

Mason County Eastern

Kindergarten - 5th Grade
Cardinals
Parent/Student Handbook
2024-2025



Dr. Mark Forner, K-12 Principal
18 S Main Street
Custer, MI 49405
(231) 757-3733
mfor@mceschools.com

Kristy Stewart
Admin Assistant/
Attendance
kstew@mceschools.com
(231) 757-3733

Cherie Coleman
Lead Teacher
Title I Teacher
ccole@mceschools.com
(231) 757-3733

Be Kind

Earn Respect

Stay Safe

Take Responsibility

(leave page blank)

**Confirmation of Receipt of
Elementary Student Handbook
And
Internet Acceptable User Agreement (on back)**

I have received the Mason County Eastern Elementary Student Handbook for the 2024-25 school year.

I understand my child/ward is expected to follow all the rules and regulations set forth in this handbook and that failure to do so may result in disciplinary action as stated in the Mason County Eastern Schools' Board of Education policies.

Grade Level

Student Name

Date

Parent/Guardian Name

Disclaimer: The failure to sign and return this document will in no way negate the disciplinary action as stated in the Elementary Student Handbook.

By signing below, the user and parent or guardian (if applicable) certify that they have read the Mason County Eastern Schools Policy on District-Provided Access to Electronic Information Services and Networks and agree to follow the policy and this Acceptable User Agreement. Each party further agrees to contact the Mason County Eastern Schools Internet Administrator if he or she has questions about the District's Policy or this Acceptable Use Agreement.

I understand and will abide by the above Internet Use Agreement. I further understand that violation of the Agreement may constitute a criminal offense. Should I commit any violation, Mason County Eastern Schools may revoke any access privileges, and I may be subject to disciplinary and/or legal action.

User's Full Name (please print): _____

User's Signature: _____

Date: _____

(If the user is under the age of 18, a parent or guardian must also read and sign this agreement.)

As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read the Internet Use Agreement. I understand that this access is designed for educational purposes and that Mason County Eastern School District has taken precautions to eliminate controversial materials. However, I also recognize it is impossible for the school district to restrict access to all controversial materials and I will not hold the District responsible for materials my child acquires on the network. Further, I accept full responsibility for supervision if and when my child is not in a school setting or accesses inappropriate material via a device not maintained by Mason County Eastern Schools.

I hereby give permission to issue an account for my child and certify that the information contained on this form is correct.

Parent or Guardian's Name (please print): _____

Parent of Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parents/guardians who do not want their child to have access to the Internet should write a note below expressing their wishes. For those students who do not receive

permission to use the Internet, the District will provide alternative research tools that the student can use to complete the work.

SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

At Mason County Eastern Schools we believe that **all** students can learn. We believe that students will reach their full potential in an environment of **Teamwork**, **Trust** and **Pride**.

MCE Student Code of Conduct

MCE Board Policy 5600 reads: “The Board shall require each student of this District to adhere to the Student Code of Conduct promulgated by the administration and to submit to such disciplinary measures as are appropriately assigned for infraction of those rules. The Board of Education acknowledges that conduct is closely related to learning and that an effective instructional program requires an orderly school environment, which is, in part, reflected in the behavior of students.”

MCE Board Policy 1210 reads: “The Superintendent shall be given the latitude to determine the best method of implementing the policies of the Board.”

MCE Board Policy 5600 reads: “The Superintendent shall promulgate administrative guidelines for student conduct which: a) are not arbitrary, b) do not discriminate among students, c) do not demean students and d) do not violate any individual rights constitutionally guaranteed to students.”

A Welcome Letter From The Principal

Dear Students and Parents:

Welcome to Mason County Eastern Elementary School! It is a great day to be a Cardinal! We are going to have a terrific school year and we are excited to get started.

This handbook contains important information about our school and school rules as well as important Board of Education policies. Students and parents: please take the time to read it carefully.

At Mason County Eastern, we have established a school culture based upon high expectations for student growth and student conduct. We believe that EVERY student at Mason County Eastern can and will be academically successful.

We believe students thrive when there is a shared commitment between families and the school community to provide the support each student needs to be successful. Sometimes that support comes in the form of honest, difficult conversations when a student is not performing to their fullest potential.

Our school's mission statement reads as follows: "At Mason County Eastern Schools we believe that all students can learn. We believe that **ALL** students will reach their full potential in an environment of **Teamwork, Trust and Pride.**"

We are honored and pleased that you have selected Mason County Eastern as your school of choice. In turn, we promise to do everything in our power to prepare your student for a long, happy and successful life.

GO RED! GO GOLD!

