

**Meridian Public School  
7-12 Student/Parent  
Handbook  
2019-2020**



**Mustangs**

**Mr. Randy Kort, Superintendent  
Mr. Harold Scott, Principal**

# Meridian Public School

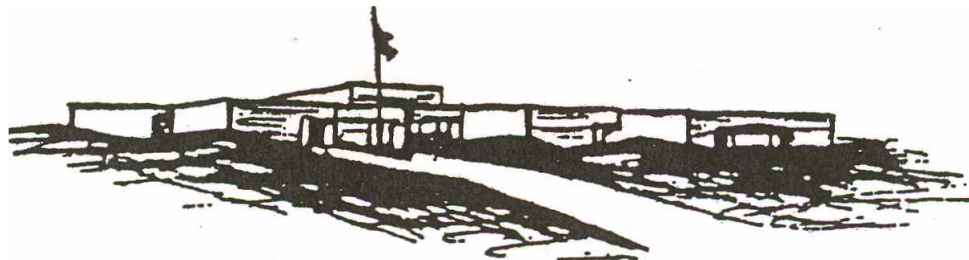
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## Mission Statement

Meridian Public Schools will educate all students in a safe, nurturing environment while challenging them to develop their integrity, knowledge and unique talents to become responsible, productive citizens.

## Belief Statement

- We believe each individual has the right to a safe and comfortable physical and emotional environment.
- We believe all students have unique and special gifts.
- We believe all students can learn.
- We believe that everyone needs positive goals.
- We believe education is a cooperative effort between home, school, and community.



Home of the Mustangs!

*Distributed by the Meridian Senior Class of 1996.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Cover	i
Mission / Belief Statement	ii
Table of Contents	iii,iv,v,vi
<b>A. Introduction / Staff</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>B. Renaissance</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>C. General Information</b>	
1. Loyalty	3
2. Location of Offices	3
3. School Day	3
4. Non-Discrimination	3
5. Borrowed Articles	4
6. Inclement Weather	4
7. Lost and Found Articles	4
8. New Student Information	4
9. Sickness and Health	4
<b>D. Student Procedures</b>	
1. Planning Your Education	5
2. Success as a Student	5
3. Suggestions for Effective Study	5,6
4. Announcements	6
5. Breakfast and Lunch Meals	6
6. Bulletin Boards	6
7. Cell Phones / Electronic Devices	7
8. Class Dismissal	7
9. Counselor	7
10. Dress Code	7,8
11. Driving During School Hours	8
12. Fire Drills and Tornado Drills	8
13. Internet Acceptable Use / Responsibility	8,9
14. Library	9,10
15. Lockers	10
16. Moving About the Building	10
17. Office Conference	10
18. Passes	10
19. School Property	11
20. Student Use of Copy Machines	11
21. Study Hall	11
22. Telephone Calls	11
23. Textbooks	11
24. Vending Machines	11,12
<b>E. Student Rights and Responsibility / Discipline</b>	
1. Good Conduct Rules/Behaviors for all students	12
a. Consequences	12
b. First Offense	12
c. Second Offense	13
d. Third Offense	13
e. Carry-Over	13
f. Loss of Letter	13

g.	Loss of Awards / Recognition / Nominations	13
h.	Pre-Trial Diversion Programs	13,14
2.	Discipline	14
a.	Suspensions	14
b.	Minor Misbehaviors	14
c.	Level I Offenses/Consequences	14,15
d.	Level II Offenses/Consequences	15
e.	Discipline Process	15,16
3.	Cell Phone / Electronic Consequence	16
4.	Detentions – High School	16
5.	Forged Note Consequence	16
6.	Homework Hour Failure to Serve Consequence	16
7.	Leaving School Without Permission Consequence	16
8.	Saturday School	16
9.	Tardy	17
10.	Bullying and Other Harassments	17
a.	How to Deal with a Bully or Harasser	17,18
b.	Investigation of Allegations	18
11.	Sexual Harassment	18,19
a.	Investigation of Allegations	19
12.	Suspensions and Expulsion	20
13.	Emergency Expulsion	20
14.	Short-term Suspension	20,21
15.	Long-term Suspension And Expulsion	21-22
16.	Student Use and / or Possession of Guns	22
17.	Student Use and / or Possession of Alcohol, Tobacco, Drugs, E-Cigarettes, Vapor Devices	22
a.	Prevention	22,23
b.	Intervention	23
c.	Discipline	23
d.	First Offense	23
e.	Second Offense	23
f.	Third Offense	23
g.	Aftercare	24

**F. Attendance / Tardiness / Truancy**

1.	Attendance	24
2.	Eligibility and Absence Guideline	24,25
3.	Leaving School Without Permission	25
4.	Make-Up Work Missed	25
5.	Scholastic Eligibility	25
6.	Tardy	25
7.	Truancy	25,26
8.	Unexcused Absence	26
9.	Verification of Absence	26
10.	Work Release	26,27

**G. Academic Information**

1.	Academic Letter	27
2.	Class Membership	28
3.	College Credit Classes	28
4.	Dropping Out or Transfers	28
5.	Fail List And Eligibility of Participation in School Activities	28
6.	Grading System	28
7.	Graduation and Course Requirements	28,29
8.	Health Education	29

9. Homework Form	29
10. Honor Roll	29
11. Incompletes and Conditionals	29
12. Junior High Failures / Retention	29
13. Nebraska State Standards and Assessment	30
14. Report Cards and Progress Reports	30
15. Teacher Assistant	30
<b>H. General Class / Activities Information</b>	
1. Class Officers (Election of)	30
2. College Visitation	30
3. Early Dismissals	30
4. Extra-Curricular Activities	30
5. Insurance	30
6. Leaving Building During Games	30
7. Medical Release Forms	31
8. Pep Rallies	31
9. School Dances / Junior – Senior Prom	31
10. School Sponsored Trips	31
11. School Sports	31
12. Senior Class	31
13. Spirit Activity	31
14. Student Council	31
15. Student Organizations and Sponsors	32
16. New Rules	32
<b>I. School Bus Safety</b>	<b>32,33</b>
<b>J. Activity Guidelines</b>	
1. Introduction/WARNING	34
2. Philosophy	34,35
3. Objectives	35,36
<b>K. NSAA Regulations Governing Summer &amp; School Year Activities</b>	<b>36</b>
1. Sports Seasons	36
2. Summer Activities	36
3. Clinic	36
4. School Year Activity Practices	36
• Football	36
• Basketball and Volleyball	36
• Track and Wrestling	36
• Conditioning Program	36
• Physical Examinations	36
• Participation on Non-High School Teams	36
• All-star Competition	36
• Amateur Rule	36
• Improper Conduct	36
<b>L. NSAA Eligibility, Attendance and Scholastic Requirements</b>	<b>37</b>
1. Participants	37
2. Semester Limitations	37
3. Season Limitations	37
4. High School Graduates	37
5. Second Semester Eligibility	37
6. Residence	37
7. Age Limitation	37

<b>M. Participation Information-Meridian School Regulations</b>	<b>38</b>
1. Pre-Practice Requirements/Physical/Permission Form	38
2. Appearance	38
3. Attendance and Participation	38
4. Coaches Office and Equipment	38
5. Dressing Room	38
6. Eligibility Guidelines	38
7. Equipment	39
8. Practice Schedules	39
9. Switching Sports	39
<b>N. Extra-curricular and Co-curricular Activity Policies</b>	<b>39</b>
1. Good Conduct Rule	39
2. Requirements to Letter	39,40
3. Coaches/Sponsors Discretion	40
4. Procedure for Due Process	40
5. Suspensions	40
6. Academic Pass	40
<b>O. Student Fee Authorization Act</b>	<b>40</b>
1. Definitions	41
2. Fees Authorized	41
3. Activity Admissions	41
4. Breakfast / Lunch Program	41
5. Course Project Materials	41
6. District Facilities and Equipment Use	41
7. Fee Waiver	41
8. Meals During Activities	42
9. Musical Instruments & Band Uniforms	42
10. Non-Instrumental Music Extracurricular Act.	42
11. Non-Specialized Attire (Clothing)	42
12. Organizational and Class Dues and Fees	42
13. Other Items	42
14. Penalties	42
15. Personal or Consumable Items	42
16. Post-Secondary Education	42
17. Public Hearing	43
18. Severability Clause	43
19. Student Record Copy Charges	43
20. Transportation	43
21. Vending and Concessions	43
<b>P. Index</b>	<b>44-45</b>
<b>Q. Student Fee Waiver Application</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>R. Signature / Student – Parent (to be returned to home room teacher)</b>	<b>49</b>



# Welcome to Meridian Public Schools

Welcome to Meridian Public Schools, **HOME OF THE MUSTANGS!** Whether you are a new or continuing student at Meridian, we hope that the information in this handbook will help guide you through a successful 2019-20 school year. The faculty and support staff is pleased to have you as a part of our educational program and activities. As a contributing member of our “Mustang Family”, it is **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** to read and understand the necessary school guidelines and procedures set forth in this handbook to help make Meridian an efficient, safe, and productive environment.

When questions arise, please remember that the teaching staff, support staff, counselor, and the administration are here to assist you. Parents and students alike are always welcome to contact school personnel for needed assistance at **402-446-7265**. The entire staff is looking forward to the opportunity to work with you and encourage you to strive for personal excellence and growth this year at Meridian.

## **Administration**

Randall Kort Superintendent  
Harold Scott Principal

## **Junior-Senior High**

Jacob Baber Special Education  
Leslie Drees 7-12 Instrumental Music  
Kelly Garcia Spanish  
Amanda Hanzlik Middle School/W. Geog  
Lorrie Hofstetter Science  
Clint Jones 7-12 Physical Education  
Lisa Kruse PreK-12 Guidance  
Gabrielle Morin 7-12 Vocal Music  
Kim Peters Family & Cons. Science  
Chris Placek Art/Enrichment  
Mary Nieves Ruiz Garcia Spanish  
Chris Schropfer School Librarian  
Kathy Soukup Business  
Takota Thiem English  
Lawrence VanderSchaaf Social Studies  
Amy Weber Math  
Sarah Wollenburg Agriculture/Industrial Tech

## **Elementary**

Hanna Borgmann 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade  
Echoe Davis 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Leslie Drees PreK-2 Vocal, Elementary Band  
ReNee Henry Special Education  
Robbin Hergott 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade  
Trevor Hoins 5<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Clint Jones PreK – 6 Physical Education  
Natalie Meyer Kindergarten  
Gabrielle Morin 3-6 Vocal Music  
Nancy Paul Preschool  
Shawn Pohlmann 6<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Shana Rickstrew Title  
Michelle Weyer 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

## **ESU #5**

Kristin Banahan Speech  
Damien Bertwell Technology  
Staci Hergott School Nurse  
Justin Johnson Occupational Therapy  
Lisa Richardson Hearing

## **Secretaries/Paras**

Trish Endorf District Secretary  
Kathy Houser High School Secretary  
Kelly Kanost Elementary Secretary  
Michelle Baxa SPED Para  
Shannon Burkhart Elementary Para  
Michaela Endorf Elementary Para  
Stephanie Hinrichs High School Para  
Cynthia Kerwood Elementary Para  
Lori Pohlmann SPED Para

## **Cooks/Custodians**

Elaine Bartels Head Cook  
Mike Hofstetter Head Custodian  
Shari Bachle Kitchen  
Kenny Falck Custodian  
Kimberly Kotas Kitchen

## **Bus Drivers**

Tonya Griffin Routes  
Janelle Heiserman Fairbury/Daykin  
Charles Houser Alexandria/Gilead  
Wendy McKenzie Daykin/Western  
Elizabeth Noel Tobias/Western  
Allen Lintz Tobias/Ohiowa  
Substitute

## **Other Coaches**

Deanna Brakhage Cheerleader/Dance  
Robert Schropfer Girls Basketball  
Jack Sobotka Junior High Basketball  
Robert VanWesten Volleyball

## **Meridian Board of Education**

President Jay VanWesten  
Vice President Todd Vorderstrasse  
Secretary Jason Bartels  
Scott Sobotka Treasurer  
Member Jamie Niederklein  
Member Rene’ Scheer



# Renaissance Program

A NEW COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

The 2019-20 school year will be the 22<sup>nd</sup> for the **Renaissance Program** at MPS. Meridian's Renaissance began with a new *Commitment to Excellence* in our educational programs in 1998-1999 and continues to remain a constant segment of our School Improvement Plan from which the program evolved. Implementation of the Renaissance Program was the result of a three-year school improvement study at Meridian. The program is designed to reward academic improvement and good behavior habits at school. The Student Council and the Principal's office set the yearly guidelines for this nationally known program.

The goal of the Meridian Renaissance Program is to provide an atmosphere that continues to promote excellent performance and continuous improvement by all students and staff. It creates an attitude among students that academic achievement, accomplishments, and pride in hard work will result in immediate and future rewards. We believe that students who are encouraged, supported, and rewarded for academic achievement will experience greater success, graduate, and enter the world community as positive, productive citizens.

The **Renaissance Program** began in Conway, South Carolina in 1988, and was sponsored by the Jostens Corporation, a Fortune 500 company based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. This fast growing program has over 1500 schools across the country involved in a rebirth of educational improvement. By employing basic motivational concepts used in the business world, the **Renaissance Program** will provide tangible rewards and incentives to student who improve their academic performance or maintain high levels of classroom excellence.

Through the work of the staff, Student Council, elected class leaders, and area community businesses, this program has established rewards and recognition for Meridian Jr/Sr High School Students. All 7-12 students are eligible to become a part of three established academic levels. Those three (3) levels are called the **RED LEVEL Achievers**, the **BLACK LEVEL Achievers**, and the **WHITE LEVEL Achievers**. The "RED" Level students qualify for rewards and incentives by earning all A's in their course work. The "BLACK" Level students qualify by earning an overall average of 85% or above. One grade of "C" (80% or above) will be allowed. The "WHITE" Level students can qualify by raising their established grade point average by half a grade (.5) with no F's.

Students who qualify for the grade point incentives must also have exhibited exemplary attendance, discipline, and punctuality habits. To qualify for the rewards and incentives each semester, student must have missed five (5) days or fewer for the semester, and have three (3) or fewer tardy for each nine-week period. Student must have had no "Saturday School" sessions or out-of-school suspensions, and two (2) or fewer minor detentions during the semester.

All students must believe they can excel, and the staff will support them in their effort to work to the highest level of their ability. In our partnership with the area business community, the entire staff at Meridian Jr-Sr High School will strive to produce educated, responsible, and productive citizens. The symbol of the Renaissance in the American eagle: to soar with the eagles, we must commit to the **Renaissance** – the rebirth, renovation, restoration, and renewal to achieving excellence in education.



# **GENERAL STUDENT INFORMATION**

## **LOYALTY**

### **Loyalty - An American Creed**

I believe in the United States of America as a government of the people, by the people, for the people; whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed; a democracy in a republic; a sovereign nation of many sovereign states; a perfect union, one and inseparable; established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and their fortunes.

I, therefore, believe it is my duty to my country to love it; support its Constitution; to obey its laws; to respect its flag; and to defend it against all enemies.

### **Loyalty - Salute to the American Flag**

*"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands; one nation under God; indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."*

### **Loyalty - Your School**

You should always bear in mind that this is your school. It is your duty to conduct yourself both in and out of school in such a manner as to always be a credit to your school. Always build up your school - never put it down.

If you have concerns, talk it over with your teacher, your student council, your principal, or your superintendent. A level-headed discussion of the problem will accomplish more than grumbling and complaining. Contribute everything you can for the betterment of your school. The more you put into your school, the more you can get out of it. Be proud of your school and do everything you can to make people proud of it, too.

### **Loyalty - You**

Remember the school is for you, and the members of the faculty will assist you in every way possible. Therefore, do not hesitate to ask questions if you find yourself undecided as to what is expected of you, or if you have a personal problem. The teachers, principal, counselor, or superintendent will be willing to discuss any problem with you.

## **LOCATION OF OFFICES**

The Superintendent's Office is located just inside the main doors of the school, on the north end of the Commons Area. The prek-12 Principal's Office is located south of the high school library.

Anyone seeking school information, wishing to visit the school, or talk with a teacher or student, must report to the Superintendent's Office upon entering the building. Visitors are always welcome, but are asked to check in at the Superintendent's Office to receive a visitor's pass before visiting classrooms.

## **SCHOOL DAY**

The regular school day **begins at 8:00 a.m.** and **ends at 3:42 p.m. (3:12 on Fridays).** Students are expected to arrive on time and leave promptly after dismissal. The **warning bell rings at 8:00 a.m.** and the **tardy bell rings at 8:10 a.m.** To be early is to be on time; to be on time is to be late.

Students are not to enter the building before 7:45 AM or remain after 4:00 p.m. unless they have permission to work under the supervision of a teacher and go directly to the area where they are supposed to work. If a student is unable to find a teacher willing to sponsor him/her, the student should notify the principal of this fact prior to noon. The principal will arrange sponsorship of the student. The teacher must actually be in the same room with the student in order to sponsor the student.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION**

It is the policy of the Meridian Public School not to discriminate on the basis of sex, handicap, race, color, religion, marital status, veteran's status, or national or ethnic origin in its educational programs, admission policies, employment policies, other agency administered programs and all related publications.

### **BORROWED ARTICLES**

The school or its organizations frequently find it advantageous or necessary to borrow articles from individuals and business establishments for various school functions. We should show our appreciation for these courtesies by promptly returning borrowed property in as good condition as when it was borrowed. It is the student's responsibility under direction of the activity sponsor to secure and return borrowed property. Be sure it is returned immediately after use.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

In case of bad weather, school will be held only if the school buses can safely pick up and deliver students. Notice of school closing will be announced on Radio Stations: KGMT 1310 AM-Fairbury, KFAB 1110 AM-Omaha, KWBE 1450AM-Beatrice; TV Channel: KHAS-TV Channel 5-Hastings, KOLN/KGIN-TV Channel 10-Lincoln, KLKN TV-TV Channel 8-Lincoln, and through the **School Messenger** automated telephone-messaging program. The following procedures will be followed as closely as possible in making school announcements. In all cases the safety of the students and staff will be the primary concern in determining whether the school will operate.

