

# Dorothy McElhinney Middle School Student Handbook

## General Information

### Annual Notification

Annual registration forms will be available online through the parent portal account for families to complete each summer. These electronic forms may contain the following documents: Emergency Information Card, Parent/Pupil Rights Notification, Sexual Harassment Policy, Notice of Consequence, Student Health Care Plan, Acceptable Internet Use Contract, and Directory/Media Release. It is extremely important this information is read carefully and submitted promptly.

- **Emergency Contacts and Health Information must be filled out accurately each year.** This information is vitally important in the event of an emergency. Please include a relative's or neighbor's telephone number. **We request that you notify us immediately if your address or telephone numbers change. Please list all telephone numbers where parents can be contacted during the school day.**

### Communication

Dorothy McElhinney Middle School adheres to an open communication policy. At DMMS, no one will be able to address the individual needs of your child better than the classroom teacher. When concerns arise **we strongly suggest parents make an effort to first contact the teacher.** A complete directory of teachers' phone numbers and email addresses is available on our website.

- Newsletter: *The Colt Connection* will be sent home regularly via email and a calendar will be available on the DMMS school website.
- The DMMS website can be accessed at <http://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/dmms>
- Student Agenda/Planner: Students will be supplied with an agenda and are required to list their homework assignments daily. Parents are requested to review on a weekly basis.
- Parent Conferences: A teacher-parent conference may be initiated at any time by a parent or teacher. In order to hold a conference, the parties involved should make arrangements to meet at a mutually convenient time.
- **Parent Portal:** Grades are posted in AERIES at: <http://abi.murrieta.k12.ca.us>
- New DMMS parents will activate their AERIES parent portal following enrollment. The guidance tech will assist.

### Closed Campus

Dorothy McElhinney Middle School has a closed-campus policy. This means that no student is to leave the school grounds during the regular school day for any reason unless the following procedures are observed:

- Once students arrive at school in the morning, they must remain on campus unless checked out by an authorized adult – this includes between their arrival and the beginning of the school day.
- All students will remain on campus during regular school hours. Students needing to leave school during the school day must check out through the attendance office and have an authorized adult sign them out.
- Dental/Doctor Appointments: Parents/guardians are required to come to the school office when they need to pick-up a student for an appointment during the school day. The student will be released to an authorized adult (18 years and older) after office clearance has been properly obtained.
- Lunch: Students must stay on campus during lunch periods unless their parent/guardian comes to the school office and signs them out.
- Students may not remain on school campus after school hours, unless it is for a specific after-school activity and the required permission form is on file in the school office and with the supervising teacher.
- For the safety of students, adults requesting to check out a student will be required to show a valid picture identification.

### Deliveries

- Because we cannot guarantee students will receive messages received late in the day, messages will not be delivered one hour before school is out.
- Lunches, food, instruments, books, homework, clothing, flowers, etc. may be delivered to student services only. Students may come to the office during break or lunch to pick up any deliveries. **Items will not be delivered to classrooms. No balloons or glass containers allowed.** In order to minimize disruptions to the learning environment, parents/guardians are not to make deliveries to classrooms.

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## Telephone Procedures

- **STUDENTS MAY NEVER USE THE PHONE TO CALL PARENTS TO PICK THEM UP WHEN THEY ARE FEELING ILL.** They must go to the Health office to be assessed by the School Nurse and/or Health Technician.
- Students may use the phone in Student Services.
- Classroom phones are **NOT** for student use under any circumstances.
- **Cell phones must be off and not displayed during school hours.** Students who desire to place a call during break or lunch need to come to the office and ask permission to use the phone.

## Identification Cards

- I.D. Cards will be issued in the fall, when school pictures are taken. Students should carry their I.D. card when on campus and at all school events. Students are required to present this card:
- When requested to do so by any school official
- Upon admission to a school function (for example, dances)
- When checking out material from the library

Do not LOAN or GIVE this card to any person. It will be confiscated without refund.

I.D. cards, whether lost or stolen, will be replaced at a nominal fee (payment in advance to DMMS ASB).

## Food Policy

- Food and drink are served and eaten in the lunch shelter area only
- Students may eat and drink at break and lunch only.
- Throwing food and/or drinks is not allowed. Glass containers are not allowed.
- **Chewing gum is not allowed.**
- Our classrooms should be peanut/tree nut/food allergy aware spaces. Food and drink are not allowed in any classroom unless teacher permission is given. All food items provided should be pre-packaged with the ingredient label displayed or the food ingredients must be known or labeled.
- Students are not allowed to sell any food/items for profit or as fundraisers for outside organizations on campus.