Sincerely,
Dr. Mark Forner
K-12 Principal

Contents

	Page
Accommodating Persons With Disabilities	8
Animals On School Property	8
Attendance Policy and Procedure	9
Parent/Guardian Procedure	
Types of Absences	
Assignments During Absence	
Leaving School Early	
Backpacks	10
Bullying	10
Bus Regulations	10
Responsibilities of Parent/Guardians	
Responsibilities of Students	
Bus Video Cameras	
Cafeteria	13
Cell Phones and Electronic Communication Devices	13
Communication	13
Counseling	13
Daily Announcements	14
Daily Schedule	14
Drug-Free Schools & Student Services Policy	14
Emergency School Closings	15
Field Trips	15
Head Lice Policy	15
Illness	15
Internet Acceptable User Agreement	15
Internet Conditions of Use	
Lockers	17
Medication Policy	17
PBIS Expectations and Rules Matrix	18
Physical Education Participation	19
Recess and Playground	19
Safety Drill Procedures	19
School Records	20
Search and Seizures	20
Section 504 Policy	21

Sexual Harassment Policy & Unlawful Discrimination	21
Definition	
Reporting Procedures	
Investigation and Discipline	
Student Discipline	22
Student Suspension and Expulsion	23
Factors To Be Considered Before Suspending/Expelling	
Due Process	
Restorative Practices	
Petitions For Reinstatement	
Truancy	26
Truancy Enforcement Goals	
Truancy Enforcement Policy	
Level I - Local School Intervention	
Level II - Referral To Law Enforcement	
Weapons-Free School Zone Policy	27
Physical and Verbal Abuse	
Factors To Be Considered Before Suspending/Expelling	
Restorative Practices	
Petitions For Reinstatement	

Accommodating Persons With Disabilities

Persons with disabilities will be provided an opportunity to participate in all school-sponsored services, programs or activities. Persons with disabilities having questions about accessibility or needing accommodations should contact the superintendent or building principal. Notification of the need for accommodation should occur as far in advance as possible of the school-sponsored function, program or meeting.

Animals On School Property

In order to assure student health and safety, animals are not allowed on school property, except in the case of a service animal accompanying a student or other individual with a disability. This rule prohibiting animals on school property may be temporarily waived by the building principal in the case of a unique educational opportunity for students, provided that: (a) the animal is appropriately house, humanely cared for, and properly handled, and (b) students will not be exposed to a dangerous animal or unhealthy environment.

Attendance Policy and Procedure

Michigan law requires that whoever has custody or control of any child between the ages of 6 and 18 (unless the child has already completed high school graduation requirements) shall assure that the child attends public school during the entire school year. Michigan law requires that the student's attendance be continuous and consecutive for the school year fixed by the school district.

Parent/Guardian Procedure for School Notification of Student Absence

When a student is absent, notification, including the reason for the absence, must be in the office within 48 hours. Notification of type of illness is required based on Mason County Health Department requirement. The Attendance Office phone number is (231) 757-3733 option 5. It is available 24 hours per day, seven days a week.

Types of Absences

Excused - A student is absent for a valid reason and is accepted by the Attendance Office and the reason is cleared according to the attendance procedure.

Unexcused - A student is absent and has an unacceptable reason or no explanation, and/or fails to clear the absence in accordance with the attendance procedure.

Pre-Arranged - A parent/guardian should communicate with the school at least a week prior to the pre-arranged absence in order to receive school related work.

School-Related - A school related absence is an absence for a pre-approved school function.

Court Absence - A court absence is when a student has been ordered to appear in court or to participate in other judicial activities. A signed note from the court stating the date and time the student was required to appear is required.

Suspension - A suspension is when the student is absent from school for a behavior or discipline-related matter.

Funeral - A funeral absence is for a family member.

Assignments During Absence - Missed assignments and classwork are expected to be completed and are the responsibility of the student. Assignments are to be completed and returned to the appropriate teacher by the due date established.

Leaving School Early - If a student must leave school during the school day for any reason, he/she must report to the office prior to leaving. A parent/guardian must sign a student out before the student may leave. **Only parents/guardians and/or adults listed on the student's emergency card may sign a student out early.**

Backpacks

Backpacks may be brought to school but they are to be taken directly to and left in the student's locker until the end of the school day.

Bullying

It is the policy of the District to provide a safe and nurturing educational environment for all of its students. This policy protects all students from bullying/aggressive behavior regardless of the subject matter or motivation for such impermissible behavior.

Bullying or other aggressive behavior toward a student, whether by other students, staff or third parties, including Board members, parents, guests, contractors, vendors and volunteers, is strictly prohibited. This prohibition includes written, physical, verbal and psychological abuse, including hazing, gestures, comments, threats or action to a student, which causes or threatens to cause bodily harm, reasonable fear for personal safety or personal degradation. Misconduct occurring outside of school may also be disciplined if it interferes with the school environment. All incidents should be reported to school administration.

Bus Regulations

Riding the bus is a **PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT** of all students at MCE. Bus privileges are available to eligible students to and from school and various activities. To ensure a safe and enjoyable ride, bus expectations must be understood. While students are on the bus, they are under the supervision of the bus driver. In most cases, bus discipline problems can be handled by the bus driver. In the case of a written disciplinary referral, student bus problems are investigated and handled by school administration. Parents will be informed of any and all inappropriate student behavior on a bus. Parents are encouraged to discuss bus safety and appropriate behavior with their children before the beginning of the school year and regularly during the year.