**Before school starts:** Notice will be made as early as possible. Every effort will be made to notify the media before 7:00 a.m., but all parents are urged to use their judgment as to whether they wish to send their child(ren).

**After school is in session:** We will use the same media to make notification of school closing. Students will be sent home only if we have reasonable assurance that they can safely reach home. If you, as a parent, feel that you wish to pick up your child early, we again urge you to use your best judgment in this matter and will certainly not question your decision to do so.

### **LOST AND FOUND ARTICLES**

**Lost items** should be reported to the Secretary's Office as soon as noted. It should be thoroughly understood by all patrons and pupils that the pupil is responsible for his/her own property, and that the school cannot assume responsibility for the loss of personal property. However, every effort will be made to assist pupils to locate or recover personal property which has been lost, if it is reported immediately to the principal or for an out-of-town trip to the teacher or coach in charge. In the latter case, report it before boarding the bus or transportation home.

**All articles found** should be taken to the Office. The Office will seek to return each article to its rightful owner. Lost and found notices will be printed in the daily announcements. At the close of each semester, the principal will dispose of lost articles not claimed throughout the school year.

### **NEW STUDENT INFORMATION**

All new incoming students need to report their **social security number** to the guidance counselor office for inclusion in their permanent record. According to recently passed state legislation, newly enrolled students must provide either: (a) a certified copy of the student's **birth certificate**, or (b) other **reliable proof** of the student's identity and age accompanied by an affidavit explaining the inability to produce a certified copy of the birth certificate, and (c) a copy of **all immunizations**. The school will also request complete name of student, grade entering, address, and other information necessary to enrollment. This information must be provided to the administration and/or counselor office upon entering school.

### **SICKNESS AND HEALTH**

If a student becomes ill, he/she must check out with the principal, superintendent, or designated person before leaving school. A student with a fever, vomiting, or other medical condition will be allowed to leave school with permission from his/her parent or guardian, and approval of the administration. Prescription or over-the-counter medication will only be given with parent approval (note/phone call). All meds must be in the original container.

Good health is one of the major objectives of the Meridian School. In order to achieve this objective, a regular health program is pursued. Cumulative health records are maintained for each pupil, containing a health history, the results of physical and dental examinations, inoculation and vaccination records and other information pertinent to the student's physical well-being. All additional inoculations and vaccinations or other chronic health problems should be reported to keep records up to date.

# **STUDENT PROCEDURE**

## **PLANNING YOUR EDUCATION**

The decisions you make in selecting a course and subjects are going to be the most important decisions you have made thus far in your life. They may determine your entire future. You should attempt to determine what you will likely do in life as indicated by your abilities and interests and then select your subjects so as to aid in your success in that endeavor. You should never allow your courses to be determined by the decisions of your classmates. Their decisions may be good for them but utterly wrong for you. Your parents, teachers, counselor, and principal can be of great help to you in this matter if you will discuss your problems with them.

It is recommended that you make an appointment with the guidance counselor early in the year to discuss your future. A testing program designed to aid the student and parents in following a course of study throughout high school is given to each student throughout his/her high school career. Test scores are entered on permanent records.

## **SUCCESS AS A STUDENT**

If you are to succeed as a high school student, you need to:

1. **Do home study.** Each pupil is expected to spend some time on the preparation of studies outside of school hours. The **amount of time** needed for homework depends upon the pupil's degree of efficiency in the use of class study time and study hall time.
2. **Follow a definite time schedule** for study.
3. Acquire **correct habits** of study.
4. **Be prompt** in doing all tasks assigned.
5. **Be self-reliant.**

Above all else, you must be loyal and true to yourself. **YOU ARE WHAT YOU THINK YOU ARE.** You owe it to yourself to think your best, do your best, and hence, **BE YOUR BEST.** Remember the school can provide the material, tools, and environment for you to grow and learn; **what you do with these is up to YOU!**

If you would like to discuss personal problems or school problems with any staff member, including the superintendent, please feel free to make an appointment to meet with them.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE STUDY**

1. **Make a schedule** for study, assigning the study of each subject to some definite hours and cultivate the habit of studying by schedule.
2. At the beginning of the study of a new unit or assignment, **study the instructions given by the teacher closely**, noting what is desired and what has been suggested as especially important.
3. As a safeguard against forgetting, **write down the assignment**; take notes on both required and helpful suggestions on how to study the material. If examples are given, copy them.
4. Before launching into the study of a lesson, **determine what materials will be needed** – reference books, notebooks, writing materials, ruler, etc. - and have these on hand.
5. Form the habit of **beginning study with energy**. Don't daydream or waste time.
6. Form the habit of **using the index of a book freely, study maps, and look up difficult words.**
7. **Concentrate on the work** at hand and don't permit your mind to wander. Resolve to master each lesson. Don't put off parts of the lesson because they appear unattractive.
8. In studying reading matter, **observe the following "efficiency" rules:**
  - Read through quickly once to get the general thought.
  - Read through again, trying to "react" in the same way to everything read by agreeing, disagreeing, comparison with something else, thinking up applications of the full meaning, outlining the assignment.
  - Stop occasionally to see how well you can recall the more important points. Write them down from memory or with as little help as possible from the text.
  - Talk over the materials, read with someone in your class, and write out questions to ask in class or points you do not understand.
9. **Do not stop** until you feel that you have mastered the assignment and are fully prepared.
10. If you accept help from anyone, **be sure that you understand the explanation.**

11. In preparing your work, **emphasize those points**, which you believe the instructor thinks are most valuable and which are likely to be emphasized in class discussions.
12. **In memorizing:**
  - **Be sure that you understand the material** thoroughly before you start to memorize.
  - **Repeat mentally** the material with complete concentration, using the book only as you need it.
  - **Learn by small units** and practice these units. See if you can recall it a few hours after you have "memorized" it.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Daily announcements shall be made at the beginning of second period. A daily bulletin is published that includes meetings, activities, absentees, and other information for that day. Announcements will be made over the intercom system **ONLY** when they cannot be handled in any other appropriate manner (preferably at the beginning or ending of the period.) This bulletin is e-mailed to staff and students daily. Students are responsible for reading the announcements daily.

### **BREAKFAST and LUNCH MEALS**

The cafeteria offers a breakfast and regular lunch menu each day of the week. An optional choice of a fruit/vegetable bar is also available daily. **Students may bring a noon sack lunch, but students may not leave the campus for lunch or have food or drink brought to them.** Students are called to the lunchroom via a weekly rotation by classes. The lunch period is 30 minutes in length. After eating, students are asked to go to the gym (if open), sit in the commons, or go outside to the cement "horseshoe" area until the bell rings. Cafeteria food may not be taken out of the commons.

School breakfast and lunches are available and students are encouraged to eat them. Prices are set by the Board of Education. Only well-balanced meals are served which provide about one-third to one-half of the day's nutrition requirements. High standards of sanitation and safety are maintained. The Federal and State governments through cash reimbursements and surplus commodities finance the programs and by the participating students who pay a nominal fee. The program is financially self-supporting, nonprofit, and is supervised by the State Department of Education.

**Lunch payment is to be made in the Superintendent Secretary's office.** The school may end lunch privileges upon the accumulation of THREE (3) unpaid lunches. The school will deny a student lunch privileges if more than TEN (10) unpaid lunches accumulate. **School Lunch checks should be written out to the Meridian Hot Lunch Program.**

**Nondiscrimination Statement:** In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at [\(800\) 877-8339](tel:8008778339). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call [\(866\) 632-9992](tel:8666329992). Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) Fax: [\(202\) 690-7442](tel:2026907442); or (3) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov) This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

### **BULLETIN BOARDS**

Bulletin boards are maintained throughout the building. The principal must approve all postings placed on the hall bulletin boards by students. The library bulletin board is for the use of the librarian. Classroom bulletin board postings will be by or with the approval of the classroom teacher. Notices should be removed as soon as the purpose has been served. Make it a habit to read bulletin board notices daily. They may concern you.

## **CELL PHONES / ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Schools all over the country are struggling with the relative ease with which students may use cell phones to take inappropriate pictures, engage in cyber-bullying or cheating via texting or photographing a quiz/test. Ringing or vibrating cell phones are also a disruption to the educational process and interfere with student learning. **Students may not use cell phones, pagers, i-pods, portable DVD players or similar electronic devices during regularly scheduled class time without specific approval of the classroom teacher and prior knowledge of the administration.**

**Students who are observed using such devices during regularly scheduled class time** (tardy bell to dismissal bell) without permission in a classroom, hallway or bathroom are subject to disciplinary action. Cell phones and other electronic devices may be used before school, between classes, during lunch or after school as long as they are used in a school appropriate manner.

Students who utilize any device to video or photograph a teacher without the permission of the teacher or use authorized video/photos in an inappropriate manner will be subject to disciplinary action including detention, suspension or expulsion based on the use of the unauthorized video/photos.

**Cell Phone Consequences: Students whose cell phone disrupts instructional time will be subject to the following consequences:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Offense:** Cell phone must be given to the staff member and will not be given back until the end of the school day.

**2<sup>nd</sup> & Subsequent Offenses:** Cell phone must be given to the staff member and will be given to a parent/guardian.

**Failure to hand over a cell phone** when requested by a school staff member (administrator, teacher, para-educator, secretary, coach, custodian, kitchen staff, bus driver) will result in an out-of-school (OSS) suspension of one (1) day for a first offense, three (3) days for a second offense, five (5) days for a third and subsequent offenses. These events would still count as a cell phone violation when determining the total number of offenses.

## **CLASS DISMISSAL**

Classes are in session from the ringing of the tardy bell until dismissed by the teacher in charge. The bell at the end of the period is a warning bell and not a dismissal bell. Students will remain seated until dismissed by the teacher.

## **COUNSELOR**

The counselor program at Meridian Public Schools has the basic goal of helping students take advantage of the many opportunities at school and to prepare them for the next step in their lives.

There are four components to the counselor program:

1. **Curriculum** -- Lessons are developed for students in PreK-12 to help them attain, develop, and demonstrate competencies in academic, career, and personal/social development.
2. **Individual Planning** -- The counselor will work with individual students to make appropriate education and career plans.
3. **Responsive Services** -- Activities are available to meet the immediate needs of the students and their families. The student, parent, teacher, or administration can initiate these services through the school counselor.
4. **System Support** -- Other duties will be performed to maintain and enhance the total educational program.

## **DRESS CODE**

Student dress should be appropriate for the school setting. This includes offsite events and activities. Dress that is in good taste, in no way distracting, and is not vulgar or suggestive in appearance or in the written word or illustration will be acceptable.

**Hats, hoods, sunglasses, and bandanas** may not be worn during school hours unless approved by the administration. Cheerleaders may wear their uniforms during school hours on game days.

**Inappropriate attire may not be worn to school or school activities.** Examples of unacceptable clothing would include tank tops or armless T-shirts, halter tops, midriff tops and spaghetti tops. Skirts, dresses or shorts **must be knee length or longer.** Cleavage must be covered. Underwear cannot be showing. **Clothing deemed to be worn in a gang-related or style** (ex. sagging pants off the hips, colored bandannas, on the head/hung from the waist, and waist chains) are unacceptable school attire. Students may not wear clothing or jewelry **with vulgar illustrations, profanity, phrases of sexual innuendo, or logos/advertisements involving alcohol, drugs, or tobacco products.**

The administration has the right to correct any violation of the school's dress code in the school setting or activities. Appropriate clothing will be provided to the student for the day if the student does not have appropriate clothing available. Students will not be allowed to leave school to change clothes.

### **DRIVING DURING SCHOOL HOURS**

1. No driving during school hours except with permission from the administration.
2. All cars are to be parked in the designated parking area (south end of west lot).  
**Seniors – 1<sup>st</sup> row**    **Juniors – 2<sup>nd</sup> row**    **Sophomores – 3<sup>rd</sup> row**    **Freshmen – 4<sup>th</sup> row**
3. Students are not to be in or around cars during school hours.
4. Students are to enter and leave the parking areas at a moderate speed.
5. Spinning of tires is prohibited.
6. Cars are to be parked in designated places **ONLY AT RIGHT ANGLES** to parking stalls.
7. Do not park in marked "No Parking" OR handicap painted areas.
8. Students who violate these or any other regulations in regards to the operation of motor vehicles will be subject to disciplinary action and may be denied the privilege of parking on school property.
9. Reckless driving on or around school property may be reported to law enforcement.

### **FIRE DRILLS AND TORNADO DRILLS**

State law requires fire drills throughout the year. The sounding of an alarm is the signal to vacate the building for practice or because of fire. In the event of failure of the alarm, a hand bell or other signal, which cannot be mistaken, will be used. Students need to follow instructions from teachers. Procedures will be posted in individual rooms.

### **INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE & RESPONSIBILITY**

Access to the information highway, the INTERNET, is available for all 7-12 students. Along with this access privilege comes the responsibility to follow Meridian's INTERNET Rules and Guidelines. The technology resources are to be used for the limited purpose of advancing the District's mission. The technology resources are to be used, in general, for educational purposes, meaning activities that are integral, immediate, and proximate to the education of students. All procedures in place must be followed before computers may be checked out or leased.

### **SEE TECH HANDBOOK FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.**

#### **Privacy and Safety**

- Do not go into chat rooms or send chain letters without permission.
- Do not open, use, or change computer files that do not belong to you.
- Do not reveal your full name, phone number, home address, social security number, credit card numbers, password or passwords of other people.
- Remember that storage is not guaranteed to be private or confidential.
- If you inadvertently access a web site that contains obscene, pornographic or otherwise offensive material, notify a teacher or the principal immediately so that such sites can be blocked from further access. This is not merely a request; it is a responsibility.

#### **Legal Propriety**

- Comply with trademark and copyright laws and all license agreements. Ignorance of the law is not immunity. If you are unsure, ask a teacher or parent.
- **Plagiarism is a violation.** Give credit to all sources used, whether quoted or summarized. This includes all forms of media on the Internet, such as graphics, movies, music, and text. Use or possession of hacking software is strictly prohibited and violators will be subject to disciplinary action. Violation of applicable state or federal law, including the Nebraska State Statutes, Meridian Public School Policy, may result in criminal prosecution or disciplinary action by the District.

### E-mail

Students needing email for academic reasons will be allowed email access through an address assigned by the district.

- Always use appropriate language.
- Do not transmit language/material that is profane, obscene, abusive, or offensive to others.
- Do not send mass e-mails, chain letters or spam.
- Students should maintain high integrity with regard to email content.
- No private chatting.

**Meridian Public School e-mail is subject to inspection by the school.**

### Consequences

The student in whose name a system account and/or computer hardware is issued will be responsible at all times for its appropriate use. Students are also responsible for the appropriate use of desktop computers or other technology owned by the school. Non-compliance with the policies of the Meridian Public School Student Handbook may result in disciplinary action as outlined in this handbook. **E-mail, network usage, and all stored files shall not be considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by designated District staff to ensure appropriate use.** The District cooperates fully with local, state or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to violations of computer crime laws. The administration and/or the Technology Committee will review all other questions.

To prevent and/or discourage INTERNET usage where students go through steps or web pages or somehow bypass the school's filtering systems to access inappropriate sites in the school environment, a Saturday School or out-of-school suspension will result for those who initially and intentionally misuse the INTERNET. **Only games of educational value** determined by and supervised by school personnel will be allowed through administrative approval. Students are not to make personal unauthorized purchases (EBay, etc.) or to sell items via the INTERNET while at school.

### Consequences for computer misuse will be the following:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Violation** - One four-hour session at Saturday School ... 7:00-11:00 a.m.  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Violation** - One day of out-of-school suspension  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Violation** - Loss of computer privileges until reinstated by the Board of Education.

### Suspension for Pornography

*ANY STUDENT USING SCHOOL COMPUTERS WHO INTENTIONALLY ACCESSES ANY FORM OF PORNOGRAPHY WILL BE GIVEN A SHORT TERM SUSPENSION OF ONE (1) TO FIVE (5) DAYS OUT OF SCHOOL. THE STUDENT WILL ALSO LOSE THE COMPUTER PRIVILEGES FOR A MINIMUM OF 30 CALENDAR DAYS AND WILL HAVE TO ATTEND A BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING IN ORDER TO ASK TO HAVE THE COMPUTER PRIVILEGES REINSTATED.*

## LIBRARY

The high school library is located on the south end of the Commons Area. Students going to the library should go for school related purposes only. The library is not to be used for visiting or as a hallway. If necessary, the student can make special arrangements with the teacher/librarian to use the library before 8:00 a.m. or after 4:00 p.m. The English teachers also devote a portion of their time each year to instructing pupils in the practical use of the library with the assistance of the librarian.

**Encyclopedias, dictionaries, and other resource books** may be checked out for overnight use only. The book must be returned to the library the following morning. Permission to check out these books is to be given by the librarian only. For all media supplies, please use proper procedures that are in place.

**Magazines and Periodicals** -- Current copies of magazines and periodicals may be used in the library during study halls. If they are used during study halls, the student using them as soon as he/she is finished with the magazine or periodical will place them back on the shelf where they belong. No current magazines may be taken out of the library by any student during the school day unless he/she has special permission. They may be checked out for overnight use only and must be checked out with the librarian. All current magazines are placed on file for future reference. Those magazines and periodicals on file may be checked out for research purposes for two weeks. Please make every effort to handle these carefully so others may use them.

When the librarian is scheduled to be in the Elementary library or is absent from school, arrangements will be made to have the library open while he/she is absent. Students must have a pass from the study hall teacher to go to the library during study hall time. During class time, the teacher sending student(s) will have made arrangements prior to the class period. This privilege will last for each student as long as library rules of quiet study are followed.

**Returning Books** -- The librarian will designate the times and place(s) for returning all materials checked out of the library. Students shall make themselves familiar with these regulations and follow them.

### **LOCKERS**

Each student will have his/her own locker(s). Students are to hang their coats on hooks and keep books in the hallway locker assigned to them. Athletic bags and gear are to be stored in the gym lockers. **STUDENTS ARE HIGHLY ENCOURAGED TO USE LOCKS ON THEIR GYM LOCKERS.** If students purchase their own lock, the combination must be given to the administration.