## Food Services

- Lunch menus and applications for free/reduced lunches are available online: [murrietaschoolnutrition.com](http://murrietaschoolnutrition.com)
- Applicants will not be given free meals while their application is being processed. Students will be required to pay full price or bring a meal to school until they are notified by mail whether their application has been approved.
- Snacks are available before school, at break, and at lunch. Snack items and prices vary.
- Please do not send your student with bills larger than \$20. Food Service does not keep enough change on hand. Change is not available through DMMS's bookkeeper.
- We highly encourage pre-payment for meals on a weekly or monthly basis. Pre-paying helps keep the lunch lines moving quickly during lunch and eliminates the risk of your child losing their money during the school day. Visit [www.mySchoolBucks.com](http://www.mySchoolBucks.com) to create or view your account.

## Lost and Found

Items left in classrooms or on campus will be put into a storage bin in student services. Items not claimed at the end of each quarter are donated to charity. Smaller items will be located in the school attendance office.

## Visitors

Parents are encouraged to visit the school. All visitors are required to check in at the office and present valid identification. Those wishing to visit classrooms must have approval from the teacher and principal 24 hours prior to their visit. Minors may not visit the school during school hours.

## Volunteers

Dorothy McElhinney Middle School encourages parents to become involved at our school. All volunteers must sign in at the office and must wear a visible visitor's pass. Volunteers who have contact with students, in an enclosed area, for four (4) hours or more per week are required to have a TB skin test. Do not let this prevent you from coming to our school and helping. 3-1/2 hours is a lot of time to donate to our school. For more information, please call the school.

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## Volunteer Registration Form – Required

Adult volunteers for our school are required to complete a Volunteer Registration Form at the school office. This information will then be checked by our Human Resources Department against the Murrieta Police Department's "Megan's Law" computer database.

## **Animals on Campus**

Pets are not allowed on campus without prior written consent from the parent, teacher, and administration. If permission is given, the animals must be caged or leashed and kept in the appropriate area. Parents are to supervise the animal at all times. Animals within the classroom environment and under teacher supervision are to be respected by all.

## **Clubs**

Dorothy McElhinney Middle School will provide a variety of extra-curricular activities for our students. Clubs may be available before and after school and during lunch. Clubs will vary depending on availability, staffing, and student interest. See the DMMS website under 'Activities' for an updated list.

## **Fire Drills**

Dorothy McElhinney Middle School conducts regularly scheduled fire drills. Evacuation instructions are posted in each classroom.

## **Transportation**

- Students must have a bus pass to ride the bus and may only ride on their route. Please visit the district website (parents/transportation) or call 696-1600 ext. 1195 for transportation information.
- Bike racks are available for students to lock up their bikes.
- Students riding skateboards or scooters to school should bring a combination or keyed padlock so they can lock them in the racks supplied by the school.
- Students are required to wear helmets when riding their bike, scooters or skateboards to and from school. They must walk with their bike, scooter or skateboard whenever they are on school property.

## **Safety**

- Students must walk at all times on campus unless otherwise instructed.
- **Earthquake Procedures:** The procedures to use in case of an earthquake will vary depending on the severity and frequency with which the tremors occur.
  1. If you are inside the building:
    - a) One long ring of bell will signal "Duck and Cover".
    - b) Stay away from windows, cabinets, and any objects that might topple over.
    - c) At the end of the earth movement, evacuation procedures will be followed to clear the building.
  2. When outside:
    - a) Stay away from the edge of the building, overhead structure, or power lines.
    - b) Walk silently and stay with class.
    - c) Wait for specific instructions from your teacher.

## **School Sponsored Events**

School events sponsored by Dorothy McElhinney Middle School are subject to the following requirements:

- I.D. Cards must be presented in order to gain admission.
- Only DMMS students may attend. Guests from other schools are not allowed.
- Faculty members and chaperones have full authority to admit, refuse admission to, or remove any student from an event.
- **School rules and dress codes apply at all times.**
- Students are expected to be "OKC" - courteous, friendly, and polite.
- Students who do not display appropriate behaviors will be required to leave. Parents will be contacted and required to pick up their child. Until such time as they arrive, the student will remain with the administrator in charge.
- All events will be scheduled at the discretion of the principal, ASB Advisor, and Student Government.