In the interest of student's safety, students are expected to observe the following rules:

1) Students must always follow the bus driver's directions.

- 2) Students who create disturbances on the bus will be issued a student discipline referral and could be denied bus privileges.
- 3) Students are to use classroom conduct, no profane or vulgar language.
- 4) Vandalism to a bus will be charged to the student/parent.
- 5) No smoking, tobacco products, or flammable products are permitted on the bus. (This will result in the loss of bus privileges.)
- 6) Non-bussing students will be permitted to ride the bus in certain or emergency situations. A note from their parents and signed by the principal is required.

Students may be suspended from riding the school bus for engaging in misconduct. In accordance with Board policy, the District may use video cameras to record student conduct on the interior of the bus. The District's transportation director is responsible for reviewing the tapes to ensure that bus safety procedures are being followed and that the buses are operated in accordance with district guidelines and state law.

Responsibility of Parents/Guardians

- 1) Ensure that your student is at his/her designated bus stop five (5) minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. The driver is responsible for the maintenance of this schedule and **cannot** wait for tardy students.
- 2) To provide necessary protection for their students when going to and from the bus stop.
- 3) To accept joint responsibility with school authorities for proper conduct of their students and be responsible for restitution for any vandalism of the buses.
- 4) To expect your student to walk some distance to a bus stop as required by state regulations.
- 5) To provide written permission for their student to board or exit the bus at other than the regular stop.
- 6) To inform the transportation supervisor or the driver when absence is expected from school. If this is before 7:30 a.m., please contact the transportation department at 231-898-1553.
- 7) To make reasonable efforts to understand and cooperate with those who are responsible for pupil transportation.

8) Parents/guardians wanting to make an afternoon bus change are to contact the elementary office by 2:30 each day.

Responsibility of Students

- 1) Be at the designated bus stop five (5) minutes before the bus arrives. The bus **will not** wait for tardy students.
- 2) Stay off the roadway at all times when waiting for the bus.
- 3) Cross in front of the bus when crossing the road or highway, **not in back of the bus**. Always cross at least ten (10) feet in front of the bus and cross only after the driver signals for you to cross.
- 4) Wait until the bus comes to a stop before attempting to enter or leave the bus. Remain seated while the bus is in motion. Enter or leave the bus at the front door only, except in the case of an emergency.
- 5) If the bus is crowded, move over and allow others to be seated.
- 6) Keep your head, arms and hands inside the bus at all times.
- 7) Keep feet out of aisles, off the seats and back of seats, and do not block the aisles.
- 8) Do not leave the bus without the driver's consent, except at home or school.
- 9) Students living in town will be picked up and dropped off at designated locations.
- 10) If students who are not regular riders request to be transported, they must present a note from a parent/guardian to verify that the request is legitimate.
- 11) Students who are suspended from school may not ride a bus.

Bus Video Cameras

In accordance with Board of Education policy, the District may install video cameras in the interior of district buses. The District's transportation director is responsible for reviewing the tapes to ensure that bus safety procedures are being followed. Only authorized school personnel will review video tapes. Any disciplinary action resulting from the use of the video cameras shall be determined by the administration, which

shall ensure that the district policy relating to discipline, including appropriate due process, is followed.

Cafeteria

All students will receive a half hour lunch period each day which includes both time to eat and a recess break. A hot lunch is available every day. A breakfast program is available from 8:00 - 8:15 AM and will be served in the cafeteria. In addition, Mason County Eastern participates in the National School Lunch Program, which enables students that qualify to have free or reduced lunches.

Misbehavior in the cafeteria will result in disciplinary action according to the school's disciplinary procedures.

Cell Phones and Electronic Communication Devices

No cell phones or other electronic devices are allowed in school unless prior arrangements have been made with school staff. Devices must be checked into the office at the beginning of the day and will be returned at the end of the day.

Communication

The following is a sequence of steps which should be followed by students and parents/guardians when they are in need of clarification about grades, assignments, tests, projects, discipline, absences and/or tardies:

Contact MCE staff/administrator in this order:

1. Teacher
2. Counselor
3. Principal
4. Superintendent

Counseling

Counseling services are provided for students and consultations are available for parents/guardians regarding situations which will have an impact on school performance/well-being. Confidentiality is maintained in all person/private matters with the exceptions of disclosure of intended harm to someone else, self, or abuse/neglect.;

Daily Announcements

Emergency-type announcements will be made over the P.A. system whenever it is necessary to do so.

Daily Schedule

Elementary School Schedule

7:50 AM	Teacher Day Begins
8:00 AM	Students may enter the building
8:20 AM	Morning Class Sessions Begin
11:10 AM - 11:45 AM	Recess/Lunch Grades K - 5
11:45 AM - 3:10 PM	Afternoon Class Sessions
3:10 PM	Student Dismissal
3:20 PM	Teacher Day Ends

Drug-Free Schools & Student Services Policy

The District seeks to provide all students with an education needed to participate as responsible citizens in an ever-changing world. The District is committed to providing a tobacco, alcohol and other drug-free environment for students and staff. The possession/use of alcohol, controlled substances, mind/mood altering substances, drug paraphernalia, and/or other illicit drugs is prohibited in any attendance center on school district grounds or at any school sponsored activity (this list is not all inclusive). Those in violation will be subject to disciplinary procedures. Tobacco use by all students is prohibited at all times and by staff members during regular working hours. The safe environment will help students accomplish the educational outcomes of the District.