The lockers used by students at Meridian are considered school property. **Searches of school lockers used by students can be made at any time as deemed necessary by the school administration.** Also, administrators with reasonable suspicion and/or just cause may search athletic lockers, clothing pockets, book bags, purses, etc. as well as any motor vehicles parked on school property. The Jefferson County Sheriff's Canine Unit may also conduct periodic searches during school or after school hours. School personnel may also search personal items left unattended on school property. Any inappropriate or illegal materials found in the searches will be confiscated.

**School backpacks/athletic bags should not be left** on the floors of the dressing rooms or school hallways, as this is a violation of state school safety/fire regulations. Athletes should use their lockers and/or hooks and not store their equipment/uniforms on the dressing room floors.

**Students who must bring large sums of money or other valuables to school are urged to leave them in the Superintendent's or Principal's office until they are needed or the close of the school day.** While we would hope that all of our students are trustworthy and honest, life has taught us that this is not always true. Therefore, we urge each student to take reasonable precautions with his/her possessions and particularly items of great value.

**In order to protect the health and welfare of the students, the administration reserves the right to check student lockers at any time.** It is the responsibility of each student to be sure their locker is kept neat, and that only those articles required for school purposes are kept in the lockers. Any articles, which would be deemed contraband under the laws of the State of Nebraska or the regulations of the school, will be subject to confiscation. Students who do not take care of their lockers may be denied use of a locker.

### **MOVING ABOUT THE BUILDING**

Courtesy should be practiced at all times in the halls and classrooms. Loitering in the halls, classrooms, locker rooms, and gymnasium; running, shoving, whistling, public display of affection, etc. will be grounds for disciplinary action. Always observe the rules of good behavior and respect for others in all areas of the buildings and grounds. **While class is in session, students must have a pass to leave the classroom.**

### **OFFICE CONFERENCE**

Pupils wishing to confer with the principal, counselor, or superintendent should come to the respective office before school, after school, or during a regular study hall after receiving permission and a pass from the teacher in charge of the study hall. If one of the administrators is not there, a message should be left in the office. Students will not be excused from regular classes unless the classroom teacher issues a pass and gives permission for the student to go to another area.

### **PASSES**

Passes must be issued for each student when he/she leaves a class or study hall to go to another part of the building. This pass is to be issued by the teacher in charge of the student at the time. Teachers who see students loitering in halls or unoccupied rooms will send them back to their place of origin. If a student does not have a pass, he/she will receive a consequence from the administration.



## SCHOOL PROPERTY

Attractive surroundings contribute to the well-being and happiness of students. It is the responsibility of each student and staff to take care of the facility, the grounds, and all school property. Students may be held liable for the cost of any repairs, replacement, or damage to school property.

## STUDENT USE OF COPY MACHINES

No student, with the exception of Teacher / Library / Organization/ and/or Office Assistants, may operate school copy machines. Only those students who have been taught the proper operation of the copy machines will be allowed to operate them. Personal copies made for students on the machine in the Superintendent's office will be charged ten cents per copy.

## STUDY HALL

All students are to be in their seats and in order when the tardy bell begins to ring. Students are required to follow the procedure set up by the study hall teacher. A teacher has the right to set any reasonable rules for their study hall. These rules will be communicated to the students at the beginning of the school year.

### **Study hall expectations are as follows:**

1. All students are to report to study just as they would to a regular class.
2. Each study hall teacher will take attendance at the beginning of class.
3. Students will not be allowed to pass from the study hall to homerooms or classrooms for study materials. Study materials must be brought to study hall before the beginning of the period.
4. Students are to be seated and it should be a quiet, individual study time for ALL students. **NO EXCEPTIONS! If a student has no homework, they should be sure to bring proper reading material to class and read.**
5. If conferences are needed with other instructors, students must have a pass slip signed by that instructor indicating that he or she has an appointment...this includes the library. The student will then be issued a pass that he/she must turn in to the study hall teacher when he/she returns from the conference, with the time he/she left the conference and the initials of the teacher involved.
6. All students are expected to follow study hall rules.

## TELEPHONE CALLS

**IN CALLS:** The office will always gladly cooperate with parents and guardians to get messages to pupils during school hours. However, calls for pupils during school hours are disturbing to the school routine, and should be held to a minimum. Students will not be called to the telephone unless it is an emergency.

**OUT CALLS:** No student call, regardless of its urgency, is to be made any time without the specific approval of the superintendent, principal, or designated person. Long distance calls are **NOT TO BE CHARGED** to the school. Students should call using a phone credit card or the District office telephone.

Students may use the telephone located in the school office while the school day is in session after getting permission from the administration or designated person. Use of this phone is to be **ONLY** when the student has a pass to be away from his/her assigned area, or during the lunch period.

## TEXTBOOKS

The classroom teacher will issue textbooks to students. They are to be numbered and assigned to the pupil. Pupils damaging books beyond ordinary wear will be expected to pay for a new book. A notation of the condition of your book will be made in the teacher's record when it is issued. Please place your name on the inside of the cover in ink.

## VENDING MACHINES

The food and drink vending machines may be used after school. Due to Federal Hot Lunch regulations, the machines are always off between 7:15 a.m. and 3:45 p.m. Use of the machine will **NOT** be an excuse for a tardy to class or being late for the bus. Occasionally the machine will malfunction. Please contact the principal when this occurs. **DO NOT POUND. KICK. OR SHAKE THE MACHINES.** Contact the principal for stuck items or incorrect change. The administration may shut off the machine for a period of time if the student body does not throw trash away properly. *PLEASE HELP KEEP OUR SCHOOL CLEAN!!! Note: Approved water will be available throughout the day.*

Food and drink may be brought to school if it is part of a class project (Spanish cooking, classroom presentations, an occasional class reward, etc.) or for an after school activity meeting if approved by the Principal's Office in advance. Unapproved food and drink that is brought to school may be confiscated by the administration.

## **STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITY / DISCIPLINE**

### **GOOD CONDUCT RULES / BEHAVIORS FOR ALL STUDENTS**

Students attending Meridian need to understand that their choices of behavior **AT ALL TIMES** reflect on their school, their community, their family, and certainly themselves. Inappropriate behavior **IN AND OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL** will result in appropriate consequences. Some examples of inappropriate behavior would include (but not be limited to):

Cited for, self-reported, and reported by school personnel or law enforcement:

1. Use/possession of illegal substances
2. Incidents of poor citizenship in school
3. Gross insubordination in school
4. Conflicts with the law such as stealing of property, acts of vandalism/violence, assault
5. Placed on probation or parole
6. Entering a county pre-trial diversion program
7. Being suspended for excessive detentions
8. Inappropriate behavior during a school sponsored activity

**Incidents of students violating the Good Conduct rule** will be investigated by the building principal when a violation is observed, reported, read about in a local paper, or "self-reported" by the student. When the violation is proved valid, consequences will be administered the day the investigation is completed.

**CONSEQUENCES:** ALL OFFENCES ARE CUMULATIVE FROM JUNIOR HIGH THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL. Such offenses can be those on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities, home or away, or on a student's free time outside the school day or week.

**FIRST OFFENSE:** The student will receive a **28 CALENDAR DAY SUSPENSION** from activities and a minimum suspension from **FOUR (4) MAJOR ACTIVITIES**. Major activities include, but are not limited to, athletic contests, musical events or contests, drama or speech contests/performances, organizational clinics or field trips, prom or other school dances. The determination of what constitutes a major activity will be at the discretion of the principal.

### **ALL OPTIONS CAN BE CHOSEN TOGETHER OR CHOSEN SINGULARLY**

**OPTION B:** If the student "self-reports" a violation to the coach, sponsor, or the principal **WITHIN ONE (1) SCHOOL DAY of the incident**, the suspension will be **reduced by seven (7) CALENDAR DAYS** from activities, and the **MINIMUM** number of major activities that must be missed will be lowered by **one**.

**OPTION C:** If the student agrees to participate in a school approved evaluation and substance abuse awareness program (if available) set up through the school's SCIP team representatives, the student will have a further reduction of days from the suspension time from activities of **SEVEN (7) CALENDAR DAYS** and the **MINIMUM** number of major activities that must be missed **will be lowered by one** WHEN the school receives a student release from the approved evaluator and/or counselor as proof of completion of the evaluation and/or recommended counseling.

Choosing Option B or C **DOES NOT GUARANTEE AN ACTUAL REDUCTION OF MAJOR ACTIVITIES TO BE MISSED**. THE **MINIMUM NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES TO BE MISSED** may or may not extend past the reduced number of calendar days. The actual number of activities to be missed is dependent on the school calendar and the number of major activities planned during that time frame.

**SECOND OFFENSE:** The second offense for a student will result in a **180 CALENDAR DAY SUSPENSION** from all activities.

**OPTION B:** If the student "self-reports" a second violation to the coach, sponsor, or principal **WITHIN ONE (1) SCHOOL DAY of the incident**, the suspension from activities will be reduced **BY 45 CALENDAR DAYS**.

**OPTION C:** If the student completes a school approved substance abuse evaluation and/or counseling program (if available) and files a student release with the principal's office and SCIP team as proof of completion, the suspension from extra-curricular activities will be **reduced by 45 CALENDAR DAYS**.

All students who are suspended from their activities WILL BE ALLOWED TO ATTEND PRACTICES, but will not be allowed to participate in scheduled events.

**THIRD OFFENSE:** The third offense for a student will result in a **365 day suspension** from all activities. After a calendar years' time, a student may be reinstated to activity participation if he/she appears before the Board of Education with a report of substance abuse program completion, counseling documentation, and year of "clean slate" living within the law. Upon hearing the report, the Board of Education may elect to vote for the student's reinstatement to participation in activities for one last opportunity.

**CARRY OVER:** Consequences for violations that occur when there are fewer days in the school year than the consequences call for will "carry over" to the next school year. For example, if the suspension is for 28 days and at least four (4) activities, but there are only 12 days and two (2) activities left in the school year, the suspension will carryover for 16 days and two (2) activities into the next school year. The count will resume with the first scheduled activity of the new season.

**LOSS OF LETTER:** All students suspended from their activity/sport season due to breaking the Good Conduct Rules and/or Drug, Alcohol, Tobacco, e-Cigarette, Vapor Device policies, will automatically forfeit their letter.

**LOSS OF AWARDS / RECOGNITION / NOMINATIONS:** All students suspended from their activity due to breaking the Good Conduct Rules and/or Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco/e-Cigarette/Vapor Device policies, will not be nominated nor supported for any award during that activity/sport season. This is to include letter awards, local incentive awards, all-conference nominations, all-state nominations, player of the week nominations, etc. The only exceptions would be those awards decided upon by persons other than coaches, sponsors, and the Activities Director such as sports casters, sports editors, etc. Awards gained by actual competition (ie. medals) or awards received prior to the violation/ suspension would not be retractable. A violation would not affect the chance for awards during other activities or sport seasons.

**PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION PROGRAMS:** The Meridian School District accepts the fact that many counties in Nebraska and in other states now have various forms of pre-trial diversion programs for minors who have been charged by officers of the law with illegal possession and/or use of tobacco, alcohol, and other illegal drugs. Under the provisions of some pre-trial diversion programs, a minor's record is concealed or erased upon successful completion of such a program while unsuccessful completion results in facing charges originally issued ... or a repeat violation during the pre-trial diversion program results in facing both first and the second offense charges.

Any Meridian student in grades 7-12 who enters a pre-trial diversion program as the result of legal charges for illegal possession or use of illegal substances WILL FORFEIT HIS OR HER RIGHT OR PRIVILEGE TO PARTICIPATE IN SCHOOL SPONSORED ACTIVITIES.

It is further understood that any student who voluntarily enters a pre-trial diversion program by his or her signing into the program, WILL NOT BE JUDGED by the Meridian Schools AS GUILTY of the previous pending charges, nor will their entry be construed as an admission of guilt as it is realized that students may choose the pre-trial program in any extenuating circumstances to avoid the possibility of a court conviction and record of such, regardless of innocence or guilt. However, such entry into a diversion program WILL COUNT AS AN OFFENSE to the Meridian School's Good Conduct Rules.

**The graduation exercise for seniors will not be considered as an extracurricular activity. Seniors must be in good standing in classes to participate in the graduation exercise per administration discretion.**

### **DISCIPLINE**

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a respectable manner, be considerate of others rights, and make the best use of the opportunities available to them. Permission to remain in class is based on good behavior. Teachers have the right to end attendance if the pupil shows unwillingness to observe the regulations of the particular class or shows lack of cooperation. Individual teachers will cover their classroom rules.

Any student who has been the subject of disciplinary action may be declared ineligible for an award during the school year in which the disciplinary action was taken. The principal shall, subject to review by the superintendent and/or Board of Education, make the decision in these cases. Discipline problems for grades 7-12 have been divided into three categories: minor misbehavior to be handled by the teacher, Level I offenses, and Level II offenses.

**SUSPENSIONS:** Any time a student is placed on an in-school or out-of-school suspension, that student is ineligible to participate in practice or contest for the day(s) suspended (including adjoining weekend).

### **MISBEHAVIOR FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS WILL RESULT IN DOUBLE CONSEQUENCES!**

#### **MINOR BEHAVIORS:** (to be handled by the teacher individually)

1. Leaving class without a pass signed by the teacher.
2. Personal radios or CD players and hand-held electronic type games may not be used at school during school hours.
3. Playing cards.
4. Note passing or note writing, including electronically.
5. Possession or consumption of seeds or candy except during an approved special activity.
6. Possession or consumption of food or drink except during lunch or an approved special activity.
7. Wearing a hat in the building during the school day.
8. Sleeping during class time.
9. Coming to class after an absence with no make-up slip.
10. Talking in class without permission.
11. Other minor misbehavior.

#### **Teachers who observe the behaviors listed above will:**

1. Notify the student that he/she has broken a rule.
2. Notify the student of the consequence for the misbehavior. Examples of possible consequences include book reports, time after school, and individual conferences.
3. Complete the discipline form online and submit to the Principal's Office by the end of the day or at the end of the week. The principal will keep records of the misbehavior on each student and will take future disciplinary action when it is determined that the student's behavior is substantially disrupting school.

**LEVEL I OFFENSES/CONSEQUENCES:** Level I offenses include a minimum of 15 minutes in detention hall on the day of the offense. The principal can delay the punishment for one day. Students must receive prior permission from the principal to delay the consequence. Level I Offenses include:

1. Inappropriate clothing.
2. Snowballing.
3. Inappropriate display of affection. (For example, kissing, embracing, or groping ... keep hands to yourself.)
4. Possession or use of squirt gun.
5. Improper use of school telephones.
6. Disrespect of school property.
7. Physical misbehavior such as hitting, pushing, and rough housing.
8. Improper graffiti or pictures displayed in or on notebooks or lockers (Nudity, profanity, gang-related symbols, sexual innuendo).
9. Other behaviors deemed inappropriate by school personnel.
10. Multiple minor offenses.

**Teachers who observe students doing any of the above actions will:**

1. Inform the student that she/he has broken a school handbook rule, will be written up with a discipline referral, and will be expected to serve a detention.
2. File a discipline form online and submit to the principal's office.
3. Discuss the incident with the principal if necessary.

**LEVEL II OFFENSES/CONSEQUENCES:** Level II offenses include:

1. Possession or use of a weapon (other than firearms). Lasers are considered to be in the weapon category and are not to be brought to school or school activities.
2. Improper driving.
3. Leaving the building without permission.
4. Cheating - how the grade is to be handled is at the discretion of the teacher.
5. Profanity (if directed toward staff member, consequences increase).
6. Multiple Level I offenses.
7. Disrespect towards others.
8. Unexcused absence(s). The time spent in detention hall will be made up minute for minute of missed class
9. Gambling.
10. Sexual harassment.
11. Unsportsmanlike conduct.
12. Fighting.
13. Stealing.
14. Intimidation or coercion of others.
15. Act(s) of Insubordination...failure to comply with a reasonable request by school personnel in the school setting or at any activity. (Examples...failure to hand over a cell phone in school, refusing to take another seat as directed by the bus driver, refusing or not complying with a teacher's directive to go to the office when directed to do so, etc.)
16. Failure to appear for punishment in other offenses(s).
17. Not bringing an excuse from home after being absent.
18. Other behaviors considered inappropriate by the administration.

**Teachers who observe this type of misbehavior will:**

1. Notify the student that he/she has broken a rule.
2. If reasonable and possible, send the student to the Principal's Office.
3. File a discipline report online and submit to Principal's Office and speak to the principal about the incident as soon as possible.

**Consequences for Level II offenses are a minimum of thirty (30) minutes after school, and the possibility of one or more of the following:**

1. Further time after school.
2. Assigned conference time with the counselor.
3. Assignment to a session of "Saturday School".
4. Suspension from extra-curricular activities.
5. Short or long term suspension.
6. School/Community service.
7. Intervention of Law Enforcement.
8. Expulsion.
9. Other discipline actions deemed appropriate by the administration (ex. -- restitution).

**DISCIPLINE PROCESS:**

**FOR LEVEL I OFFENSES, LEVEL II OFFENSES, AND SUSPENSIONS (PER SEMESTER)**

<u>Detentions</u>	<u>Minimum consequence</u>
#1 through 4	Time spent with teacher or designee
#5	Saturday School - Two (2) hours – 7:00am-9:00am
#6 and 7	Saturday School - Four (4) hours – 7:00am-11:00am
#8 and 9	Short term Suspension Out-of-school (1-5 days)
#10	Recommended for Expulsion for the remainder of the semester. (If within the last ten (10) days of the semester – expulsion will include the following semester.)

The administration has the right to deviate from the above procedures in order to best handle individual cases. Anytime a student is substantially disrupting the educational process, student may be sent to the principal.

Note: See "Student Use and/or Possession of Guns," "Student Use of Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, e-Cigarettes or Vapor Devices," for the outlines of consequences for these violations of policy.

### **CELL PHONE / ELECTRONIC CONSEQUENCE**

**1<sup>st</sup> Offense**-Cell phone must be given to the school staff member and will not be given back until the end of the school day.

**2<sup>nd</sup> & Subsequent Offenses**-Cell phone must be given to the school staff member and will be given to a parent/guardian.