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- Any student suspended/expelled, with excessive tardies, or who has lost privileges for any other reason may not attend any school event during the time of their consequence.

## Personal Items

DMMS is not responsible for the cost or replacement of any personal items brought to school that are damaged, lost or stolen.

## PTSA

The DMMS teachers and staff encourage you to become a part of our Parent, Teacher, Student Association (PTSA). It is a wonderful way to become a part of your student's school career through such programs as book fairs, and classroom volunteers. These are just examples of some programs and your help will ensure that these and many others will continue.

## Withdrawal from School

Two days advance notice should be given by parents/guardians who plan to withdraw their student from the school district. This notice must be given in the school office where the student will be given instructions for withdrawal procedures. All textbooks must be turned in and school fees and book fines paid before a student leaves or transcripts will be withheld. Parents requiring copies needed for enrollment at their new school must provide 24-hour notice to the Dorothy McElhinney Middle School office.

## Attendance Policies

### Call DMMS: 951-304-1885 - Press #1 for Attendance (24 hours – 7 days a week)

Students will attend classes on a regular, daily basis and attendance will be a priority. Students will attend each class on time throughout the day. Students are expected to be prepared to learn when the bell rings: in assigned seat, supplies ready, personal needs taken care of, and mentally prepared to learn. Students entering class after the bell will be marked tardy by the teacher. For excused tardies, please submit a doctor or dentist note.

## Habitual Tardies

Students consistently tardy to school or class will be assigned consequences.

- 5 unexcused tardies will result in a lunch detention. 10 unexcused tardies will result in Saturday school.
- If the problem does not improve, parents will be contacted and a meeting with administration will be set up.
- We are required by law to report habitual tardies to the district's Student Attendance Review Board.

## Absences

- California schools receive funding as a result of student attendance. Schools will receive funding only for students in attendance. Previously, schools were funded for students who had doctor appointments or who stayed home due to illness. Because of this change, we ask that you make every attempt to make appointments after school hours for your child.
- Students returning to school after an absence must submit a written or verbal explanation from the parent/guardian stating the student's name, grade level, date of absence, and reason for absence on the first day back to class.
- Parents should call our attendance line to report an absence. Follow the prompts by pressing 1 for attendance then press 1 again to report the absence.
- If the absence is due to medical appointments, please submit a doctor's note.
- Habitual absences/truancies may result in family referral to the Student Attendance Review Board (SARB).
- It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements for make-up work. The student will make up any work missed during the absence, within a reasonable time determined by the teacher, based on the nature of the work missed.
- If a final exam is missed for an excused absence, the course grade will be submitted with a zero for the final exam. It is the student's responsibility to arrange a time for a make-up assessment immediately upon their return to school. Exams may not be taken early.
- Parents calling to request missed work may do so once the student is absent for three (3) days. Teachers must be given 24-hour notice.
- Students absent without a valid excuse for more than three days in one school year shall be classified as truant.
- Students may not be on campus for after-hours events on the same school day as any unexcused or unexcused absence.

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## Zero Period

Zero period classes are a year-long commitment. They run from 7:55 until 8:45 AM daily. It is a privilege to be in zero period, and there is a high demand for enrollment. For students who have reached the **7th tardy** or **5th unexcused absence in any semester**, the teacher or administration will:

- Move the student into a regular school day and drop the zero period class immediately, or
- No longer enroll the student into a zero period class the following semester

## Personal Business/Family Trips

- A student who will miss school for a pre-planned family trip or other personal business of 5-15 days will need to notify the office a minimum of 5 days prior to the start of the absence.
- These types of absences could be unexcused according to the State Education Code.
- Make-up work for personal business/family trips must be turned in within two days of the student's return to school.
- Please note that make-up work completed during personal business/family trips may not coincide with class work and academic progress may be adversely impacted.
- **Family trips need to be scheduled during school breaks.**

## Student Pickup

The following must be observed when picking up a student during school hours:

- We value your child's education and request that all efforts are made not to pull your child out during school hours.
- To minimize the amount of time your child will be out of class, we will pull your child once you arrive. There is no need to call the office prior to your arrival.
- Only approved contacts, as specified on the Emergency Card, will be allowed access to the child.
- The contact must be at least 18 years old and the contact must have a photo I.D.
- You will experience delays when pulling your child from their P.E. class, during breaks and lunches, and/or near the end of the school day. Please plan accordingly.
- **Please do not attempt to pick up your child within the final 30 minutes of the school day.**

## Health Office Information

### Health Services

A district nurse and/or health technician will be present on campus at all times. Students should obtain an office pass to receive medical attention. Students must have an emergency card on file in the office in case of accidents. Parents will be notified of accident situations and are responsible for transporting students except in cases of extreme emergency.