The District acknowledges that some students and staff have academic, physical, emotional, social, alcohol, or other drug problems that interfere with learning. Prevention programs and student services are designed to help students and staff learn skills to live productive lives, avoid mind/mood altering substance use problems and deal with issues that might deter their academic, personal and professional success.

The District accepts the concept that chemical dependency and other related problems are treatable. The prevention programs and student services provide appropriate options for prevention education, assessment, intervention and referral.

Emergency School Closings

In case of bad weather and other local emergencies, you will be notified by the Mason County Eastern Schools power school notification system or by listening to any local radio or television station to be advised of school closings or early dismissals. If bad weather or other emergency occurs during the day, please listen to local media stations for possible early dismissal information. For your child's safety, make certain your child knows ahead of time where to go in case of early dismissal. If we dismiss early for an emergency, all after-school functions are automatically canceled.

Field Trips

Field trips are considered to be an educational experience and an extension of the classroom. A student's past behavior and attitude will have a direct bearing on whether he/she will be included on field trips or outings. When a student's unacceptable behavior results in a second suspension from school, he/she forfeits the privilege of attending any or all future trips for that school year. In some cases, it will be necessary for a parent/guardian to accompany his/her student in order for the student to attend the field trip or outing. There may be requirements for a student to attend a specific field trip, outing or activity. Participation in some field trips, outings and/or activities may be contingent upon specific behavioral requirements and/or student responsibilities.

Head Lice Policy

Any student found to be carrying head lice is to be sent to the office immediately.

Illness

In case of illness during the school day, students must report to the office. Students are not permitted to go home unless contact is first made with the parents or legal guardian. Parents must make certain that the school has emergency contact numbers should a student become ill and need to be sent home.

Internet Acceptable User Agreement - Mason County Eastern Schools

Internet access is available to students and teachers. The goal in providing this service to teachers and students is to promote educational excellence at MCE by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, communication and research.

With access to computers and people all over the world also comes the availability of material that may not be considered of educational value in the context of a public

school. The District has taken steps to restrict access to controversial issues and materials.

MCE believes that valuable information and interaction available on this worldwide network is an asset to the District's educational goals. This policy may be revised from time to time as necessary.

Internet Conditions of Use

The use of your account must be in support of education and research and consistent with the laws, rules, and regulations of Mason County Eastern Schools, the State of Michigan, and the Federal Government (including the Children's Internet Protection Act).

The District will make its best effort to install server and/or client software which will restrict access to most inappropriate material.

The following uses of school-provided Internet access are not permitted:

- 1) To access, upload, download or distribute pornographic, obscene or sexually explicit material;
- 2) To transmit obscene, abusive, sexually explicit, harassing, or threatening language or suggestions;
- 3) To violate any local, state or federal law;
- 4) To access another person's materials, information or files without permission;
- 5) To engage in commercial, political, or profit-making enterprises. Notify your teacher or administrator immediately if you accidentally encounter or obtain materials in violation of this policy.
- 6) To cyberbully or impersonate another individual online.

The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right. An inappropriate use will result in the cancellation of those privileges and other appropriate consequences, including discipline.

All users must obtain prior approval before receiving an account. Each student and teacher who receives an account will be instructed in the proper use of the network. The system administrators may close an account at any time. The administration, faculty and staff of MCE may request the system administrators deny, revoke or suspend specific user accounts.

Accounts will be terminated upon your departure from MCE.

Lockers

Each student will be assigned a locker. Personal padlocks are not permitted. Damage to the lockers must be replaced at the expense of the student. Lockers shall only be used for books, apparel, shoes, boots and lunches. Stale food, alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, vapes, drugs or weapons of any kind are not to be stored in school lockers. An administrator may inspect student lockers when there is a reasonable cause to believe that prohibited articles are stored within. The locker may be searched to ensure school safety and student welfare.

Medication Policy

Administration of medication will be as follows:

- 1) The student's physician must provide written orders detailing diagnosis, dosage of medicine, times when medication should be administered and a telephone number where the physician can be contacted. A medication form is available from the secretary in the office.
- 2) The parent/guardian must provide a written request and permission for the school to administer the medication and a telephone number where the parent/guardian can be contacted in case of emergency.
- 3) The parent/guardian must bring the medicine to school in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or physician.
- 4) All medication shall be clearly identified on the outside of the container and the medication will be stored in a cabinet at school.
- 5) School personnel shall administer the medication in the presence of another adult and in compliance with the instructions of the physician.
- 6) In case of an emergency when a student's life or health is threatened, a school administrator, teacher or designated staff member may give medication to that student without a second person being present.
- 7) School personnel will communicate regularly with parents/guardians and the physician about any problems or effects of administering medication to students during school hours.
- 8) In an emergency, a designated staff member will notify the parent/guardian as quickly as possible.
- 9) No medication, including aspirin, ointments, cold tablets, etc. will be administered to a student without written permission of a parent/guardian and the completion of the school medication form.
- 10) School personnel will work closely with the physician so the medical program can be modified as changes in the student's physical condition warrant it.