**Failure to hand over a cell phone** when requested by a school staff member (administrator, teacher, para-educator, secretary, coach, custodian, kitchen staff, bus driver) will result in an **out-of-school (OSS) suspension** of 1 day for a first offense, 3 days for a second offense, 5 days for a third and subsequent offenses. These events would still count as a cell phone violation when determining the total number of offenses.

### **DETENTIONS – HIGH SCHOOL**

All detentions will be supervised. Students who have been requested by teachers to serve detentions will serve them with that particular teacher or his/her designee. They may be served from 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. or 3:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. or in multiples of 30 minutes arranged with the teacher. Lunch detention is not an option. **Detentions are to be served that day or the following day of student attendance.** If student fails to serve the detention, the student is referred to the Principal's Office. The time will be doubled and a call to parent/guardian will be made. Students will have two (2) days to make up the delinquent detention time. Students failing to make up their detention within this time frame will be assigned to a full session (7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.) of Saturday School.

### **FORGED NOTE CONSEQUENCE**

Forged notes will result in student being assigned to Saturday School.

### **HOMEWORK HOUR FAILURE TO SERVE CONSEQUENCE**

If student fails to serve the homework hour, they will serve an in-school suspension the following day of attendance.

### **LEAVING SCHOOL WITHOUT PERMISSION CONSEQUENCE**

A call to parent / guardian will be made, and the student will be assigned to Saturday School.

### **SATURDAY SCHOOL**

**Saturday School Rules and Regulations:** Any student not responding to detention responsibilities or exhibiting inappropriate behaviors that require intermediary discipline will be assigned Saturday School by the principal or designee. Students must attend Saturday School on the assigned day, at the appropriate time, and be on task the entire session. Students failing to attend or violate the Behavioral Contract will receive an in-school suspension for a day in the following week with the day to be determined by the principal. The student will also be re-scheduled to the next day that Saturday School is in session.

#### **Other criteria used in Saturday School will include:**

1. Students MUST be prompt. The doors to the school will be locked at 7:00 a.m.
2. The minimum amount of time that any student will attend on a Saturday is two (2) hours.
3. Students must be on task for the entire time with absolutely NO TALKING.
4. No excuses for missing Saturday School will be allowed. Each student will have had multiple chances to serve their assigned detention(s) by this point in time. Only documented, unforeseen, extenuating circumstances, approved by the administration will be considered. Examples can include a sudden death in the family or a medical doctor documented illness. Going to work is not an acceptable excuse.
5. Students are required to sign a Saturday School Behavioral Contract before serving a Saturday School session.

CELL PHONES, COMPUTERS, ELECTRONIC DEVICES, ETC. MAY NOT BE USED DURING SATURDAY SCHOOL, IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION, HOMEWORK HOURS OR DETENTIONS UNLESS APPROVED BY SUPERVISOR.

**TARDY**

Meridian Jr.-Sr. High School has a three (3) minute passing time between classes. This time span is adequate for all students to get to their next class on time. The "being on time" work habit is a habit our school believes is important for all students to develop for use as an employed adult in the work force. Being late for class or school will bring on consequences. **Students that are tardy will earn a lunch detention.** Any student who accumulates a fourth tardy in any 9-week period will be assigned a two (2) hour session of "Saturday School" from 7:00-9:00 a.m. Any student who accumulates an eighth (8) tardy in any 9-week period will be assigned a four (4) hour session of Saturday School from 7:00-11:00 a.m. Thereafter, each additional fourth (4th) tardy in the 9-week period will result in a four (4) hour Saturday School session.

**"BULLYING" AND OTHER HARASSMENTS**

It is also a policy of the Meridian Schools to prohibit the actions of "bullies", either by verbal or physical abuse against other students, school personnel, or visitors at our school. This policy also includes other inappropriate types of harassment by students. Those types of harassment would include, but is not limited to, harassment on the basis of race, sex, creed, color, national origin, religion, marital status, economic and/or social background, or disability. Harassment of these types means conduct of a verbal, written, or of a physical nature that is designed to embarrass, distress, agitate, ridicule, disturb, or trouble a targeted student individual. Students, individually or collectively, whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to the investigation procedure which may result in a discipline consequence, up to and including suspension and expulsion.

One of the missions of the District is to provide a physically safe and emotionally secure environment for students and staff. The administration and staff are to implement strategies and practices to reinforce and encourage positive behaviors by students. Positive behaviors include non-violence, cooperation, teamwork, understanding, and acceptance of others. The administration and staff are to implement strategies and practices to identify and prevent inappropriate behaviors by all students, including anti-bullying education for all students. Inappropriate behaviors include bullying, intimidation, and harassment. Bullying means any ongoing pattern of physical, verbal, or electronic abuse on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by the school being used for a school purpose by a school employee or designee, or at school-sponsored activities or school-sponsored athletic events.

Common school incidents that are considered "bullying" or harassing would include repeatedly:

1. Causing verbal, written, or physical harassment or abuse (Ex: making cutting remarks about personal features or choice of school dress, putting inappropriate writings on bathroom walls about someone, or shoving someone into a locker between classes)
2. Making remarks of a demeaning nature (Ex: "You idiot, where were you when the brains were passed out?")
3. Making implied, or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, awards, etc.
4. Using demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at an individual
5. Taking, defacing, or ruining personal property (Ex: writing on notebooks, messing with another's locker and contents or book bags)

**PLEASE DOCUMENT – HELP US HELP YOU!**

**HOW TO DEAL WITH A BULLY OR HARASSER**

**Step I**

When a student believes that she/he is being subjected to "bullying" or other forms of harassment, the concerned individual should indicate to the bully or harasser in a clear, direct, and firm manner that the comments or actions are considered offensive, AND NEED TO STOP! Say it clearly and firmly, "I don't like what you did/said, and I want you to stop!" This admonition should be made before a witness or witnesses whenever possible.

**Step II**

If the action taken in Step I is ineffective in curtailing the "bullying" or harassment behaviors, the student should report the incident(s) to the Guidance Counselor or HS Principal. The student may ask for a confidential, discreet, intervention/warning on their behalf by the school administration, or the Guidance Counselor. When reporting the incident, the student should have developed a detailed written record of the bullying/harassment

incident (writing down everything that happened), including the name of the bully/harasser, date, time, place, witnesses, and any other pertinent details.

The student, or any school employee who has witnessed an incident of "bullying" or harassment behaviors, could elect to submit a written complaint on the school forms prescribed by the school district to the school administration, which will begin an administrative investigation. If the school administration determines that a student is intentionally making a false accusation against another student, an appropriate discipline consequence will be assigned to the accuser.

Retaliation against an individual because the individual has filed a "bullying" or harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a bullying/harassment investigation is also prohibited. A student who is found to have retaliated against an individual in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline consequences, up to and including suspension and expulsion.

The student should request support throughout the complaint procedure process from a fellow student, a trusted teacher, a district SCIP member, or school counselor.

### **INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGATIONS**

Upon receipt of a written complaint from the aggrieved student, an administrator of the alleged offender will follow-up on the case by:

1. Interviewing the complainant and preparing detailed notes of the incident to file.
2. Interviewing the alleged offender and preparing detailed notes to file.
3. Interviewing any witnesses and preparing detailed notes to file.
4. Conducting a thorough investigation of all aspects of the complaint.
5. Rendering, without undue delay, a decision in writing to all parties concerned as to whether or not the alleged bullying or harassment did occur.
6. Submitting a copy of that decision to the Superintendent of Schools as confidential information.

When it has been determined that some type of bullying or harassment has occurred, the offender's supervisor shall take appropriate disciplinary action following consultation with the Superintendent and the school district legal counsel when appropriate. Such disciplinary consequences normally include:

1. Counseling, and/or an oral/written reprimand, could include assigned detention time.
2. Assigning mandatory Saturday School attendance.
3. Suspension from attending and/or participating in school activities.
4. Issuing a short term suspension from school (1-5 days).
5. Issuing a long term suspension from school (6-19 days).
6. Recommending expulsion from school for the remainder of the semester.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the disciplinary action prescribed by the school administration, the complainant may pursue further redress via direct appeal to the Board of Education.

Until the investigation is completed and a final decision rendered, both the complainant's and alleged offender's position and/or academic standing shall be protected.

Meridian Schools has expectations for each and every student to develop, demonstrate, and practice a mannerly tolerance for people around them who are different in many ways from themselves. All students have the right to attend Meridian Schools free from verbal and/or physical harassment or "bullying". The purpose of the Harassment and Bullying Policy is to protect students and staff from those who fail to comply with school guidelines regarding the treatment of others. **It is EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY to help eliminate harassment and bullying from occurring in our school.**

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

It is the policy of the Meridian Schools to prohibit sexual harassment by students to ANY PERSON in the school, not merely other students. It is a violation of this policy for any student to harass ANY PERSON in the school by making any unwelcome verbal or physical sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other inappropriate verbal or physical conduct/contact. **Inappropriate activities proscribed by this policy include, but are not limited to, verbal or written harassment or abuse, pressure for any type of sexual activity, remarks of a sexually demeaning implication, unwelcome touching, and unwelcome and offensive public sexual display of affection.** Additional examples could include such behavior as leering, joking, offensive/innuendo sexual type remarks, which are not directed specifically at the person who feels harassed. It should be remembered that Federal and Nebraska School Law make sexual harassment illegal.



### **Step I**

When a student believes that she/he is being subjected to sexual harassment, the concerned individual should indicate to the harasser in a clear, direct, and firm manner that the comments or actions concerned are considered offensive and the comments or actions NEED TO STOP! Say it clearly and firmly, "I didn't like what you did/said, and I want you to stop!" This vocal admonition should be made before a witness or witnesses whenever possible.

### **Step II**

If the action taken in Step I is ineffective in curtailing the offensive behavior, the student should report the incident(s) to the Principal or Guidance Counselor. The student may ask for a confidential intervention/warning on their behalf by the school administration, or the Guidance Counselor. When reporting the incident, the student should develop a detailed written record of the offensive event/s (writing down everything that happened), including the name of the offender, date, time, place, witnesses, and any other pertinent details.

The student, or any school employee who has witnessed an incident of Sexual Harassment, could elect to submit a written complaint on the school forms prescribed by the school district to the school administration, which will begin an administrative investigation. If the school administration determines that a student is intentionally making a false accusation against another student, an appropriate discipline consequence will be assigned to the accuser.

Retaliation against an individual because the individual has filed a sexual harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a sexual harassment investigation is also prohibited. A student who is found to have retaliated against an individual in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline consequences, up to and including suspension and expulsion from school.

The student should request support throughout the complaint procedure process from a fellow student, a trusted teacher, a district SCIP member, or school counselor.

### **INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGATIONS**

Upon receipt of a complaint from the aggrieved student, an administrator, of the alleged offender, will follow-up on the case by:

1. Interviewing the complainant and preparing detailed notes of the incident to file.
2. Interviewing the alleged offender and preparing detailed notes to file.
3. Interviewing any witnesses and preparing detailed notes to file.
4. Conducting a thorough investigation of all aspects of the complaint.
5. Rendering, without undue delay, a decision in writing to all parties concerned as to whether or not the alleged harassment did occur.
6. Submitting a copy of that decision to the Superintendent of Schools as confidential information.

When it has been determined that some type of sexual harassment has occurred, the offender's supervisor shall take appropriate disciplinary action following consultation with the Superintendent of Schools and the school district legal counsel when appropriate. Such disciplinary measures could normally include:

1. Counseling, and/or oral or written reprimand, could include assigned detention time.
2. Assigning mandatory Saturday School attendance.
3. Suspension from attending/participating in school activities.
4. Issuing a short term suspension from school (1-5 days).
5. Issuing a long term suspension from school (6-19 days).
6. Recommending expulsion from school for the remainder of the semester.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the disciplinary action prescribed by the school administrator, the complainant may pursue further redress via direct appeal to the Board of Education. Until the investigation is completed and a final decision rendered, the complainant's and alleged offender's position and/or academic standing shall be protected.

It is important to any school district that policy be made and maintained to insure that each student and employee has a safe and productive learning environment or working place free from sexual harassment.

**It is EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY to help make and maintain that kind of positive school environment in Meridian Schools.**

## **SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

Following is a summary of the procedure to be used in the suspension and/or expulsion of students from Meridian Public School. These procedures are drawn from Section 79-4,170 to 79-4,205 of the school laws of Nebraska. Anyone wishing a complete copy of these laws may obtain the same by submitting a written request to the Office of the Superintendent, Meridian Public Schools.

The Board of Education may authorize the emergency exclusion, short-term or long-term suspension, expulsion or mandatory reassignment of any pupil from school for conduct prohibited by the Board's rules or standards established pursuant to this act if such emergency exclusion, short-term or long-term suspension, expulsion or mandatory reassignment shall comply with the procedures required by this act.

Administrative and teaching personnel may take action regarding student behavior, other than those specifically provided in this act, which are reasonably necessary to aid the student, further school purposes, or prevent interference with the educational process. Such actions may include counseling of students, parent conferences, rearrangement of schedule, requirements that a student remain in school after regular hours to do additional work, requirements that a student receive counseling, or restriction of extra-curricular activity.

### **EMERGENCY EXPULSION**

Any student may be excluded from school in the following circumstances, subject to the procedural provisions of the law, and if longer than five school days, subject to the provisions of subsection (3) of the law: (a) if the student has a **dangerous communicable disease transmissible** through normal school contacts and poses an imminent threat to the health or safety of the school community; or (b) if the student's **conduct presents a clear threat to the physical safety of him/herself or others**, or (c) is so **extremely disruptive** as to make temporary removal necessary to preserve the right of other students to pursue an education.

Any emergency exclusion shall be based upon a clear factual situation warranting it and shall last no longer than is necessary to avoid the danger described above.

If the superintendent or designee determines that such emergency exclusion shall extend beyond five days, the school board shall adopt a procedure for a hearing to be held and a final determination made within ten school days after the initial date of exclusion. Such procedure shall substantially comply with the provisions of the law and such provisions shall be modified only to the extent necessary to accomplish the hearing and determination within this shorter time period.

### **SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION**

The principal may deny any student the right to attend school or take part in any school function for a period of up to five school days on the following grounds:

1. Conduct constituting grounds for expulsion, as set out in this act.
2. Any other violation rules and standards of behavior adopted under this act. Some examples of offenses for which a student may receive a short-term suspension include, but are not limited to:
  - Use, dispensing, selling, or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and vapor devices
  - Gambling
  - Fighting
  - Use of abusive or profane language
  - Unsportsmanlike conduct involving visiting school teams or delegations, the student's own school teams or representatives, or officials of such contests
  - Vandalism or destruction of property belonging to the school district, staff or students
  - Gross disrespect for school staff or other students
  - Behavior that seriously interferes with class work or activities of the school
  - Theft of property belonging to the school district, staff, or students
  - Unlawful sex acts or lewd behavior
  - Failure to follow all rules or regulations of the Board of Education or the administration

Students may receive a short-term suspension for misbehavior while on school district property, while being transported to or from school or a school activity, or while participating or attending any school activity at home or away. Such short-term suspension shall be made only after the principal has made an investigation of the

alleged conduct or violation and has determined that such suspension is necessary to help any student to further school purposes or to prevent an interference with school purposes.

Before such short-term suspension shall take effect, the student shall be given oral or written notice of the charges against him or her and an explanation of the evidence the authorities have and an opportunity to present his or her version. Within twenty-four hours or such additional time as is reasonably necessary following such suspension, the principal shall send a written statement to the student, student's parents, or guardian describing the student's conduct, misconduct, or violation of the rule or standard and the reasons for the action taken. The principal shall make a reasonable effort to hold a conference with the parents before or at the time the student returns to school.

### **LONG-TERM SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

As used in this act, unless the context otherwise requires:

1. Long-term suspension shall mean the exclusion of a student from attendance in all schools within the system for a period exceeding five school days but less than twenty school days.
2. Expulsion shall mean exclusion from attendance in all schools within the system for a period not to exceed the remainder of the semester in which it took effect.

The following student conduct shall constitute grounds for long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment subject to the procedural provisions of the Student Discipline Act, when such activity occurs on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose or in a vehicle being driven for a school purpose by a school employee or by his or her designee, or at a school-sponsored activity or athletic event:

1. Use of violence, force, coercion, threat, intimidation or similar conduct in a manner that constitutes a substantial interference with school purposes.
2. Willfully causing or attempting to cause substantial damage to private or school property, stealing or attempting to steal private or school property of substantial value or repeated damage or theft involving private or school property.
3. Causing or attempting to cause personal injury to a school employee, to a school volunteer, or to any student. Personal injury caused by accident, self-defense, or other action undertaken on the reasonable belief that it was necessary to protect some other person shall not constitute a violation of this subdivision.
4. Threatening or intimidating any student for the purpose of or with the intent of obtaining money or anything of value from such student.
5. Knowingly possessing, handling, or transmitting any object or material that is ordinarily or generally considered a weapon.
6. Engaging in the unlawful possession, selling, dispensing, or use of a controlled substance or an imitation controlled substance, as defined in Section 28-401, a substance represented to be a controlled substance, or alcoholic liquor as defined in Section 53-103 or being under the influence of a controlled substance or alcoholic liquor.
7. Public indecency as defined in section 28-806, except that this subdivision shall apply only to students at least twelve years of age but less than nineteen years of age.
8. Sexually assaulting or attempting to sexually assault any person if a complaint has been filed by a prosecutor in a court of competent jurisdiction alleging that the student has sexually assaulted or attempted to sexually assault any person, including sexual assaults which occur off school grounds not at a school function, activity, or event. For purposes of this subdivision, sexual assault shall mean sexual assault in the first degree and sexual assault in the second degree as defined in sections 28-319 and 28-320, as such section now provide or may hereafter from time to time be amended.
9. A repeated violation of any rules and standards validly established pursuant to section 79-4,176 if such violations constitute a substantial interference with school purposes.

#### **If the principal makes a decision to discipline a student by long-term suspension or expulsion, the following procedures shall be followed:**

On the date of the decision, a written charge and a summary of the evidence supporting such charge shall be filed with the superintendent. The school shall, within two school days of the decision, send written notice by registered or certified mail to the student, the student's parents or guardian informing them of the rights established under this act.