### Medications

In compliance with CA Education Code (Section 49423), when an employee of the school district gives medication to a student, the employee must be acting in accordance with the written directions of a physician and with the written permission of the child's parent or legal guardian. These authorizations must be renewed whenever the prescription changes or within 12 months of the signed authorization form. The prescription label on the container is not acceptable as a physician's statement. Over-the-counter medications will be given only if prescribed by a physician or dentist and accompanied by the medication authorization form. It must be signed by medical provider and parent or legal guardian.

We require all medications to be stored in the Health Office and to be administered only when the physician's and parent's/guardian's signed permissions are on file. **Children are not allowed to have medication (prescription or over the counter) in their possession at school, walking to and from school, or on the school bus.** This practice provides for the safety of all students on campus. The only exception to this policy is if the student's well-being is in jeopardy and the medication, such as an inhaler for asthma, or epinephrine is carried on his/her person. The appropriate release forms can be obtained from the school and must include a statement from the physician that the student's well-being is in jeopardy unless he/she carries the medication.

Medications must be provided to the school in the container, in which it was purchased, with the prescription label attached, and must be prescribed to the student to whom it will be administered. School personnel cannot give medication brought to school in a plastic bag, plastic ware, or any other repackaging. Out-of-date medication will not be administered. An adult must bring the medication to school along with the completed authorization form, and check these items in with the health office.

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If you anticipate a visit to your child's physician or dentist and expect that medication may be prescribed or the dosage changed, please stop by the school health office for the appropriate forms.

## Academic Information

### Curriculum and Instruction

In connection with our district's goals, DMMS' curriculum and instruction aims to increase academic performance through our district-wide K-12 sequence of skills which is based on state academic standards. Students study a full, balanced repertoire of subjects including:

- Reading/Literature
- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science and Health
- History and Geography
- Visual and Performing Arts
- Physical Education

In addition to our strong academic foundation, Dorothy McElhinney Middle School has an emphasis on the Visual and Performing Arts. The arts are addressed through both integration within the regular curriculum and focused study on the various arts themselves. Students at DMMS will be exposed to regular, standards-based instruction in dance, visual art, computer art, drama, and music. Our staff is committed to the power of the arts in the lives of students. We work hard to utilize the arts focus to impact students' self-esteem, critical thinking skills, social awareness, and academic achievement.

### Homework Policy

- Philosophy: Homework is a valuable part of the instructional program, with extension and expansion of student learning facilitated by the assignment of meaningful and manageable student work. Generally, homework is to be done independently, or with minimal supervision. Parents are encouraged, however, to show interest in their child's homework and to provide an appropriate setting, free of distraction, to promote quality work. Teachers regard homework as an important indicator of student performance and will provide feedback and reinforcement to the student in a timely manner.
- Implementation: Generally, homework will be assigned Monday through Thursday evenings. Middle school students may average a total of 60-120 minutes of homework per evening. Please refer to individual teacher guidelines for specific homework policies.
- Make-up homework policy: **When a student is absent from school, it is his/her responsibility to contact teachers upon returning to school regarding make-up work.** The time allotted for making up missed work will vary depending on the circumstances surrounding the absence, the actual time out of school, and the teacher's classroom policy. Each student will make arrangements with his/her teachers for turning in this work. If a student is out for three (3) days or more, the parent may call and request work. Teachers must be given 24-hour notice. *A student's grade may be affected by frequent absences.*
- Pre-planned family trip/personal business: Parents will need to contact each teacher five (5) school days in advance to request work for the period of time they will be absent. (see Absences)
- Student Agenda/Planner: Students are supplied with a Student Agenda/Planner and are required to list their homework assignments daily. Parents are requested to review and sign on a weekly basis. Planners may be replaced at a nominal fee.