- 11) School personnel shall not administer any medication where the administration of the medication requires specialized knowledge or training, such as injection of medication, unless that person has required knowledge or training.
- 12) If the seal is broken on any medication container, the parent/guardian shall affirmatively state the container contains the medication that is identified on the outside of the container.
- 13) School personnel shall exercise the utmost care in administering medication to students.

PBIS Expectations and Rules Matrix

Mason County Eastern Schools implements Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS focuses on creating and sustaining school-wide, classroom, and individual systems of support that improve the educational environment for all children. Our aim is to explicitly teach behavior expectations and then recognize the positive behaviors shown by students.

By implementing PBIS, we hope to reduce school and classroom behavior disruptions and educate all students about acceptable school behaviors. Our PBIS implementation plan includes clearly defined outcomes, research-validated practices, supportive administrative systems and information for problem solving behaviors.

All staff members at MCE will establish regular, predictable, positive learning and teaching environments. The staff members will serve as positive role models to students as they teach expected school behaviors. Our school also has a system in place for recognizing and rewarding expected behaviors. By improving the school environment, we hope to increase learning time and promote academic and social success for every student.

The core values at Mason County Eastern Elementary are:

Be Kind, Earn Respect, Stay Safe and Take Responsibility. Our staff members will refer to these as B.E.S.T. expectations. We want all of our students to be their Cardinal Best. All students are explicitly taught what it looks like to be kind, earn respect, stay safe and take responsibility in every area at our school. These behavior expectations are clearly displayed on the walls around our school.

Physical Education Participation

Students in grades 1 through 5th grade will have Physical Education class one day per week. **Students are to bring athletic shoes and dress appropriately on their gym**

day. Students without athletic shoes will sit on the sidelines in the gym. Students forgetting athletic shoes over a period of time will be disciplined by the Physical Education instructor. All students are expected to participate in PE class unless a written note from the Doctor is received.

Recess & Playground

Recess provides an essential break in the educational day of elementary students. All recesses (weather permitting) are conducted outside and provide elementary students with fresh air, exercise and a chance to socialize with peers. Students returning from recess are generally refreshed and ready to participate productively in learning.

Students that are too ill to benefit from an outside recess are also too ill to be in school. Only students with a doctor's note will be excused from recess. In the event that the actual outside temperature and/or wind chill drops below ZERO degrees, students will stay inside for recess.

Students will remain within the fenced playground area during recess. The throwing of snowballs is strictly prohibited. Para pros have the authority to provide other regulations as needed in order to keep students safe during recess. Students who fail to comply with these rules and regulations may lose their recess privileges.

Safety Drills

Safety drills will occur at times established by the school board. Students are required to be silent and shall comply with the directives of school officials during emergency drills. Each school shall conduct fire drills, tornado drills and lock-down drills during the school year in compliance with state and local regulations. Drills will not be preceded by a warning to the students.

Fire drills and tornado drills are held periodically throughout the year. The route for leaving in case of fire or tornado is posted in each room. Students must walk quickly and quietly in a single file to the designated area. Do not take books, coats, or other personal belongings and listen carefully to all safety instructions. An all-clear will be used to call students/staff back to class.

School Records

The Mason County Eastern School District, in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, maintains directory information of the following types and makes this information available to interested parties.

- 1) Honors and awards
- 2) Participation in school activities
- 3) Height and weight of athletes
- 4) Information generally found in yearbooks

Names and addresses of students may be released to any organization offering bonafide post-high school education or training, including the United States Armed Forces. Parents/guardians and students 18 years of age or older have the right to refuse disclosure of any and all of the above designated directory information pertaining to that particular student by informing school officials, in writing, within five (5) days of the publication of this notice. Parents/guardians have the right to review the contents of individual student records. Arrangements may be made through the building principal.

Search And Seizures

To maintain order and discipline in the schools and to protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel, school authorities may search a student, student lockers, desks, storage areas or student automobiles under the circumstances outlined below and may seize any illegal, unauthorized or contraband materials discovered in the search. School officials will attempt to have the student present whenever such searches are conducted, but such searches may be conducted in the student's absence.

As used in this policy, the term "unauthorized" means any item dangerous to the health or safety of students or school personnel, or disruptive of any lawful function, mission or process of the school, or any item described as unauthorized in school rules available beforehand to the student.

A student's person and/or personal effects (e.g., purse, bag, etc.) may be searched whenever a school authority has reasonable suspicion to believe that the student is in possession of illegal or unauthorized materials.

A student's failure to permit searches and seizures as provided in this policy will be considered grounds for disciplinary action. If a search yields illegal or contraband materials, such findings shall be turned over to proper legal authorities for ultimate disposition.