**Such written notice shall include the following:**

1. The rule or standard of conduct allegedly violated and the acts of the student alleged to constitute a cause for long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment including a summary of the evidence to be presented against the student.
2. The penalty, if any, which the principal has recommended in the charge, and any other penalty to which the student may be subject.
3. A statement that, before long-term suspension, expulsion or mandatory reassignment for disciplinary purposes can be invoked, the student shall have right to a hearing, upon request, on the specified charge.
4. A description of the hearing procedures provided by this act, along with procedures for appealing any decision rendered at the hearing.
5. A statement that the principal, legal counsel for the school, the student, the student's parents, or the student's representative or guardian shall have the right (1) to examine the student's academic and disciplinary records and any affidavits to be used at the hearing concerning the alleged misconduct, and the right (2) to know the identity of the witnesses to appear at the hearing and the substance of their testimony.
6. A form on which the student, student's parents, or guardian may request a hearing to be signed by such parties and delivered to the principal or superintendent in person or by registered mail or certified mail as prescribed in the law.

Nothing in this act shall preclude the student, the student's parents, guardian or representative from discussing and settling the matter with appropriate school personnel prior to the hearing stage.

*A pupil may be suspended from participation in or attendance at extra-curricular activities. Some examples of behaviors that could result in suspension include, but are not limited to: unsportsmanlike conduct, fighting, use of profanity, deliberately causing injury to another person, failure to maintain passing grades, or suspensions.*

**STUDENT USE AND / OR POSSESSION OF GUNS**

In accordance with Federal and State law, any student who has been determined to have brought a firearm to school shall be expelled for a period of not less than one calendar year. Students in violation who are in special education programs or other identified disabilities may have their expulsion requirement modified on a case-by-case by the superintendent and/or the school board. This case-by-case examination is to be done in compliance with special education and federal civil rights laws. **All students who violate the student handbook "firearm" rules will be referred to the proper authorities within the Nebraska criminal/juvenile justice system.**

**STUDENT USE AND / OR POSSESSION OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, OR DRUGS  
(INCLUDING E-CIGARETTES AND/OR VAPOR DEVICES)**

**PREVENTION:**

The purpose of the district drug and alcohol prevention program is to promote wellness and healthy life styles. To accomplish this, the program will instill respect for a healthy mind and body. Students will learn how the body functions, how personal habits contribute to good health, and how drugs affect the body. The prevention program will focus on classroom instruction, guidance and counseling, and school climate. Involvement of parents and other community members is essential for the success of district prevention activities.

**A. Instructional Program**

The district will provide instructional programs, which assist students in making responsible decision about the use of alcohol and drugs. Current and accurate information about alcohol and drugs and their effects upon the body is only one component of an instructional prevention program. Other components include instruction and skill development related to self-esteem, goal setting, decision-making, understanding feelings, conflict management and problem solving, refusal skills, and the development of communication skills.

All certified staff will be provided training in drug awareness and prevention strategies.

## **B. Guidance and Counseling**

Guidance and counseling personnel will assist teachers with the implementation of classroom substance abuse prevention activities. The counselor, in conjunction with the intervention team, will help students find assistance from outside substance abuse agencies.

## **C. School Climate**

Prevention efforts will emphasize effective communication throughout all levels of the educational environment. Communication requires a receptive audience. Maintaining such a receptive audience is dependent upon maintaining a positive and healthy school environment that daily encourages the student's positive self-concept; the student's enthusiasm for learning; outlets for student self-development and creativity which acknowledge individual skills, needs, and interests; responsible student decision making and problem solving; and recognition of special needs of high risk students or families experiencing undue stress.

## **D. Family and Community**

The successful prevention of harmful chemical involvement must include a plan to ensure that parents and community are aware and knowledgeable of programs and services available to them and their children. Parents and community members will be actively involved in the community/school partnership.

## **INTERVENTION:**

When it is found through the SCIP Referral System that a student has been experiencing learning difficulties, which may or may not be caused by abusing alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs, the SCIP team will intervene with the parents/ guardians and/or the student to offer help in eliminating the cause of the learning difficulty. This intervention process will involve informing the parents/guardians of the student's difficulties, and may provide referral to appropriate agencies, educational programs, and student support systems in/outside the school.

The SCIP team WILL NOT decide any disciplinary terms or issues connected with the student's violation of any Student Handbook rules and regulations. The SCIP team's function is to provide assistance in finding sources of help for the student rather than determine discipline policy.

## **DISCIPLINE:**

Any student found to be in possession of or using alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco, e-cigarettes, vapor devices or a substance, which is represented to be a controlled (illegal look-alike) substance while under the supervision of school officials or personnel will be suspended.

**FIRST OFFENSE:** Out-of-school suspension will occur for a minimum of five (5) school days and not allowed to attend extra-curricular activities for 28 calendar days for a first time offense. *OR*

The five (5) day suspension will be waived if the student will voluntarily seek professional evaluation/treatment from a trained chemical dependency counselor or a licensed physician in chemical dependency. Students/parents may use the Guidance Office or SCIP team personnel to help find proper professional help. Fees for the assessment and/or treatment are the responsibility of the student and parent/ guardian. Upon proper authorization, the agency will notify the school and the suspension will be commuted at that time. The choice is up to the student and parent(s)/guardian(s).

**SECOND OFFENSE:** Out-of-school suspension will occur for a minimum of five (5) days and not allowed to attend extra-curricular activities for 56 calendar days for a second offense. Participation in a rehabilitation/counseling program is mandatory. Parents/students may use the Guidance Office or SCIP team in finding proper professional help. All fees connected with gaining professional help are the responsibilities of the student and parent(s)/guardian(s).

**THIRD OFFENSE:** Expulsion for the remainder of the semester and not allowed attendance for the remainder of the school year may be recommended by the administration.

## **AFTERCARE:**

It is important that students returning to school from a community inpatient or outpatient treatment program be given aftercare support. Primary aftercare responsibility for students returning from a community treatment program rests with the students, parent, and community treatment program personnel. The school will offer guidance/support through members of the trained SCIP team and the guidance office. Student support groups will be formed when feasible.

**The Meridian Public School strongly encourages students with chemical abuse problems seek professional evaluation and treatment from trained professionals.** Because we believe that chemical dependency is preceded by misuse, we have staunch beliefs that such early intervention can benefit the student before significant harm or dependency results. Our administration, guidance office, and SCIP team are trained to assist you in finding proper professional help. The dispensing of any illegal substance on school grounds or at any school-sponsored activity will cause the student to be recommended for expulsion from school for the semester.

## **ATTENDANCE / TARDINESS / TRUANCY**

### **ATTENDANCE**

The Nebraska School Laws require regular school attendance for all students of school age. That law states that every person residing in a school district in Nebraska and who has legal or actual charge or control of any child who is of mandatory attendance age (6-18 years of age) shall enroll the student and see to it that the **student is in attendance each day that such school is open and in session**, except when illness or severe weather conditions make attendance impossible or impracticable.

In addition to this, schools have found that irregularity in attendance is the most frequent cause of failures; therefore, parents will greatly aid the school in promoting the educational welfare of their student if they will not ask to have their student excused except in cases of extreme emergency. Appointments with hairdressers, shopping trips, helping out at home and the like should be done on family time, not school time. Medical appointments should be made for late afternoon when possible. It is usually very difficult to earn a passing grade in classes when the student has been absent for an unreasonable number of days.

**Any student's absences, excused or unexcused, of more than five (5) days in one quarter or the hourly equivalent may cause his/her class credits to be denied for the semester.** The number of absences is considered on a period-by-period basis. The building principal will make the determination if credit is to be granted or withheld after investigating the student's EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM RECORD. The principal has the right to require any / all missed time from class period(s) to be made up before favorable determination of granting credits will be considered.

A family who has a student with more than five (5) days missed (or "the hourly equivalent") in any given quarter and/or does not send the required parental notes to school as school policy requires can expect written correspondence from the school or a request for a meeting to discuss the excessive absenteeism. The school may report to the county attorney of the county in which the person resides when the school has documented the efforts to address excessive absences, the collaborative plan to reduce barriers identified to improve regular attendance has not been successful, and the student has accumulated more than twenty (20) absences per year. The school shall notify the child's family in writing prior to referring the child to the county attorney. This is as suggested by Nebraska State School Law 79-209 (Compulsory Attendance).

When a student is ill and absent from school for the day, **he/she will NOT be allowed to attend any school activity as a participant or as a spectator that night unless approved by the administration.** The school cannot excuse any student to miss a day of school to go to work, unless the work is at home as a family necessity or an employer has extreme need due to extenuating circumstances to be considered.

### **ELIGIBILITY AND ABSENCE GUIDELINE**

Students participating in team sports or other school activity groups **MUST BE IN ATTENDANCE FOR AT LEAST 1/2 OF THE SCHOOL DAY (four (4) periods)** before being allowed to participate in extra-curricular practices or competitions. The principal may waive this regulation if the student's parents or guardian requests

such a waiver PRIOR TO THE ABSENCE. Attending a morning funeral or keeping a doctor's appointment is usually considered just cause for a waiver from the office. Please contact your principal when in doubt about the eligibility requirement.

### **LEAVING SCHOOL WITHOUT PERMISSION**

Students may only leave school with permission from the principal/superintendent and permission from his/her parent/guardian. Students who leave without obtaining the necessary permission will be considered unexcused.

A call to parent/guardian will be made, and the student will be assigned to Saturday School.

### **MAKE-UP WORK MISSED**

Teachers are to allow two (2) days for each day missed for missed class assignments, unless more time is requested to the principal by the parent(s) / guardian(s). The principal will consider extenuating circumstances before granting more than two (2) days per day missed in absence. Parents/guardians should call the school to explain any unexpected absence. No note from home throws up a red flag that truancy may have occurred. Forged notes from home by a student will result in being assigned to Saturday School.

### **SCHOLASTIC ELIGIBILITY**

In order to participate in extra-curricular activities, students must be enrolled in at least 25 semester hours per week. In addition, students must have received 20 semester hours of credit the IMMEDIATE PRECEDING SEMESTER. This is an NSAA (Nebraska State Activities Association) guideline.

### **TARDY**

Meridian Jr.-Sr. High School has a three (3) minute passing time between classes. This time span is adequate for all students to get to their next class on time. The "being on time" work habit is a habit our school believes is important for all students to develop for use as an employed adult in the work force. Being late for class or school will bring on consequences. **Students that are tardy will earn a lunch detention.** Any student who accumulates a fourth tardy in any 9-week period will be assigned a two (2) hour session of "Saturday School" from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. Any student who accumulates an eighth (8) tardy in any 9-week period will be assigned a four (4) hour session of Saturday School from 7:00 to 11:00 a.m. Thereafter, each additional fourth (4th) tardy in the 9-week period will result in a four (4) hour Saturday School session.

### **TRUANCY**

Truancy occurs when the school and the parent/guardian does not know where the student was when the absence happened. The student will be EXPECTED TO TURN IN TO THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE A VALID, SIGNED, WRITTEN EXCUSE FROM THE PARENT/GUARDIAN SO THE SCHOOL KNOWS THAT TRUANCY DID NOT OCCUR. No note from home indicate that truancy may have occurred. Forged notes from home by a student will result in being assigned to a four (4) hour Saturday School session.

Meridian School is in partnership with Jefferson County truancy program.

The Meridian school has been informed and will comply that after ten (10) days we will notify the parents, and shortly thereafter, refer your child's name to the truancy officer along with reasons they have been absent or a.m. tardies. This is why a note from the doctor, hospital, therapy, etc. is very important.

**The following paragraph is information the truancy officer sent to us to help with the process and to reassure you as parents.** "The most important thing to tell the parents is just because the school is referring their child over to us, doesn't mean they are in trouble. Our main goal is truancy intervention. If we can start watching students at around 10 absences that allows us to intervene before they get to 20, but only if necessary. If the student isn't continuing to miss days, the parents will never hear from us. We have a standard policy to have all students referred to us at 10 days. Early intervention can be more beneficial to the student. There are circumstances in which not all students require this intervention, but by having a standard policy it provides safeguards from any student who may be falling through the cracks. Once a referral is received, we review each case to determine the appropriate action needed. If we can see that a student has legitimate reasons for missing school, we will have minimal, if any, contact with the parents and the student." The school wants to reassure you as parents that we have the child's best interest in hand. Meridian Public Schools and staff take student attendance very seriously and we hope that you, as parents, take it seriously

also. We feel attendance is a big part of a student's learning experience and helps mold them into independent, responsible, prompt young men and women.

Therefore, as a forewarning, the school will notify the parent at or close to **five (5) or more absent days per quarter** or as soon as they have **10 days total absences per school year**. Please call the school if you have any concerns on your child's attendance at 402-446-7265 ext. 3 and talk to Mr. Scott, Mrs. Kruse, Kathy Houser, or Kelly Kanost.

Please remember to contact the school by 8:30 a.m. each morning to inform the school of a student's absence and explain the reason why the student is absent from school. **Students are asked to bring documentation from appointments such as doctors, dentists, therapists, eye doctor, hospitalization, etc. This is very important, as they have asked us to send a doctor notice or any documentation along with the attendance referral.**

### **UNEXCUSED ABSENCE**

Absence without sufficient reason, with or without the parent/guardian's consent, is inexcusable and will jeopardize the student's privileges. The following absences will be excused: legitimate illness, work at home if approved in advance, participation in State Fair activities, Ak-Sar-Ben activities, going on trips with parents, or going to NSAA District or State competitions. Any other activity will be unexcused unless cleared in advance by the High School Principal. Classroom work/grades missed because of an unexcused absence are to be made up. The classroom work/grade will receive full credit if completed fully and is turned in on time. Whenever a student misses school, it is the student's responsibility to get missed assignments, get the work completed satisfactorily, and turned in on time.

### **VERIFICATION OF ABSENCE**

Parents/guardians are required to call the school by 8:30 a.m. each morning to inform the school of a student's absence and explain the reason why the student is absent. After 8:30 a.m., a phone call to the parents/guardian will be made if notification has not been completed. **Parents/guardians are asked to submit a written excuse for all absences in advance if at all possible.** The written excuse should include the number and dates of the days gone, and a specific reason for the absence.

**IF THE STUDENT HAS BEEN ILL OR IS ABSENT FOR SOME OTHER REASON, THE STUDENT SHOULD BRING AN EXCUSE FROM HOME ON THE DAY HE/SHE RETURNS TO SCHOOL IF AN EXCUSE IS NOT RECEIVED WITHIN TWO SCHOOL DAYS, THE ABSENCE WILL BE CONSIDERED UNEXCUSED AND THE STUDENT WILL BE RECORDED AS TRUANT.** Class time missed exceeding the five (5) day limit will be made up before class credit will be given. Written excuses from the parent/guardian must be specific in regard to the reason for the absence. Notes that are generic (i.e. "John was absent yesterday (give date), please excuse.") will be considered UNEXCUSED until further specific information is given to the Principal's Office. Additionally, students are asked to bring documentation from appointments such as doctor, dentist, therapist, eye doctor, etc. This documentation could be very useful to the student if the student exceeds his/her allowed absences.

A student that is absent from school for any reason except to officially represent the school in a school-sponsored activity shall be entered as absent on the school attendance record. **Students absent for three consecutive days or more because of a contagious illness such as mumps, chickenpox, etc. may be required to have a doctor's permit to be allowed back in school.** The school nurse can permit the student to go back to school in place of a doctor. The reason for this is obvious - to protect the entire school against the spreading of a contagious disease.

### **WORK RELEASE**

Senior students may be allowed release from school to go to work. The release time may be selected from 1<sup>st</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, or 8<sup>th</sup> period of the school day. Travel time for the student to get to the job site or school should be built into the employer's work schedule.



**School work release agreement:**

1. The student will not exceed seven (7) absences in any of the class period for the remainder of the school year except for illness, in which the school may ask to have the illness verified by the family doctor.
2. The student will not exceed three (3) detentions per semester for the remainder of the school year.
3. If the student receives a progress report indicating failure in any class, the student WILL NOT BE RELEASED FOR WORK UNTIL THE STUDENT IS PASSING IN ALL CLASSES.
4. The student's release is contingent on attending work. If the student is not attending work on a school day, the student would be expected to remain in school unless prior approval is granted by the Administration.
5. If the student is directed by a teacher/administrator to stay after school for disciplinary reasons, the student must serve the detention time after school or arrange to serve the time before school begins the next day.
6. The employer must provide the school with a verified (signature needed) work schedule. One will be sufficient if the weekly / monthly schedule is the same. If there is a variation of the work schedule, a verified weekly schedule must be given to the school at the beginning of each workweek.
7. A work release agreement must be signed by the employee, parent, and employer and kept on file.

**ACADEMIC INFORMATION**

**ACADEMIC LETTER**

Students in grades 9-12 may earn an Academic Letter each year.

The requirements for the letter are:

1. The student must earn at least a **93% grade average** for the following lengths of time:
  - Ninth Grade                      3 Quarters
  - Tenth Grade                      3 Semesters
  - Eleventh Grade                  4 Semesters
  - Twelfth Grade                   6 Semesters
2. At least one of the semesters listed in the semester requirements for grades 9-12 must be during the current school year.
3. In order for a quarter or semester to be counted towards the requirements listed above, the student must take at least four academic core classes. Those classes considered core classes for this rule are:

-ENGLISH-

English 9  
 English 10  
 English 11  
 English 12  
 English Composition I & II  
 College Lit

-MATHEMATICS-

Algebra I  
 Algebra II  
 Geometry  
 Trigonometry  
 Calculus

-SCIENCE-

Physical Science  
 Biology  
 Chemistry  
 Physics  
 Physiology  
 Practical Science

-SOCIAL STUDIES-

World Geography  
 World History  
 American History  
 American Government

-TECHNOLOGY-

Info Tech Apps I  
 Digital Media  
 Info Tech Apps II

-FOREIGN LANGUAGE-

Spanish I  
 Spanish II  
 Spanish III  
 Spanish IV

4. A distance learning class from another high school or from a college can be approved to substitute for or count as a "core course" requirement. The administration and counselor will give the approval.

The administration and the counselor will decide if new courses will be added to the list of core courses and elective curriculum. If a student transfers to Meridian, the student will be eligible for an Academic Letter after he/she attends Meridian for two complete semesters.