### Grade Reports

- All grade reports will be available for viewing through the AERIES Parent Portal. Report cards are in AERIES under 'grades', 'grades' again in the dropdown menu. Teacher gradebooks are accessible either in AERIES under 'gradebook summary' or in Canvas.
- To re-set an AERIES password contact the guidance tech in student services.
- Report cards are calculated at the end of each eighteen-week semester, and report card grades are entered on the student's transcript. Transcripts are included in the student's cumulative record.
- Progress reports are calculated at the sixth and twelfth week. These reports are a statement of pupil progress from the teacher to the parent/guardian. The progress report does not become part of the student's cumulative record.

**Note: Paper copies of grade reports are available in student services upon request.**

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## Academic Dishonesty

**Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated.** Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, copying from other sources (on-line courses, any internet site, another student), or turning in work done by parents or peers. It includes homework, projects, tests, notes, using notes without permission, forging, altering or duplicating school or teacher documents or signatures, plagiarism and text messaging regarding test data or information. Allowing another student to use or copy your work is also considered academic dishonesty.

## Schedule/Class Change Policy

Students are enrolled in a full day, year-long schedule. Schedule changes will only be considered for the following criteria:

- An incomplete schedule
- An elective course already completed
- A level change based on test data and teacher recommendation
- Elective course changes – **only considered for the first 10 days of each semester**, based on availability. Teacher and parent approval is required for students wishing to add or drop a year-long elective class.

Note: Class change requests need to be submitted to the appropriate counselor. We strongly encourage students to attend their elective class at least once before requesting a change.

Teacher Change Request – At DMMS, we believe it is in the best interest of the student to work through any difficulties that may arise in the teacher-student relationship. We realize that the rigor of school coursework places demands upon our students and they may become frustrated or despondent regarding their classroom performance. When these situations present themselves, students and parents must schedule a meeting with the teacher of the class in question and counselor (if needed). If the problem has not been satisfactorily addressed after meeting with the teacher, please contact the appropriate counselor or assistant principal.

## Library - Textbooks

It is very important that all students follow all library policies on returning library and textbooks. Books checked out through the library should be returned in the same condition as when borrowed. Failure to return books in a timely manner will result in disciplinary action such as school detention and loss of extra-curricular activities. Students must show their Student Identification Card to check out a book from the library.

### Textbook Library Fines will be assessed per MVUSD Board guidelines.

- MVUSD Board Policy 6161.2 states: When property of the district is lent to students, the Governing Board expects that it shall be returned in a timely manner, with no more than usual wear and tear. If the property has been willfully cut, defaced, or otherwise damaged, or if the student refuses to return it at the request of the district employee, the district shall afford the student his/her due process rights and subsequently may withhold the student's grades, diploma, and transcripts until the student or parent/guardian has paid all damages. As provided by the law, the parent/guardian of a minor shall be liable for all damages caused by the minor's misconduct. (Education Code 48904)

## Student Behavior

### Student Recognition

Dorothy McElhinney Middle School implements several activities and awards/rewards for those students who demonstrate excellence or improvement. At the end of each semester, assemblies are held and awards given to recognize students who have achieved high levels of performance.

Additional special awards/rewards/activities include:

- Leading the Way Luncheon
- Renaissance Program
- Positive Phone Calls Home

### Student Leadership

Students may apply to participate in Student Leadership in lieu of a regular elective class. This class allows students to explore the various leadership roles and functions that help govern our school. ASB officers will be elected by the students in accordance with the ASB constitution. ASB is in charge of scheduling and organizing school-wide assemblies such as dances and pep rallies, lunchtime activities, and other school functions.

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## Student Expectations

Dorothy McElhinney Middle School is committed to quality educational programs for all students. In order to achieve our goal, students, staff and parents must share the responsibility and support the following student expectations:

- Respectfulness (Courtesy and respect to self, others, and personal and school property is expected)
- Focus on Learning (Includes being prepared, having materials, and being attentive)
- Positive Attitude (Follows directions, demonstrates cooperation)
- Demonstrates Pride (Respect for self, others, groups, and school)
- Commitment to education (Takes advantage of instructional opportunities)
- Appropriate Communication (Includes verbal and written, as well as gestures)

At DMMS, responsibility, self-discipline, and mutual respect for others are important parts of each student's education. It is the students' responsibility to follow the rules of the school, treat others as they would want to be treated, and do nothing to interfere with the learning, safety and well-being of other individuals. In order to meet these objectives, the following classroom discipline policy is in force:

STEP ONE: Warning-from teacher

STEP TWO: Classroom consequence

STEP THREE: Parent contact/ Detention/ Referral to administration.