Section 504 Policy

It is the intent of the Board of Education to provide a free and appropriate public education to each student with a disability within its jurisdiction regardless of the nature or severity of the disability.

It is further the intent of the District to ensure that each student with a disability, within the meaning of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, is defined, evaluated and provided with reasonable accommodations and adaptations to ensure appropriate educational services.

The Superintendent will appoint a Section 504 coordinator who will serve as administrator for the policy within the District.

Sexual Harassment & Unlawful Discrimination Policy

This District supports and maintains a learning and working environment that is free from unlawful harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment. The District's policy is to provide an environment free from acts of harassment and discrimination based on a person's gender, race, color, national origin, marital status, religion, disability, height, weight, veteran status, or any other protected characteristic. This policy applies to all Board members, employees, students, and any other individual on school premises or at school events related to Board members, employees or students.

Each administrator shall be responsible for promoting understanding and acceptance of, and assuring compliance with state and federal laws, and Board policy and procedures governing sexual and other unlawful harassment within his/her building or office.

Definition

Sexual harassment means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- 1) Submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of a person's employment or of a student's participation in school programs or activities; or
- 2) Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for decisions affecting the employee or student; or
- 3) Such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment so that it unreasonably interferes with an individual's performance.

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- 1) Verbal harassment or abuse;
- 2) Pressure for sexual activity;
- 3) Repeated remarks with sexual or demeaning implications;
- 4) Unwelcome touching;
- 5) Sexual jokes, posters, cartoon, etc.;
- 6) Suggesting or demanding sexual involvement, accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, safety, job or performance of public duties.

Reporting Procedure

If you believe you are a victim of harassment or discrimination, you should report it immediately. Students should report such conduct to the building principal or guidance counselor.

Investigation and Discipline

The District will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation of all reports of unlawful harassment and discrimination. **A police report may follow.** Information will be kept as confidential as possible and will be disclosed only to persons with a need for the information. Any student found to have committed harassment or discrimination will be disciplined, up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Student Discipline

MCE Elementary School will use a consistent procedure for handling discipline. Teachers will address all minor infractions in the classroom, such as disruptive, rude behavior, pushing, and blurting out. Teachers will document these minor infractions. Teachers will refer all major infractions, such as fighting, biting and repeated rude behavior to the office by completing an Office Referral Form (ODR).

Suspensions will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Students committing major offenses will be permitted to share their version of the incident with an administrator. Other students and/or staff members involved will also be permitted to report their involvement in or witness of the incident. After gathering all of the facts, the parent will be contacted by the administration.

All rules, regulations and suspensions will apply to all school sponsored activities. Consequently, students are expected to behave accordingly at all school functions,

academic or extracurricular. Students serving an out-of-school suspension will not be allowed to practice, attend or participate in any after school sponsored activity.

The Board of Education reserves the right to change this policy, as needed, during the school year and shall notify students and parent/guardians of these changes.

Student Suspension and Expulsion

It is the belief of Mason County Eastern Schools that the school staff make every effort to solve discipline problems with the school setting and without excluding a student from class or school.

Exclusion may fall into the following categories:

- 1) **In-school suspension** is the removal of a student from classes but not the building.
- 2) “**Suspension**” is defined as the exclusion of a student from class or school for a **short-term** period (less than 10 days) or a **long-term** period (more than 10 days but less than 60 days) for disciplinary reasons.
- 3) “**Expulsion**” is defined as the exclusion of a student from school for a period of 60 days or more for disciplinary reasons.
- 4) “**Permanent Expulsion**” is defined as when the student’s educational opportunities, with the school district, are terminated forever.

Section 380.1311 of the School Code authorizes suspension or expulsion for the following reasons:

- 1) Gross misdemeanor
- 2) Non-Compliance
- 3) Possesses a dangerous weapon in a Weapon Free School Zone
- 4) Commits arson in a school building or on school grounds
- 5) Commits criminal sexual conduct in a school building or on school grounds.

Short-Term Suspensions (up to 10 days): School administration has the authority to suspend a student from school or specific class(es) for up to ten (10) days.

Long-Term Suspensions (more than 10 days but less than 60 days). The Superintendent has the authority to suspend a student for more than ten (10) days but less than sixty (60) days.

Student Expulsion. The Board of Education retains unto itself the authority to expel a student.

Make-Up Work. Students will receive full credit for make-up work turned in according to the time guideline of two (2) days for each day missed or sooner. The policy will be the same for exams, tests, or quizzes.

Factors To Be Considered Before Suspending or Expelling A Student

Prior to suspending or expelling a student for any or the above statutorily mandated reasons, except as noted below, the Superintendent shall consider the following factors:

- 1) The student's age
- 2) The student's discipline history
- 3) Whether the student has a disability
- 4) The seriousness of the violation or behavior
- 5) Whether the violation or behavior committed by the student threatened the safety of any student or staff member
- 6) Whether restorative practices will be used to address the violation or behavior
- 7) Whether a lesser intervention would properly address the violation or behavior.

