All teachers of eligible students must sign off on their students' folders indicating that they have read and understand the required modifications for their students. Folders must be signed within the first two weeks of school.

Referrals for an evaluation of eligibility for services may be made to the resource teacher by any of the students' teachers, by the guidance department, or by the student and/or his parents/guardians. All evaluations are confidential, and no information is released to any other school system or agency without written permission of the parents or the students if the student is of legal age. All eligible students must receive an appropriate education in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) under the guidelines of the IDEA. Each eligible student has a required Individual Education Plan (IEP) that mandates goals, objectives, modifications, and accommodations for learning in the LRE. Any teacher that teaches these students is required to read, commit to, and sign the IEP prior to the issuance of the first progress report. If a student has an Individual Behavior Plan that plan must be followed to properly manage the student's behavior. The teacher must be familiar with the student's educational goals and accommodations and modifications to provide the student

with the LRE. Teachers will also appropriately monitor the student's progress. IEPs are reviewed annually during an IEP meeting with all decisions being made as a team. For a legal IEP meeting to be held the following participants are required to be present: Administrator, Exceptional Education service providers, parent, or guardian of the student (if they choose to participate), regular education teacher and any other service providers. The student's attendance is optional but encouraged. All evaluations are confidential. Evaluations for eligibility will be completed within 40 school days from the date of the initial referral.

English Language Learners

English Language Learners (ELL) are non-English language background students whose level of oral, reading, and written proficiency in English does not allow them to fully benefit from the curriculum and creates difficulty in regular classroom curriculum without specially designed modifications. ELL students have not yet met the definition of fluent English proficient (FEP). If the inability to understand, speak, read, or write the English language excludes a student from effective participation in the educational programs offered by the school, the school shall take appropriate action to rectify the English language deficiency to provide the student equal access and participation in its programs. The school shall develop and periodically update a local plan for providing ESL services for students whose native or dominant language is not English. The plan for implementation of appropriate instruction and ESL services for students who have limited English proficiency shall be in accordance with the current Rules, Regulations, and Minimum Standards of the State Board of Education, and state, and federal law.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Bullying Policy

"Bullying" means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students and may involve:

- ❖ Teasing
- ❖ Social exclusion
- ❖ Threat
- ❖ Intimidation
- ❖ Stalking
- ❖ Physical violence
- ❖ Theft
- ❖ Sexual or racial harassment
- ❖ Public humiliation or
- ❖ Destruction of property

"Harassment" means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal, or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that:

- ❖ Places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property
- ❖ Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits
- ❖ Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school

The definitions of “bullying” and “harassment” include:

Retaliation against a student or school employee by another student or school employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying or harassment. Reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not made in good faith is considered retaliation.

Perpetuation of conduct listed in paragraph (a) or paragraph (b) by an individual or group with intent to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause physical harm to a student or school employee, by:

- ❖ Incitement or coercion
- ❖ Accessing or knowingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the district school system or
- ❖ Acting in a manner that has an effect substantially like the effect of bullying or harassment.

Appendix 2: Bus Policy

Students should plan to arrive approximately ten (10) minutes prior to the scheduled arrival time of their bus. The drivers strive to stay on schedule however, traffic and/or weather conditions can affect their actual arrival time at your stop.

Students shall be at the bus stop at the scheduled time. The bus schedule does not allow additional time to wait for those students who are tardy. Students shall stand a safe distance from the flow of traffic at the bus stop and wait until the bus door is open before moving toward the bus. They shall not play on highways or streets.

While the bus is loading or unloading, students shall enter or leave the bus promptly and in an orderly manner.

Students shall conduct themselves in such a manner that they will not disturb other riders on the bus or distract the attention of the bus driver. The following behavior is prohibited during bus rides:

- ❖ Standing while the bus is in motion
- ❖ Throwing items around the bus
- ❖ Physical aggression towards another person

The use of abusive or obscene language is strictly always forbidden.

Students are not permitted to bring knives or sharp objects of any kind, firearms, pepper spray or mace, tasers, blankets, pillows, pets or other living animals on the bus.

Students shall not tamper with any of the safety devices such as door latches and fire extinguishers. Students shall not shout or make gestures toward anyone outside the bus. Students shall not extend their hands, arms, head, or any other part of their body through the window.

Students shall not deface or litter the bus. They shall not write on the bus, damage seats, or throw paper, food or other objects on the floor of the bus, nor from the bus. Unnecessary abuse of the school bus by a pupil, e.g., cut seats, broken glass, etc., will result in that pupil becoming ineligible for transportation. Said pupil shall become eligible again only when payment is made for damages and assurances given that the abuse will not recur.

Food or drinks may not be consumed on the bus, and smoking is not permitted.

Students shall keep aisles of the bus clear in order to admit passage in the aisle.

Students shall not ask the driver to let them off the bus at any other place except their regular stop.

Students who must cross the road or highway to enter the bus are encouraged to wait until the bus comes to a complete stop and the driver has signaled them to cross in front of the bus.

Students who must cross the road after leaving the bus in the afternoon shall go to a point on the shoulder of the road ten feet in front of the bus and cross the road only after the driver has signaled them to cross.

Students will sit in their assigned seats for the duration of the trip. For safety purposes, aisles or emergency exits shall not be blocked.



MONTESORI ELEMENTARY
HIGHLAND PARK

FAMILY AGREEMENT & HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As a school, we commit to offer rich, rigorous, personalized learning in an attachment village community. We give students meaningful work so that they can develop excellence. We build relationships with families, and communicate closely, including frequently updating you about their growth and development, asking questions and responding promptly to yours.

As parent/guardian, I commit to the following on my child's behalf, in order for them to flourish:

1. **Attend school daily, on time**, ready to learn after a good night's sleep.
 - a. **Doors open 7:35 am**; breakfast available until **7:55 am**; **tardy after 8:00 am**
 - b. No late drop-offs after 8:30 am without a doctor's note. No early dismissal after 2:00 pm.
 - c. Pick up by **3:30 pm daily (PreK dismisses by 1:30 pm)** every day unless approved for extended care)
 - d. Provide a written **excuse** if my child is unable to attend school because of eligible reasons. *Attendance meetings will be held when absences are chronic.*
2. **Follow the dress code.**
 - a. **MEHP logo shirt; solid-colored bottoms.**
 - b. Have **two pairs of shoes**. One pair of shoes must be appropriate for outdoor play.
 - c. PreK/Kinder must keep a change of pants & underwear at school in case of an accident.
 - d. Student phones must be turned off and kept in his/her bag or by the Front Office.
3. **Communicate openly** with school. Review communications and respond as needed.
4. **Participate** in required conferences. Participate in other school events to the best of ability.
5. Read with my child daily & complete the **homework log**, which is reflected on report cards.
6. **Respect** our faculty and take **responsibility** for our classrooms and school environment.
7. **If called about an urgent behavior issue, a caring adult in my child's life will come to the school within the hour**, to help my child calm down, or bring the child home if necessary.

By signing, I agree to the statements above, and also acknowledge that I have received the Family Handbook and will familiarize myself with its contents. I understand that the school policies are subject to change at the sole discretion of the school at any time.

Child name: _____

Parent signature: _____ Date _____