### CLASS MEMBERSHIP

All credit hours will be based on the formula established by the Nebraska Department of Education.

Freshmen	0-55 hours
Sophomores	55-110 hours
Juniors	110-165 hours
Seniors	165-220 plus hours

### COLLEGE CREDIT CLASSES

College credit classes can be taken for dual credit if the college course instructor has a valid Nebraska teaching certificate. Any deviation from this will be at the discretion of and approval by the administration. Grading will be determined in coordination with the course provider.

### DROPPING OUT OR TRANSFERS

When a student drops out of school or transfers to another school, he/she must report to the principal's office. He/she must complete the Student Withdrawal Slip before official confirmation of his/her dropping or transfer can be made. All books, computer, and equipment must be turned in and accounted for. Each teacher must sign the withdrawal slip before the student can withdraw or transfer from school.

### FAIL LIST AND ELIGIBILITY OF PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Teachers will have grades updated by Tuesday mornings. **Beginning the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of each quarter, if and when a student is FAILING TWO OR MORE CLASSES BELOW 70%, OR FAILING ONE OR MORE CLASSES BELOW 60%, he/she will immediately become ineligible to participate in extra-curricular activities.** The student will remain ineligible during the complete week (Wednesday THROUGH Tuesday). The student will continue to practice while being ineligible. If and when a student has any two or more classes being failed for three (3) consecutive weeks, the principal will determine if the student should be assigned to Saturday School until the excessive failures are again passing.

### GRADING SYSTEM

Students will receive numeric grades for all classes. The conversion of a number grade to a letter grade and 4.0 scale will be as follows:

93-100	A	4.0	75-76	D+	1.7
91-92	B+	3.7	72-74	D	1.3
87-90	B	3.3	70-71	D-	1.0
85-86	B-	3.0	0-69	F	0
83-84	C+	2.7	Incomplete	I	0
79-82	C	2.3	Satisfactory	S	0
77-78	C-	2.0	Unsatisfactory	U	0
			Pass	P	0

*The above grading scales may be deviated from for students in Special Education, or with other identified special needs.*

All teachers may include additional information to the parents, which will better explain the student's progress.

### GRADUATION AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To participate in commencement exercises or receive a Meridian Public Schools diploma a student must fully complete all requirements for graduation prior to the official commencement exercises, and complete other administrative requirements or conditions. Students who graduate from Meridian Public Schools must accumulate **220 hours**. The total graduation requirements must include the following core curriculum:

English	40 Semester Hours
Science	30 Semester Hours
Math	30 Semester Hours
Social Studies (American Government is required)	40 Semester Hours
Physical Education	10 Semester Hours
Fine Arts (Music, Art, Curricular Speech, Curricular Drama)	20 Semester Hours
Computer Education	10 Semester Hours
Vocational Education or Foreign Language	10 Semester Hours
Electives	30 Semester Hours

All credit hours will be based on the formula set by the Nebraska Department of Education.

The date and time for graduation shall be set by the board, considering recommendation of the administration. Effort will be made to take into account the desires of the senior class in setting the graduation exercises, but the final decision is and will be made by the board.

School Board Policy No. 5205 (Date of Adoption: March 17, 2014)

### **HEALTH EDUCATION**

As part of the total educational program at Meridian, students are taught about health issues affecting their lives, including such topics as sex education. These important topics are presented with great sensitivity to the students' ages and maturity levels. Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher if they have any questions concerning the presentation of these topics.

### **HOMEWORK FORM**

Students not turning in daily homework assignments will be given a late homework form from the teacher and will be required to stay after school THAT DAY to make up this work. If the late homework is turned in before the end of the school day, the student will be released from staying after school. It is up to the student to make transportation arrangements if they have to stay. If student fails to serve the homework hour, they will serve an in-school suspension the following day of attendance.

### **HONOR ROLL**

High level of achievement is desired and encouraged by Meridian High School. The receiving of high grades in school does not guarantee one's success in life upon the completion of formal schooling, but it is safe to assume that its effects will be favorable. Only academic subjects are to be included in the averages.

You must have a 93% average for the Honor Roll and a 90% average for Honorable Mention. It is possible to receive a 70% in one subject and still make the Honor Roll. The Honor Roll Award will be presented to any student in grade 7-12 who is on the Honor Roll the first three school quarters.

**Class rank** will be determined on the basis of the overall numerical percentage average at the end of each semester.

### **INCOMPLETES AND CONDITIONALS**

**Incompletes** will be given when a pupil's work for that term is not complete. An incomplete must be removed by the following nine-week period to avoid it becoming a failing grade. No incompletes will be granted at the end of each grading period except those caused by excused absences.

**A conditional** will be given in lieu of an "F" at the end of the first semester of a two *semester* (continuation) course if the teacher believes the pupil can and will master the first semester's work sufficiently during the second semester so as to warrant the granting of credit for the first semester. Until such a time as a conditional is removed, it shall have all the force and effect of a failure. This is for eligibility for contests and athletics. It is the responsibility of the student to see that the incompletes and conditions are removed. Teachers are not required to remind the student to make up this work.

### **JUNIOR HIGH FAILURES / RETENTION**

A junior high student who fails half the core courses (English, math, science, social studies) each semester may be required to attend and pass approved summer school courses, *OR* take, complete, and pass district approved Subject Learning Packet (s). This extra Learning Packet course is done in the summer, and some of the cost for the packets will be the responsibility of the student/ parents. Failure to pass the district approved Learning Packets will result in grade retention for the next school term. The counselor and the principal will determine such grade retention. When a junior high student (grades 7 & 8) fails 3 or more of the four main core courses (English, math, science, social studies) in both semesters, the student will be required to repeat the grade level the next school term.

## **NEBRASKA STATE STANDARDS & ASSESSMENT**

The Meridian Public School has adopted the State Standards promulgated by the Nebraska State Board of Education. Local standards and assessments have been developed at each grade level and in each subject area required. Meridian Public School utilizes the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS), NWEA MAP, and other appropriate assessments to assess its students.

## **REPORT CARDS AND PROGRESS REPORTS**

Report cards will be distributed every nine weeks. Reports of unsatisfactory progress will be sent home as soon as a student shows that he/she is earning a possible failing grade. Occasionally, a student doing work that is barely passing in the classroom may receive a failing grade on the report card if the period test is far below passing. Parents may not receive a report previous to the report card if that is the case. Students failing will be notified personally by his/her teacher in whose class he/she is failing.

## **TEACHER ASSISTANT**

To be a Teacher Assistant, a student MUST have a minimum overall grade point average of 85% or above. Any deviation from this requirement will be at the discretion of and approval by the administration. Students that are a Library, Office, or Teacher Assistants WILL NOT be given a grade. Students who get on the failing list will discontinue their assisting until they are passing all classes again. Their TA service to the school will be noted on school transcript.

## **GENERAL CLASS/ACTIVITIES INFORMATION**

### **CLASS OFFICERS (ELECTION OF)**

Each class elects officers at its organizational meeting early in the year. The class will function as an organization whenever the officers and sponsors deem it necessary or advisable. Any student failing in any class the previous semester will not be eligible for election to a class office.

### **COLLEGE VISITATION**

Students that wish to visit a post-graduate institution may do so with the understanding that it is counted as an EXCUSED absence from school. The absence will NOT count against the perfect attendance requirements. Arrangements to be gone must be made through the Counselor's Office. A permission form must be turned in PRIOR to the visit and a verification slip signed by an official at the receiving institution must be returned to the Guidance Office. College visits will be considered a school activity upon verification of college visit. Seniors and juniors are allowed two college visits per school year. Parents are responsible for means of transportation for their student.

### **EARLY DISMISSALS**

On days with a 1:30 p.m. or 3:12 p.m. dismissal, students are expected to vacate the school building unless involved in other sponsorship activities. This time is for teacher in-service, meetings, and work time. Students are not to return to the school for extra-curricular activities before 3:45 p.m. Practices cannot begin until 4:00 p.m. without permission from the administration.

### **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Extra-curricular activities are defined as activities that are not required as part of a regular curricular offering.

### **INSURANCE**

Insurance to cover most injuries at school is available to all students. All students out for athletics or taking shop classes are encouraged to have medical insurance. In the interest of the insured students, if possible, any injury should be reported to the office or teacher before seeing a doctor. This will help insure that all losses are reported to the insurance company. The doctor should also be informed that the student has insurance. An insurance claim must be made out or it will result in non-payment. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT AND PARENTS TO SEE THAT NECESSARY FORMS ARE COMPLETED AND SENT TO THE INSURANCE COMPANY.

### **LEAVING THE BUILDING DURING GAMES**

Students must receive permission from the ticket taker(s) and / or an administrator to leave the building during games at Meridian. Any student that does not receive permission will not be readmitted to the game.

## **MEDICAL RELEASE FORMS**

Students must have a Medical Release Form signed by a parent or legal guardian on school file to be allowed to travel in school vehicles to school activities. The medical release allows for possible emergency medical treatment if necessary.

## **PEP RALLIES**

Pep rallies are held for the purpose of creating the proper atmosphere for athletic games. Yells, songs, skits, etc. should enthruse the student body to support the team and attend the game and inspire the team to do its best. Pep rallies will be set up by the Principal after consultation with the coach(es) and cheerleaders. Students will be dismissed from class to go to the pep rallies. Cheerleaders will be dismissed five (5) minutes before the rally. The junior high students will take part in the pep rallies.

## **SCHOOL DANCES / JUNIOR - SENIOR PROM**

**School Dances:** Only individuals in good academic/behavioral standing AND are at least freshman through 20 years of age are eligible to attend Meridian sponsored high school dances. ALL OUT-OF-SCHOOL DATES MUST BE APPROVED IN ADVANCE BY THE SPONSORS AND ADMINISTRATION. Occasionally, a school dance/mixer will be held at which 7th and 8th grade students may attend, and it will be advertised as such. No one will be allowed to leave and re-enter. Permission to leave and return may be given by the administration or sponsor in certain cases.

**Junior – Senior Prom:** The Junior Class entertains the Senior Class, class sponsors, and other selected guests with a banquet and prom in the spring. All plans and regulations for this event must be approved by the principal. Permission must be granted by the Board of Education to hold the Prom Banquet and Dance off the school premises each year. Prom expenses must remain within the budget limits approved by the Board of Education. Music must be school appropriate. All dance related expenses and decoration orders must be approved by the class sponsor and/or the administration.

## **SCHOOL SPONSORED TRIPS**

Pupils authorized by the school to go on sponsored trips must ride on buses both ways unless specifically exempted by the principal or teacher in charge to go with his/her parents or guardian. If a student is to be exempted from riding the bus, written permission must be received before the bus leaves to go to the activity. School buses will leave for home immediately following the event unless the sponsor has made other arrangements and has them approved by the office of the principal before leaving school. During tournaments, buses will leave at half-time of the following game unless other arrangements have been made and previously announced. When deemed necessary by the administration, parents will ride on buses to act as sponsors in addition to the teacher or coach in charge.

## **SCHOOL SPORTS**

Regulations and guidelines for participation are contained in the Activities Guidelines adopted by the Board of Education. All students wishing to participate must make themselves aware of the guidelines as well as the rules developed by the individual coach.

## **SENIOR CLASS**

Honor guards and ushers for graduation must be selected from the Meridian junior class. If there are sufficient funds remaining in the senior class account, the class may schedule a luncheon after the graduation practice. The location of the luncheon must be approved by the administration. Seniors must be in good standing in classes to participate in the graduation exercise per administration discretion.

## **SPIRIT ACTIVITY**

The principal must approve all spirit activities.

## **STUDENT COUNCIL**

The Student Council consists of eighteen (18) elected members: three seniors, three juniors, two sophomores, two freshmen, one eighth grader, one seventh grader, and six (6) at-large members from the student body. Any exchange student/s or district or state officers are automatically on Student Council. Any member of the student body has the right to attend Student Council meetings as long as he/she follows rules set up by the Student Council.

## **STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND SPONSORS**

Each student organization in school organizes at the beginning of the school year after sponsors have been assigned. Elections will be conducted by the petition method. Meetings will be held when requested by the president with the approval of the sponsor. Permission must be secured from the principal to facilitate scheduling.

Parliamentary procedure should be used in all meetings. A copy of the minutes must be kept. The actions of the organization must meet with the approval of the sponsor and the administration of the school before adoption is final. Each organization must turn in a copy of its minutes and treasurer's report to the sponsor at the end of the school year. Books for the secretary and treasurer are provided by the Principal's Office. Constitutions for all student organizations must be approved by the administration. No new organizations may be started without prior approval of the administration.

## **NEW RULES**

This handbook was written to cover many of the possible situations encountered at school, but additional rules can be formulated throughout the school year. The students will be told verbally about any rule changes.

## **SCHOOL BUS SAFETY**

Obey the bus driver!

### **Be waiting when the school bus arrives.**

- Be at the school bus stop at least 5 minutes early. The driver will wait a maximum of two minutes.
- Wait quietly at the bus stop until the bus arrives.
- Don't be late! There are other children waiting at other bus stops to be picked up.
- Set a good example for the younger children and be willing to help them.
- Do not push or shove when getting on the bus.
- The driver may refuse to let large or potentially dangerous items on the bus.

### **Always use the handrails.**

- Do not enter or leave the bus until the driver tells you to get on or off.
- Keep one hand free to grasp the railing.
- Leave a space between you and the child ahead of you.
- Do not push or shove at any time.

### **Take your seat promptly.**

- The driver may assign permanent seating if necessary.
- Get in one seat and stay there.
- If the seat is vacant, slide over to the window so someone else can have a seat.
- Ask the bus driver where to put musical instrument or other large objects.
- Never act silly or show off on a school bus. Set a good example.

### **Keep aisle clear at all times.**

- Never put arms, legs, or other objects in the aisle.
- Help the bus driver. Keep the bus clean.
- Pupils must not throw waste paper or other rubbish on the floor of the bus.
- No food, gum, or drinks are to be consumed while on the bus.
- No shooting or throwing of any kind of material within the bus or out the bus is allowed.
- The aisle must be kept clear for safety.
- Do not bring animals of any kind on the bus.

### **Stay seated until the bus stops.**

- It is very dangerous to move around on a school bus when it is moving as there are a lot of hard steel materials in a bus. You could be thrown to the floor or slammed against the back of the seat if the bus stopped suddenly.
- Bring toys and balls in a paper sack. A ball could roll down the aisle and get caught under the brake pedal causing an accident.

**Be quiet to avoid accidents.**

- The only time you will be asked to be absolutely quiet is at a railroad crossing.
- The bus driver will stop; open the side window and the bus door. The bus driver will look both ways twice before crossing the track.
- Bus riders must be quiet because sometimes you can't see a train coming, but you can hear it.
- Outside of ordinary conversation, classroom conduct is to be observed by the students.
- Loud noise, loud talking or any other disturbance while on the bus will not be permitted. Any pupil who is guilty of unbecoming conduct, or using inappropriate language, of abusing or casting reflections upon the driver or upon other pupils, forfeits the right to ride on the bus.
- Electronic devices may be played with the use of headphones.

**Keep your head and arms inside the bus at all times.**

- It is against the law to have any portion of your body or any object on the outside of the bus.

**Cross streets only when it is safe.**

- Look both ways for cars and be sure all traffic has stopped.
- Always cross in front of the bus and walk about ten (10) steps out in front of the bus so that you can see the driver and the driver can see you. If the driver is unable to see you, accidents are likely to occur.

*Pupils will be delivered at their established drop-off unless a change is requested in writing by an administrator or the parent. If the requested change will alter the bus routes, the district may refuse the request.*

**Assertive Discipline Bus Consequences in One Day**

**First Offense:**

- Verbal Warning

**Second Offense:**

- The driver will stop the bus.
- The driver will write down the name of the student and report the name to the principal.
- The student will be suspended from riding for one or two days after the student's parents has been contacted.

**Third Offense:**

- The driver will stop the bus.
- The driver will put a check by the student's name and report him to the principal.
- The student will be suspended from riding the bus for a minimum of three school days after the student's parents has been contacted.

**Fourth Offense:**

- The driver will stop at the nearest safe location with a phone.
- The driver will designate a student to call the school and request help.
- The bus will stay at the location until a teacher or administrator can come and pick up the disruptive student.
- The student will be suspended from riding the bus for the remainder of the semester after the student's parents has been contacted.

**FOR REPEAT (TWO OR MORE) BUS RIDING OFFENSES, THE ADMINISTRATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ASSIGN "SATURDAY SCHOOL" AS A DISCIPLINE ALTERNATIVE.**

**Severe Problem:** Anytime a student creates a severe disturbance or creates a disturbance for several days, the driver can react as if the student committed his/her fourth offense.

**Any damage to the bus** is to be reported at once to the driver. Any student cutting or marking on the seats, floor, side panels, or any other part of the bus will be required to pay the full cost of restoration as well as being barred from riding the bus.

# Activity Guidelines

Grades 7-12

## INTRODUCTION

This section is prepared and distributed and/or made available online each year with the intention of providing a source for a clearer understanding of the rules and regulations which govern the participation of each individual student in the activity programs of the Meridian School. Each student is reminded that he/she is **RESPONSIBLE** for checking with the head coach of each specific sport or sponsor for any additional regulations, which may govern their participation in that activity.

*"IGNORANCE OF THE RULES" will not* be considered a valid defense for rule violations(s). As a participant, it is **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** to know and follow all the rules governing your sport or activity. Participation does include sport practices before the open date for a scheduled contest.

The policies, rules, and regulations found in the Meridian Activity Guideline booklet will apply to the following school activities and/or organizations:

Volleyball	Football	Basketball	Wrestling	Track
Cheerleaders/Dance	One Act Play	Speech Team	Drama/Spring Play	NHS
Band/Chorus	Quiz Bowl Team	FBLA	Thespians	Dances
Annual Yearbook	Enrichment	Student Council	Class Activities	Prom
Homecoming	Field Trips	FFA		

## WARNING!!!

The purpose of this **WARNING** is to bring to your attention the existence of potential dangers associated with participation in activities, especially athletic participation. Participation in any athletic activity may involve injury of some type. The severity of such injury can range from minor cuts, bruises, sprains, and muscle strains to the more serious injuries to bones, joints, ligaments, tendons, and muscles. Catastrophic injuries to the head and spinal cord, though rare, can happen and be so severe as to result in total disability, paralysis or death.