The Superintendent or his/her designee will exercise discretion over whether or not to suspend a student and the Board will exercise discretion over whether or not to expel a student for statutorily mandated reasons. In exercising that discretion for a suspension of more than ten (10) days or for expulsion, there is a rebuttable presumption that a suspension or expulsion is not justified unless the Superintendent/Board can demonstrate that it considered each of the factors listed above. For a suspension of ten (10) days or fewer, there is no rebuttable presumption, but the Superintendent or his/her designee will still consider the factors.

Exception: If a student possesses a firearm in a weapon free school zone, the student will be permanently expelled without considering the above factors, unless the student can establish mitigating factors by clear and convincing evidence.

Due Process

The District has set standards for students for the best interest of all, as well as an appeal process to insure "Due Process". When there are repeated violations of the rules and regulations, appropriate action will be taken by teachers and building administrators. The building administrators may find it necessary to use parent/guardian

conferences, suspension, or other means of ensuring appropriate student behavior. Students may expect that “Due Process” will be provided in the administration of disciplinary action. Essential parts of the “Due Process” include the following conditions.

- 1) Prior notification and explanation of rules and regulations
- 2) Fair treatment of students under the rules and regulations
- 3) The rights of the student affected to be heard
- 4) The right of a student accused, if he/she chooses, to be accompanied or represented in an appeal process by a parent or guardian.

Suspensions are short periods of time that students are denied the right of attending school by administration. Expulsions are specifically stated periods of time that a student is denied the right of attending school. Only the Board of Education has the authority to expel a student from school.

By authority of Section 613 of the Michigan School Code, the Mason County Eastern Schools Board of Education authorizes the suspension or expulsion of any pupil guilty of gross misdemeanor or persistent disobedience whenever, in its judgment and in the interest of the school, shall occur.

Restorative Practices

If the District determines that it will utilize restorative practices in addition to or as an alternative to suspension or expulsion of a student, it will engage in restorative practices which emphasize repairing the harm to the victim and school community caused by the student’s misconduct.

Restorative practices may include victim-offender conferences that:

- 1) Are initiated by the victim;
- 2) Are approved by the victim’s parent or legal guardian or, if the victim is at least fifteen (15), by the victim;
- 3) Are attended voluntarily by the victim, a victim advocate, the offender, members of the school community, and supporters of the victim and the offender (“the restorative practices team”);
- 4) Would provide an opportunity for the offender to accept responsibility for the harm caused to those affected, and to participate in setting consequences to repair the harm, such as requiring the student to apologize; participate in community service, restoration of emotional or material losses, or counseling; pay restitution; or any combination of these.

Petitions For Reinstatement

Students expelled pursuant to this policy (or their parent/legal guardian if the student is unemancipated) may petition the Board for reinstatement to school. If the student is in sixth grade or above at the time of the expulsion, the parents, legal guardian, the adult student or emancipated minor may submit a request for reinstatement after 150 school days from the date of the expulsion, but the student may not be reinstated before 180 school days from the expulsion date.

Truancy

Truancy is repeated absence from school without a valid excuse. A valid excuse must be documented in writing by a doctor, agency or parent. Repeated absences, which can include an absence reported by a parent, may be considered unexcused if not supported by a justifiable valid written excuse.

Truancy Enforcement Goals

- 1) Improve student attendance
- 2) Ensure an education for every child
- 3) Reduce juvenile crime
- 4) Increase parental involvement and accountability
- 5) Uniform enforcement throughout the West Shore Educational Services District.

Truancy Enforcement Policy

The adoption of this Truancy Enforcement Policy is intended to create and facilitate an efficient and uniform response regarding truancy enforcement action. Only unexcused absences are counted for truancy. It is understood that the Student Support Specialist or his designee shall be selected pursuant to MCL 380.1571 and are separate and distinct from a law enforcement police officer as set forth herein.

Level I - Local School Intervention

The Student Success Specialist or his designee shall:

- 1) Track and document history of attendance for the entire school year.
- 2) Identify the nature of absences (illness, suspension, etc.).

- 3) Evaluate the classification of students and identify any special needs (EI, LD, etc.).
- 4) Determine if the student is achieving passing grades.
- 5) Apply early prevention measures
- 6) Discuss truancy concerns with the student and parents.
- 7) Schedule meetings with the Principal, School Counselor, etc.
- 8) Make appropriate community service referrals.

Upon reaching ten (10) unexcused absences the Student Success Specialist will send a letter, advising the parents and student of the truant status and direct that the child immediately and regularly attend school with any further absences. Notification will be sent to local law enforcement and the Mason County Prosecutor's office. The school will continue the intervention efforts described above.

Upon reaching fifteen (15) unexcused absences, the Student Success Specialist will send by first class registered mail a second letter advising the parents and student of the truant status and direct that the child immediately and regularly attend school without any further absences. Notification will be sent to local law enforcement and the Mason County Prosecutor's office. The school will continue the intervention efforts described above.

Level II - Referral to Law Enforcement

Upon reaching sixteen (16) unexcused absences, the Student Success Specialist will refer the matter to law enforcement, and the Mason County Prosecutor's office. A referral packet will be forwarded and all required documents will be included.

Weapons-Free School Zone Policy

The Board of Education ("Board") of Mason County Eastern School District ("District") as both an employer and a public school district, is concerned with and interested in protecting the health, safety and welfare of students, employees and visitors. The Board recognizes that school buildings, facilities, vehicles, grounds and other school property are best utilized in the educational process in the absence of threats to physical well-being and safety, by individuals possessing weapons and/or dangerous articles.

Accordingly, the Board (or the Superintendent, a Principal or other District official as may be designated by the Board) shall permanently expel a student from attending school in the District, if the student possesses a dangerous weapon, commits arson, or commits criminal sexual conduct in a weapon-free school zone. Such expulsion is mandatory, unless the student establishes, in a clear and convincing manner, at least one of the following:

- 1) That the object or instrument possessed by the student was not possessed for use as a weapon, or for direct or indirect delivery to another person for use as a weapon;
- 2) The weapon was not knowingly possessed by the student;
- 3) The student did not know or have reason to know that the object or the instrument possessed by the student constituted a weapon or dangerous weapon; or
- 4) That the weapon was possessed by the student at the suggestion, request, or direction of, or with the express permission of school or police authorities.

There is a rebuttable presumption that expulsion for possessing the weapon is justified if the Board determines in writing that the student has established that he or she fits under one of the exceptions above by clear and convincing evidence, and that the student has no previous history of suspension or expulsion.

The above exceptions will not apply to student misconduct involving sexual conduct or arson.

Physical and Verbal Assault

The Board may discipline, suspend or expel a student in grade five and below for a period of time as determined at the Board's discretion if the student commits physical or verbal assault at school against a District employee, volunteer, or contractor or makes a bomb threat or similar threat directed at the school building, property or at a school-related activity.

Verbal assault is communicated intent to inflict physical or other harm on another person, with a recent intent and ability to act on the threat.

"At school" means in a classroom, elsewhere on school premises, on a school bus or other school-related vehicle, or at a school-sponsored activity or event whether or not it is held on school premises.

Factors To Be Considered Before Suspending or Expelling a Student

Prior to suspending or expelling a student for any of the above statutorily mandated reasons, except as noted below, the Superintendent shall consider the following factors:

- 1) Student's age

- 2) Student's discipline history
- 3) Whether the student has a disability
- 4) The seriousness of the violation or behavior
- 5) Whether the violation or behavior committed by the student threatened the safety of any student or staff member
- 6) Whether restorative practices will be used to address the violation or behavior
- 7) Whether a lesser intervention would properly address the violation or behavior

The Superintendent will exercise discretion over whether or not to suspend a student and the Board will exercise discretion over whether or not to expel a student for statutorily mandated reasons. In exercising that discretion for a suspension of more than ten (10) days or for expulsion, there is a rebuttable presumption that a suspension or expulsion is not justified unless the Superintendent or Board can demonstrate that it considered each of the factors listed above. For a suspension of ten (10) days or fewer, there is no rebuttable presumption, but the Superintendent will still consider the factors.

Exception: If a student possesses a firearm in a weapon free school zone, the student will be permanently expelled without considering the above factors, unless the student can establish mitigating factors by clear and convincing evidence.

Restorative Practices

If the District determines that it will utilize restorative practices in addition to or as an alternative to suspension or expulsion of a student, it will engage in restorative practices which emphasize repairing the harm to the victim and school community caused by the student's misconduct.

Restorative practices may include victim-offender conferences that:

- 1) Are initiated by the victim;
- 2) Are approved by the victim's parent or legal guardian or, if the victim is at least fifteen (15), by the victim;
- 3) Are attended voluntarily by the victim, a victim advocate, the offender, members of the school community, and supporters of the victim and the offender (the "restorative practices team");
- 4) Would provide an opportunity for the offender to accept responsibility for the harm caused to those affected, and to participate in setting consequences to repair the harm, such as requiring the student to apologize; participate in community service, restoration of emotional or material losses, or counseling; pay restitution; or any combination of these.

The selected consequences and time limits for their completion will be incorporated into an agreement to be signed by all participants.

Petitions For Reinstatement

A student who has been expelled for dangerous weapons, arson, criminal sexual conduct or assault upon an employee, volunteer, or contractor may apply for reinstatement as follows:

1) If the student is in grade 5 or below at the time of the expulsion and was expelled for possessing a firearm or threatening another person with a dangerous weapon, the parents or legal guardian of the student may submit a request for reinstatement after sixty (60) school days from the date of expulsion, but the student may not be reinstated before (90) school days from the expulsion date.

2) If the student is in grade 5 or below at the time of the expulsion and was expelled for a reason other than possessing a firearm or threatening another person with a dangerous weapon, the parent or legal guardian of the student may submit a request for reinstatement at any time, but the student may not be reinstated before ten (10) school days from the expulsion date.