WE RECOMMEND THAT EACH FAMILY TAKE OUT AN INSURANCE POLICY FOR SPORT INJURIES OR MAKE SURE THEIR CURRENT FAMILY POLICY WILL COVER SPORT INJURIES. The school **DOES NOT** have insurance coverage for such injuries.

Even with the best coaching, the use of the best protective sport equipment, and strict observance of the rules, injuries are still a distinct possibility.

## PHILOSOPHY

Interscholastic activities shall be an integral part of the total school educational program that has as its purpose to provide educational experiences not otherwise provided in the curriculum, which will develop learning outcomes in the areas of knowledge, skills, and emotional patterns and will contribute to the development of better citizens. Emphasis shall be upon teaching "through" activities in addition to teaching the "skills" of activities.

A great activity tradition is not built overnight - it takes the hard work and dedication of many individuals over many years. As a member of an interscholastic team, the participant has certain responsibilities to uphold. They are as follows:

### 1. RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOURSELF

We would like to think of a participant as being someone special in that certain responsibilities are imposed on him/her. A participant is one who accepts these responsibilities and broadens him/herself and develops strength of character. Participants owe it to themselves to get the greatest possible good from their school experiences, their studies, and their participation in other co-curricular activities. You owe it to yourself to always do whatever you do in life to the best of your ability.



## **2. RESPONSIBILITY TO THE SCHOOL**

By being a participant, you have the responsibility to your school to always do your best and always follow the guidelines set forth. By being a participant, you are representing your school and your community. You automatically assume a leadership role when you are on an activity squad. The student body and citizens of the Meridian School Community know you. You are on the stage with the spotlight on you. The student body, the community, and other communities judge our school on your conduct and attitude, both on and off the field of play. Because of this leadership role, you can contribute to our school spirit and community image. Make your school proud of you and your community proud of your school by your performance and your devotion to high ideals. The younger students are watching you. They will imitate you in many ways. Do not let them down: GIVE THEM HIGH IDEALS TO COPY.

## **3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COACHING STAFF**

All coaches will follow the Nebraska Coach's Creed, which reads:

- ***I BELIEVE** inter-school sports have an important place in the general education scheme and pledge myself to cooperate with others in the field of education and to administer them that their values shall never be questioned.*
- ***I BELIEVE** the other coaches of inter-school sports are earnest in their desire to keep the inter-school program high on the plan of citizenship training and I shall do all that I can do to further their efforts.*
- ***I BELIEVE** my own actions should be so regulated as to reflect credit to this profession. I SHALL abide by the rules of the game in letter and spirit.*
- ***I BELIEVE** in the exercise of all the patience, tolerance, and diplomacy at my command in my relations with all players, co-workers, game officials, and spectators.*
- ***I BELIEVE** proper administration of all sports offers effective laboratory methods for development of high ideals of sportsmanship, qualities of cooperation, courage, unselfishness and self-control, desires for clean, healthful living and respect for wise discipline and authority.*
- ***I BELIEVE** these admirable characteristics, properly instilled by me through teaching and demonstration, will have a long carry over and will aide each one connected with the sports to be a better citizen.*
- ***I BELIEVE** in and will support all reasonable moves to improve athletic participation by an increased number of participants.*

Those of you who want to be a part of the great tradition established for you will have to accept the responsibilities which are set up for every member of all teams of interscholastic competition at Meridian Public School.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Any boy or girl is welcome to try out for any of the interscholastic teams available to them providing they meet the requirements established by the Nebraska School Activities Association, the coaches of the respective activities, the school administration, and the Meridian Board of Education.

### **Objectives are:**

1. To provide natural outlets for students desiring to participate on teams in competition with other schools.
2. To assist in the development of higher levels of strength, endurance, vitality.
3. To teach good sportsmanship.
4. To further develop the health of each individual so he/she will be a contributing member of his/her society.
5. To develop ideals of self-sacrifice and denial.
6. To help develop skills that has carry-over value in terms of worthy use of leisure time.
7. To create an atmosphere of unity, to foster a school spirit growing out of the school's athletic endeavor; a spirit which will make the educational process more effective.

### **When participating in an activity the individual shall:**

1. Consider all activity opponents as guests of Meridian Public School, and treat them with all the courtesy due friends and guests.
2. Accept the decision of the officials without question.
3. Never use abusive or irritating remarks.
4. Applaud good sportsmanship from opponents and teammates.
5. Strive for victory through fair play according to the rules of the game.

6. Love the game for its own sake - not for what winning may bring them through publicity.
7. Do everything possible to encourage enthusiasm for the game and courtesy and respect for players, coaches, and fans.
8. Win without boasting and lose without excuses.
9. Do all within their power to make the entire activity program something we will always be proud of.

## **NSAA Regulations Governing Summer & School Year Activities**

*Listed below are some of the rules of the Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA) governing student participation. Students desiring to review all regulations or needing interpretations of the regulations should consult with their coach/sponsor or the appropriate school official – Activities Director, Principal, or Superintendent.*

**SPORTS SEASONS:** *All interschool sports approved by the Association shall be divided into three seasons: Fall, Winter, Spring. No student shall participate simultaneously in more than one sport per season.*

**SUMMER ACTIVITIES:** *From the close of school for the second semester until the opening date of the fall sports season, a member may not sponsor a team or individual, otherwise be responsible for a student in summer competition.*

**CLINIC:** *A member school may organize the following: **CLINIC** - a school may organize a clinic in any sport after the school is closed for the second semester through the first weekend in August. No clinic in any sport shall exceed three weeks in duration, and that three weeks shall be defined as twenty-one calendar days to run consecutively from the first date of the clinic.*

**SCHOOL YEAR ACTIVITY PRACTICES:** *No organized practice may be held in any sport between the close of the previous season and the opening date of practice for the following season. An organized practice shall be defined as such:*

- **FOOTBALL:** *An organized practice shall mean more than five players under the direct supervision of a sponsor.*
- **BASKETBALL and VOLLEYBALL:** *An organized practice shall mean more than four players under the direct supervision of a sponsor.*
- **TRACK AND WRESTLING:** *An organized practice shall mean more than three players under the direct supervision of a sponsor.*
- **CONDITIONING PROGRAM:** *A member school may organize and supervise a year-round conditioning program to include weight lifting, running and exercising for its members in accordance with current NSAA regulations.*
- **PHYSICAL EXAMINATION:** *Each student who expects to participate in athletic contests shall present to the Superintendent or Principal, once each year before actual participation in any interschool sport, a physician's certificate on a form approved by the NSAA that he/she is physically fit for athletic participation.*
- **PARTICIPATION ON NON-HIGH SCHOOL TEAMS IN NON-SCHOOL COMPETITION:** *Any student who participates in any athletic contest other than as a representative of his/her school during the season of the sport involved becomes ineligible to represent his/her school in that sport during the remainder of the season of sport. During the season of a sport, a student is permitted to take instructions from a person other than the high school coach at times other than scheduled high school practice sessions, but such instructions shall not interfere with, not be substituted for, the high school coaching, practice sessions or contests.*
- **ALL-STAR COMPETITION:** *No member schools shall permit its students to compete in any all-star contest or be a member of any all-star team. No athletic team from any member school shall compete against any all-star team. A student violating this rule shall be declared ineligible for all interscholastic competition for a period of one year from the date of the last offense.*
- **AMATEUR RULE:** *A student shall be an amateur in all sports sponsored by the Nebraska School Activities Association. (For definition of amateur, consult your coach or the appropriate school official.)*
- **IMPROPER CONDUCT:** *The Superintendent or Principal shall exclude any contestant from his/her school contest who, because of improper conduct, would not represent the school in a becoming manner.*

## **NSAA ELIGIBILITY, ATTENDANCE & SCHOLASTIC REQUIREMENTS**

**PARTICIPANTS:** *Students who are enrolled in a member high school and have not been graduated from any high school or its equivalent, and students of a junior high school which is a part of a member high school's system who compete or practice with a member high school's team may be permitted to participate in activities of the Nebraska School Activities Association.*

*Once a student participates in an activity under aforementioned arrangements, the student shall be governed by all rules of the NSAA.*

**SEMESTER LIMITATIONS:** *A student shall become ineligible after eight semesters of school membership beginning with his/her initial enrollment in grade nine of a four-year high school. A student shall become ineligible after six semesters of school membership, which begins with his/her initial enrollment in grade ten of a three-year high school.*

*Membership in any school or schools for thirty or more school days during a semester is considered as a semester of school membership. The records of the school or schools in which the student was a member shall be used to determine the total number of days of school membership.*

*Semesters are not charged consecutively. If a student is not enrolled in school, the student is not charged with a semester of membership. When he or she re-enrolls in school, however, it takes one semester, for which the student is charged to regain eligibility.*

**SEASON LIMITATIONS:** *No student shall be permitted to participate in more than four seasons of any one activity at the high school level. After initial enrollment in grade ten, no students shall be permitted to participate in more than three seasons of any one activity. Competing in any part of an interscholastic contest shall count as a season of participation in that activity.*

**HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES:** *A graduate from a four year school or its equivalent is no longer considered a student for interscholastic activity purposes even though the student enters another high school and is classed there as a fourth or even a third year pupil and is a candidate for graduation.*

*At the end of the first semester, a student who becomes ineligible to play through graduation, but who is eligible to play until the end of the semester, shall be eligible up to and including Saturday night of the week the semester is completed. A student who is eligible to compete throughout the regular season in an activity, but who graduates or completes eight semesters of high school attendance before the state tournament in that activity shall be eligible to compete in such tournament or meet provided the tournament or meet is held before the next semester starts.*

**SECOND SEMESTER ELIGIBILITY:** *A student who becomes eligible the second semester shall be eligible the first day of the second semester, provided his/her name has been included on an eligibility list sent to the NSAA office before the contests. Students who will become eligible the second semester may be included on an eligibility list sent during the first semester, provided a note indicates that date on which they will become eligible.*

**RESIDENCE:** *Residence shall be defined as the place where one has established his/her home, the place where the student is habitually present, and to which, when departing, the student intends to return. (For further definitions and information on what constitutes residence consult your coach or the appropriate school official.)*

**AGE LIMITATION:** *No student shall be eligible for interschool competition who has attained the age of nineteen years except as follows: A student who becomes nineteen (19) years of age on or after August 1, shall be eligible on the basis of age until the end of the current school year.*

# **PARTICIPATION INFORMATION**

## **MERIDIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL REGULATIONS GOVERNING ACTIVITIES**

### **PARTICIPATION**

Listed below are rules governing the general operation and participation of activity programs at the Meridian School. Previously listed information in the student handbook, along with these guidelines, each head coach/sponsor of a specific activity may, subject to administrative approval, develop and adopt those rules which he/she desires to have in effect for his/her particular activity. These rules will be given in writing, to each participant in the specific activity, and a copy will be filed in the office of the Activities Director, Principal, and Superintendent. Anyone desiring clarification or interpretation of the rules governing their specific activity should consult their coach/sponsor or the appropriate school official.

**PRE-PRACTICE REQUIREMENTS/PHYSICAL/PERMISSION FORM:** All student athletes are required to return the physical/permission form with the appropriate signatures before they will be allowed to begin practicing.

**APPEARANCE:** Participants will always be neat, clean, and well-groomed while participating. All participants will always take pride in their dress and appearance. No outlandish dress or attire will be permitted. Participants will consult their specific head coach/sponsor for the particular rules which will govern their participation in that activity. Such things as required dress, hair length and other reasonable expectations will be given in written form to each participant in an activity by the head coach/sponsor of that activity.

**ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:** Students participating in school sponsored individual and/or team activity groups **MUST BE IN ATTENDANCE FOR AT LEAST 1/2 OF THE SCHOOL DAY (four (4) periods)** before being allowed to participate in extra-curricular practices or competitions. The Principal may waive this regulation if the student's parents or guardian requests such a waiver **PRIOR TO THE ABSENCE**. Attending a morning funeral or keeping a doctor's appointment is usually considered just cause for a waiver from the office. Please contact your Principal when in doubt about the eligibility requirement. Students may not participate in any activities if they are under disciplinary suspension or expulsion. This rule may be waived by the administration.

Participants are expected to be at all practices scheduled by the coach/sponsor. Should a student participant not be able to attend a practice, they must contact the coach/sponsor in advance. Exception: When a student is absent from school they do not need to notify the coach/sponsor, however, most coaches/sponsors appreciate knowing the reason why the student is absent from school. Students are to show the coach/sponsor their make-up slip to be excused.

All participants are expected to be on time, in fact, ahead of time, for all practices, contests, and departures for contests.

All participants are expected to participate fully in all practices. Success at any endeavor requires thorough and diligent preparation, and failure to prepare one's self may be grounds for denial of participation in contests and lettering in a sport. Penalties for unexcused absences shall be determined by the head coach/sponsor at the beginning of each season, and such penalties shall be distributed to the participants at the first practice, in writing.

**COACHES' OFFICE AND EQUIPMENT ROOM:** Coaches' offices and equipment rooms are OFF LIMITS to all students. *Exception: the student is asked to enter for a conference or on an errand for the coach/sponsor/teacher.*

**DRESSING ROOM:** All participants will be under the direct supervision of the coach/sponsor in charge while dressing. A participant must not linger in the dressing room, be rowdy or endanger the safety of others. All cases of misconduct while dressing will be dealt with by the coach/sponsor in charge, and if he/she deems it necessary, to refer the case to proper administrative authority for review and/or further action. Participants are always to respect all equipment and supplies.

**ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES:** See information in the SCHOLASTIC ELIGIBILITY section.

**EQUIPMENT:** The District tries to furnish the students with as much of the equipment needed as is feasible. All equipment will be checked out to individuals at the beginning of the season by the coach/sponsor in charge. The participant will be responsible for this equipment and should be prepared to pay for the cost of replacement if it is not checked in at the end of the season in reasonable condition. (What an item costs when purchased for replacement may be double the original cost in many cases). It is the responsibility of the participant to check in the equipment at the end of the season or immediately should they quit the sport. If a participant fails to check in his/her equipment at the designated time or immediately if they quit a sport, they will be expected to pay for the cost of replacement. Students should wear the activity equipment checked out to them only at practices and contests. All students are highly encouraged to purchase and use locks on their locker room lockers.

**PRACTICE SCHEDULES:** All starting times for practices will be designated by the individual head coach/sponsor. All participants are expected to be on the field, court, or practice location at the time set by the coach/sponsor. It is suggested that the normal length for a practice will be approximately one and one-half hours. This will allow maximum utilization of the available facilities by all groups. There will be no practice on Sundays or holidays unless approval for such practice has been given by the administration prior to the date of practice.

**SWITCHING SPORTS:** If a student switches from basketball to wrestling or vice versa, the student must do so within ten (10) days of the start of that sport season. After the switch, the student will not be able to compete or practice for seven school days. After the seven-day waiting period, the student will be allowed to practice but will not be allowed to compete for an additional ten days.

## **EXTRA-CURRICULAR & CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITY POLICIES**

The extra-curricular and co-curricular opportunities in the Meridian School educational program are areas in which coaches and sponsors have a unique influence to promote and nurture a healthy life style and ideals, and the students have an opportunity to develop and gain desirable life-long qualities. Those qualities may include the principles of justice, fair play, good sportsmanship, respect for rules and authority, respect for others, leadership, responsibility, teamwork, dependability, self-discipline, and the values of self-sacrifice and training.

The Meridian School District recognizes that rules and regulations concerning the decorum and conduct of the student body will vary with the times and values of the district's communities. Further, Meridian School believes that the individual family should be the PRIMARY guiding influence and determinant of student behavior. In addition, the school district also has a significant interest in teaching students to behave responsibly and appropriately. Consequently, students will be held accountable for their choice of actions. Their participation in any extra-curricular or co-curricular activity is dependent upon their adherence to the school district's policies, procedures, and rules. At the same time, the school will also strive to work with the student, parents, and other agencies in trying to help the student correct behavior that the school feels is negative or not in the best interest of the student.

**GOOD CONDUCT RULES:** See information: GOOD CONDUCT RULES FOR ALL STUDENTS section.

**REQUIREMENTS TO LETTER:** The first time, and only the first time, that an individual letters in any sport at the Senior High Level, he/she will be awarded by the coach/sponsor of that activity, the standard chenille letter representative of activities of the Meridian Public School.

The criteria for lettering in each specific activity will be determined by the head coach/sponsor of that activity, and distributed to the participants at the beginning of the activity season.

Some general criteria, which will apply to all activities, are:

- Attitude toward and participation in practice sessions.
- Attitude towards and participation in contests.
- Care of and replacement of equipment used by the student athlete.

The requirements for lettering may be waived in case of a student who has contributed a great deal to the team. In all cases, letters will be awarded only on the recommendation of the head coach/sponsor, and his/her determination of eligibility to letter will be final. All rules and regulations set forth in this handbook apply to all students who participate in any school activity.

**COACHES/SPONSORS DISCRETION:** Any coach or sponsor of any school extra-curricular activity may impose additional punishments for violations of school rules and/or policies. In addition, coaches and sponsors may dispense other rules and guidelines not noted in both the Student/Parent Handbook and Activity Guidelines. All rules, guidelines, and additional punishments of each coach/sponsor will be identified in additional handbooks distributed by the coach/sponsor to the student participants.

**PROCEDURE FOR DUE PROCESS:** Prior to excluding a student from extra-curricular activities, the Principal has made an investigation of the alleged conduct or violation. The student will be given oral or written notice of the charges and an explanation of the evidence. The student will have the opportunity to present his/her version.

Within twenty-four hours of such additional time as is reasonably necessary following such exclusion, the Principal shall send a written statement to the student, student's parents or guardian describing the student's conduct, misconduct, or violation of the rule or standard and the reason for the actions taken. The student may appeal the decision to the Superintendent.

**SUSPENSIONS:** Any time a student is placed on an in-school or out-of-school suspension, that student is ineligible to participate in practice or contest for the day(s) suspended.

**ACADEMIC PASS:** The Academic Pass was developed to give students in grade 7-12 the opportunity to meet with classroom teachers for academic help outside the regularly scheduled class time and not be penalized for missing an activity or practice. The rationale is academics come first in the educational system. The Academic Study Hall may be used for:

- 1) Missing homework including missing make-up work/quizzes/exams.
- 2) A failing class average below 70%.
- 3) Student help via S.A.T. recommendation.

Either the teacher or the student can initiate the Academic Pass, but both must mutually agree on the date and time. At that time, the student will report to the teacher who has agreed to meet with him/her. During this time, the student will have priority with that teacher for academic assistance. He/she will notify his/her coach/sponsor prior to the practice to be partially or completely missed because of the academic need and then bring the completed Academic Pass Form to the activity sponsor. When the student returns to the activity, he/she will not be disciplined or penalized for their absence (one time only). The second and subsequent academic meetings will not be passes and are subject to discipline and/or penalty. The use of this pass should not hinder the departure of the activity buses or the standing of the student on the team.

**Academic Passes are available in the High School secretary's office.**

## **STUDENT FEE AUTHORIZATION ACT**

The Board of Education acknowledges that the public Elementary and Secondary Student Fee Authorization Act authorizes school districts to charge student fees for certain student activities and requires the district to adopt a policy addressing student fees. Further, the Board recognizes the fact that there are expenses relating to educational and extra-curricular programs and activities that may require financial participation by students and their parents/guardians. In order to provide district students and their parents and guardians with guidance regarding the district's position on fees, the Board of Education enacts the following Student Fee Regulation. It is the intent of the Board to provide equal access for students to all programs while complying with the laws of Nebraska and the rules and regulations of the Nebraska Department of Education.

### **DEFINITIONS**

- **Curricular programs and activities** mean those course offerings and the attendant program of activities, which are supervised or administered by the school district, which do count toward graduation or advancement between grades and in which participation by students is required.

- **Extracurricular activities** means student activities or organizations which are supervised or administered by the school district, which do not count toward graduation or advancement between grades, and in which participation of students is not required.
- **Post-secondary education costs** means tuition and other fees associated with obtaining credit from a post-secondary educational institution. For a course in which students receive both high school and post-secondary education credit or a course being taken as part of an approved accelerated or differentiated curriculum program pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat 79-1106 to 79-1108.03, the course shall be offered without charge for tuition, transportation, books or other fees, *except tuition and other fees associated with obtaining credits from a post-secondary institution.*

### **FEES AUTHORIZED**

Except as provided otherwise herein, the district may require and collect fees or other funds from or on behalf of students or require students to provide specialized equipment or specialized attire for any of the following purposes:

- Participation in extracurricular activities;
- Admission fees for spectators attending extracurricular activities;
- Post-secondary education tuition and fees;
- Transportation pursuant to Option Enrollment;
- Copies of student files or records pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. 79-2,104;
- Reimbursement to the district for school district property lost or damaged by the student;
- Before-and-afterschool or prekindergarten services pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. 79-1104;
- Summer school or night school; if not otherwise prohibited by IDEA, ADA, or Section 504;
- Breakfast or lunch programs;
- Any other fee authorized by law.

### **ACTIVITY ADMISSIONS**

The district does charge admission for athletic contests and some musical or drama activities. Such admissions are subject to waiver for eligible students, except those contests hosted by Meridian, which are District NSAA authorized. Waiver of admissions is not applicable to any away activity not held on the premises of the Meridian Public School District.

### **BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROGRAM**

The district administers a federally approved school breakfast and lunch program. The cost of student meals is established by the school district board of education and is reviewed annually.

### **COURSE PROJECT MATERIALS**

Course project materials will be provided by the district for projects identified as requisite for class credit. Materials cost for projects which are optional, student selected and not required for class credit will be at the expense of the student or his/her parent /guardian.

### **DISTRICT FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT USE**

The district makes no charge to students for the use of district owned facilities/ equipment in conjunction with the Board of Education approved educational program.

### **FEE WAIVER**

Any fee to be charged or materials required to be provided for the following shall be waived for students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunches under United States Department of Agriculture child nutrition programs when requested:

- Activity admissions locally;
- Musical instruments for participation in course offerings provided by the district;

Meals during the course of the school day (8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.) if a cost free alternative is not provided.

### **MEALS DURING ACTIVITIES**

The district will provide a meal in the form of a sack lunch when a field trip or activity shall span the normal lunch period. Meridian boosters prior to departure for a sports contest may provide a snack to athletes. Students will assume costs for any post-contest meal, which shall be an optional meal and not required for

activity participation. The school district will provide a per diem for meals when the activity shall require overnight stay, such as state playoff competition, or state tournament competition.

### **MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS & BAND UNIFORMS**

Students shall not be required to furnish musical instruments for participation in elective instrumental music course offerings or activities attendant to such courses. The district, however, reserves the right to provide an instrument of district choice, either district owned or rented, to students who qualify by waiver. The district will provide issued uniforms for students who are participants in the senior high band.

### **NON-INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Students shall be required to furnish the following specialized equipment or attire for the following non-instrumental music activities: Cheerleading & Show Choir. Students electing to participate in these activities must understand that fund-raising will be utilized as a source of revenue and must, therefore, accept fund raising participation as a part of the activity. Specialized attire will become the property of the student upon purchase.

### **NON-SPECIALIZED ATTIRE (CLOTHING)**

Students shall be required to furnish and wear non-specialized attire meeting district guidelines for the following: shoes and undergarments appropriate to any interscholastic sport which the district sponsors.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL AND CLASS DUES AND FEES**

The district does not authorize class dues. Organizational dues are discouraged, but in lieu of dues, students who choose to be members of an organization also choose to participate in organizational fund-raising to remain a member in good standing. Fund raising is not required to retain class membership in good standing.

### **OTHER ITEMS**

Charges for yearbooks, class rings, letter jackets, and similar items are sold as a convenience to students and are not fees and, therefore, not subject to waiver. Fines for overdue library books or fines for damage to school property are not fees and, therefore, not subject to waiver. The cost of graduation gowns, mortar boards and tassels, are costs paid from class funds, except those items retained by the class member as a memento.

### **PENALTIES**

Students who fail to pay overdue fines or fees may be subject to administrative penalties including, but not limited to, exclusion from graduation and commencement ceremonies or related activities, exclusion from prom, withholding of the yearbook, etc. Students shall not be denied a diploma, transcript, or credit for a course work not completed for failure to pay student fines or fees.

### **PERSONAL OR CONSUMABLE ITEMS**

The district shall require students to furnish minor personal or consumable items for both elementary grades and secondary course offerings, including, but not limited to, pencils, paper, pens, erasers, crayons, scissors, basic clothing, notebooks, and like personal or consumable items. Elementary and secondary teachers may provide students with a listing of recommended items. Students will be required to provide appropriate, but non-specific, apparel for all physical education classes, to include shirt, shorts, and shoes. There may be modest fees for materials in art and vocational classes, but courses can be completed for credit without the application of fees.

### **POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION**

The district shall provide the textbook for any course offered by the district, which shall carry both high school and college credit. The district shall not provide the text, or cost thereof, for any course offered via distance learning which is college-credit only, and in no instance will the district pay the cost of tuition or college fees for courses which provide college credit.



### **PUBLIC HEARING**

On or before August 1, 2002, and annually each year thereafter, the School Board shall hold a public hearing at a regular or special meeting of the Board on a proposed student fee policy, regulation, and student handbook inclusion, following a review of the amount of money collected from student pursuant to, and the use of waivers provided in, the student fee policy for the prior school year. The student fee regulation shall be adopted by a majority vote of the School Board and published in the student handbook. The Board shall provide a copy of the student handbook to every student at no cost to the student. The student fee regulation and handbook inclusion shall include specific details as regard items required by law. In the event that the district shall choose to offer a service or materials for a fee which is not offered at the time that the original policy and regulation is adopted, or if the district choose to consider charging a fee for services or materials currently provided at no charge to the students or their parents or if any other charge is desired, a public hearing shall be held at a regular or special meeting of the Board on the proposed changes to the student fee regulation before any changes are adopted. If changes are made after the public hearing, written notice shall be provided to the students and their parents as soon as is practicable.

### **SEVERABILITY CLAUSE**

If any section or part of this regulation is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the declaration will not affect the validity or constitutionality of the reaming portions.

### **STUDENT RECORD COPY CHARGES**

Copy charges will be applicable when students or former students request copies for personal use, not in conjunction with the educational program, or copies of student records are requested by outside agencies for purposes unrelated to the educational program.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

No cost for transportation shall be assessed to any student for any curricular or extra-curricular program or activity. Transportation charges may be assessed to parents of students who live outside the boundaries of the school district for regular route transportation as provided and allowed by state statutes.

### **VENDING AND CONCESSIONS**

School organizations operate vending machines and concessions for the purpose of generating organizational revenue. The purchase of any items from vending machines or concessions is optional and not subject to waiver.

# Index

Absence.....	24,25,26	Electronic Devices.....	7,16
Absence...Unexcused.....	26	Eligibility/Absence Guideline .....	24,25
Academic Information .....	27,28,29	Eligibility...Fail List/Participation.....	28
Academic Letter .....	27	Email / Consequence .....	9
Academic Pass.....	40	Expulsion and Suspension.....	20,21,22
Activity Admissions .....	41	Extra-Curricular Activities .....	30
Activity/Class Participation.....	30,31,32	Extra-Curricular Activity Policies.39,40	
Activity Guidelines .....	34,35,36	Fail List...Eligibility.....	28
Activity Guidelines..Intro .....	34	Fee Waiver .....	41
Activity Guidelines..Warning.....	34	Fees Authorized .....	41
Act Part/Appearance.....	38	Field Trips .....	31
Act Part/Attendance.....	38	Fire Drills.....	8
Act Part/Coaches' Office .....	38	Forged Note .....	16
Act Part/Dressing Room.....	38	Good Conduct Rule .....	12,13
Act Part/Equipment .....	39	Grading System .....	28
Act Part/Physical .....	38	Graduation...Course Requir .....	28,29
Act Part/Practice Schedule .....	39	Guidance .....	7
Act Part/Switching Sports.....	39	Guns...Student Use/Possess.....	22
Alcohol...Student Use .....	22,23,24	Health Education .....	29
Alcohol-Tob-Drug – Aftercare .....	24	Homework Form .....	29
Alcohol-Tob-Drug – Discipline .....	23	Honor Roll .....	29
Alcohol-Tob-Drug – Intervention.....	23	Hot Lunch Program .....	6,41
Alcohol-Tob-Drug – Prevention....	22,23	Inclement Weather .....	4
Announcements.....	6	Incompletes/Conditionals.....	29
Attendance.....	24	Insurance.....	30
Band Uniforms .....	42	Internet Use/Responsibility .....	8,9
Borrowed Articles .....	4	Internet Consequences .....	8,9
Breakfast .....	6	Intervention..Alcohol .....	23
Bulletin Boards .....	6	Intervention..Drugs .....	23
Bullying...How to Deal With.....	17,18	Intervention..Tobacco .....	23
Bullying...Investigation of.....	18	Introduction .....	1
Bullying and Other Harass .....	17,18	Junior High Failures/Retention.....	29
Bus...School Safety.....	32,33	Junior/Senior Prom.....	31
Cell Phones/Electronic Device .....	7,16	Leaving During Games .....	30
Cigarette...Student Use.....	22,23,24	Leaving School w/o Permission....	16,25
Class Dismissal.....	7	Library .....	9,10
Class Membership .....	28	Lockers.....	10
Class Officers.....	30		
Clothing/nonspecialized attire.....	42		
Coaches' Office/Equipment Room .....	39		
College Credit Classes.....	28		
College Visitation .....	30		
Consequence/Cell Phone .....	16		
Consequence/Email .....	9		
Consequence/Electronics.....	16		
Consequence/Forged Note .....	16		
Consequence/Homework Hour .....	16		
Consequence/Leaving School .....	16		
Consequence/Minor Behavior.....	14		
Consequences/Good Conduct.....	12		
Consumable/Personal Items.....	42		
Copy Machine Charges.....	43		
Copy Machines...Student Use .....	11		
Counselor .....	7		
Course Project Materials.....	41		
Dances/School.....	31		
Detentions.....	16		
Discipline/Consequences .....	14,15,16		
Discipline..Alcohol .....	23		
Discipline..Drugs.....	23		
Discipline...Level I.....	14,15		
Discipline...Level II.....	15		
Discipline..Tobacco.....	23		
Dismissal...Class .....	7		
Dismissal...Early .....	30		
District Facilities/Equipment Use.....	41		
Dress Code .....	7,8		
Dressing Room.....	39		
Driving During School Hours .....	8		
Dropping Out .....	28		
Drugs...Student Use.....	22,23,24		
Early Dismissals.....	30		
E-Cigarettes .....	22,23,24		

Loss of Awards/Letter.....	13	Public Hearing.....	43	Student Fee...Musical/Band.....	42
Lost and Found Articles .....	4	Renaissance.....	2	Student Fee...Non-Instrumental.....	42
Loyalty.....	3	Report Cards.....	30	Student Fee...Organization.....	42
Lunches.....	6	Rules...New.....	32	Student Fee...Penalties.....	42
Make-Up Work.....	25	Saturday School.....	16	Student Fee...Personal Items.....	42
Meals During Activities .....	41,42	Scholastic Eligibility.....	25	Student Fee...Post-Sec Educ.....	42
Medical Release Forms.....	31	School Bus Safety .....	32,33	Student Fee...Public Hearing.....	42,43
Membership...Class.....	28	School Day.....	3	Student Fee...Sever Clause.....	43
Misbehaviors-Minor.....	14	School Property .....	1	Student Fee...Student Copy Charge...	43
Misbehaviors-Level I.....	14,15	School Sponsored Trips.....	31	Student Fee...Transportation .....	43
Misbehaviors-Level II.....	15	School Sports .....	31	Student Fee...Vending/Concessions..	43
Mission Belief.....	Cover	Senior Class .....	31	Student Rights & Responsibilities .....	12
Mission Statement.....	Cover	Severability Clause .....	43	Study Hall .....	11
Moving About the Building.....	10	Sexual Harassment.....	18,19	Success as a Student.....	5
Musical Instrument/Band Uniforms..	42	Sexual Harass (Allegations).....	19	Suggestions...Effective Study.....	5,6
Nebraska State Standards.....	30	Sickness, Health .....	4	Suspension and Expulsion.....	20
New Student Information.....	4	Signature .....	49	Suspension...Emergency .....	20
Non-Discrimination .....	3	Spirit Activities.....	31	Suspension-Short/Long.....	20,21,22
Non-Instrum Music Extra Activities..	42	Sponsors/Organizations .....	32	Tardy.....	17,25
NSAA Regulations.....	36,37	Sports.....	31	Teacher Assistant.....	30
NSAA Eligibility.....	37	Staff.....	1	Telephone Calls.....	11
Meridian Sports Guidelines .....	38,39	Student Copy Charges .....	11	Textbooks.....	11
Office Conference.....	10	Student Council.....	31	Tobacco...Student Use .....	22, 23,24
Office Location .....	3	Student Fee Authorization Act.....	40	Tornado Drills.....	8
Organizations and Sponsors.....	32	Student Fee...Act Admissions.....	41	Transfers.....	28
Other Items.....	42	Student Fee...BR/Lunch Progam.....	41	Transportation.....	43
Passes .....	10	Student Fee...Class Dues .....	42	Truancy .....	25,26
Penalties .....	42	Student Fee...Clothing.....	42	Unexcused Absence.....	26
Pep Rallies .....	31	Student Fee...Consum Items.....	42	Vapor Devices .....	22,23,24
Personal Items .....	42	Student Fee...Course Materials.....	41	Vending/Concessions.....	43
Planning Your Education .....	5	Student Fee...Definition.....	40,41	Vending Machines.....	11,12
Pornography .....	9	Student Fee...District Facilities.....	41	Verification of Absence .....	26
Pre-Trial Diversion Program.....	13	Student Fee...Fee Waiver .....	41	Weather...Inclement .....	4
Progress Reports.....	30	Student Fee...Fees Authorized.....	41	Welcome .....	1
Prom.....	31	Student Fee...Meals During Act.....	41,4	Work Release.....	26,27



# **STUDENT FEE WAIVER APPLICATION**

Students whose families meet the income guidelines for free and reduced price lunches are eligible to have expenses of certain fees, specialized equipment, and specialized attire waived as provided by district policy. All information provided in connection with this application will be kept confidential. The waiver does not carry over from year to year and must be completed annually.

**ALL INFORMATION REQUESTED ON THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED FOR THE FEE WAIVER APPLICATION TO BE PROCESSED.**

PLEASE PRINT

Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name(s)	School Attending	Grade
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Please list essential fees/supplies/materials needed by your student for school or school activities:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Your signature below is required for the release of information regarding the student or student's family financial eligibility for the programs/expenses listed above. Without your signature, this application cannot be processed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent or guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Administrator



**MERIDIAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**PARENT AND STUDENT CONSENT PAGE**

A. In accordance with Nebraska State Law Section 79-4, 176, paragraph (3) which states in part: "Rules and Standards which form the basis for discipline shall be distributed to students and parents..."and pursuant to P.L. 101-226 which states that parents/guardians and students be notified that this school district absolutely prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs, alcohol and tobacco on school premises or during any school activities, parents or guardians are requested to sign and return the statement below.

**I have received and read a copy of the Student/Parent Handbook.** I have had the opportunity to examine this handbook and understand its contents. I also understand that there are other board policies which govern school operations and that the handbook is not intended to be all-inclusive.

\*\*\*To access the Student/Parent Handbook, via the Internet, please go to meridianmustangs.org and click the Handbook Tab on top of the screen. If you cannot access the handbook, via the Internet, copies are available in the office.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

B. I understand that the Meridian Public Schools, on occasion, **provides photographs and general information about student activities to the media for publication and that they also maintain a school website on the Internet.** No sensitive data, addresses, etc. are provided, while photos and general accomplishments may be published.

My signature below indicates that I give my permission for my son/daughter's picture and general information to be published by the school in the media and/or on the school's website.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note...This page (WHICH WILL BE KEPT ON FILE) MUST BE SIGNED & TURNED IN TO THE SPONSORING TEACHER.**