Classroom consequences may include the following:

- move seat, or sit by self
- send student to other room with work to do
- set meeting with student and all their teachers
- have student phone home while in class with teacher supervision
- detention
- behavior contract
- other appropriate consequences

In addition, school-wide disciplinary policies may result in consequences including, but not limited to, lunch detention, Saturday school, or suspension.

## Hall Passes

Students not in the classroom during class time are required to have a pass at all times. Students must obtain a pass from their teacher before coming to the office. Remember to be polite and patient in the office areas.

## Cameras

Cameras of any kind are not allowed on campus without administrative approval. This includes film and digital still cameras, video cameras, and picture/camera phones. While we acknowledge that students will have cell phones that function as cameras, the use of these devices are restricted as described below under the topic of cell phones.

## Cell Phones/Smart Watches

The district recognizes that many families desire their students to carry cell phones for reasons of safety and emergency use. The district supports and allows possession of cell phones for those reasons. Although board policy allows possession of cell phones, it also gives the authority to school administration to restrict the use of phones.

Those restrictions are:

- Phones must not be used during the school day including instructional (class) time, break, and lunch. **Phones must be turned off and put away while on campus.**
- **The use of any camera on campus is prohibited**, unless part of a class assignment or approved school activity, without the advanced permission of the principal. This includes the use of cell phones for the purpose of taking or transmitting photographs.
- **Smart Watches are not permitted on campus**
- No student shall be prohibited from possessing or using a cell phone that is determined by a licensed physician or surgeon to be essential for the student's health and the use of which is limited to health related purposes. The school administration may require proper documentation in order to authorize such use.

**Failure to comply with the above may result in confiscation of the device and further school discipline. Phones will be returned to a parent.**



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## Electronic Devices

Electronic devices of any kind are not allowed on campus. Electronic devices include, but are not limited to lasers, MP3 players, and electronic games. Students found with these items will have them confiscated. Objects necessary for a class activity must be accompanied by permission from the appropriate teacher. Confiscated items must be retrieved from the office by the parent/guardian only. **DMMS is not responsible for the loss or theft of any electronic devices brought to school.**

## Gum

Chewing gum is not allowed at school. It is unsightly when found on the sidewalks and walls around school. No one wants to step in gum on the sidewalks, touch it underneath a desk or table, or have it stuck in his/her hair.

## Disruption

Students that are disrespectful to staff and/or peers, or who cause a disruption to school activities, will be assigned a lunch detention and their parents will be contacted. This includes throwing food and/or objects.

## Additional Inappropriate Items

The following items are not permitted on campus and should not be brought to school: Sharpie/permanent markers, silly string, colored hair spray, laser pointers, and masks or items that conceal the face.

## Public Displays of Affection

Students are expected to interact appropriately with their peers on campus. Students who have inappropriate or unwanted contact with other students will have school consequences assigned.

## Restroom Privileges

Students should make every effort to use the restroom before school, during breaks, at lunch, and during passing periods. (Teachers may grant or deny restroom privileges at their discretion.)

## Saturday School

Saturday school will be held from 8 A.M. to 11 A.M. once a month. Students will be required to bring school work or a book to read. A teacher will supervise the students that are required to attend Saturday school, and all school rules apply. Saturday school will be assigned to students that have had warnings and detentions assigned for breaking school rules.

## Saturday Success

Saturday Success is a program that is designed to provide support for students in all classes. It is held monthly, and students who attend have the opportunity to get assistance from teachers, take tests, and complete make-up work.

## Academic Eligibility/Participation Policy

Student participation in extra-curricular activities and field trips is based upon grades. Students with any F grades or more than one 'D' grade in any of their classes will not be able to attend. Final determination of grades will be made according to AERIES one week prior to the trip. Students are responsible for making up work missed while participating in the event/fieldtrip. Dress code must be followed. Students are expected to be on their best behavior. **If tickets are purchased and students may not attend due to grades or illness, reimbursement is not guaranteed.**

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Contract

All 8<sup>th</sup> grade students must submit an 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Contract, signed by the student and parent, to Student Services. The contract outlines expectations for discipline, attendance, academic performance, and the return of school property such as school and library books. Student permission to participate in promotion and the end of the year 8<sup>th</sup> grade activities is granted based on adherence to the contract.

### **The following steps will be taken for violation of the school rules:**

The first offense will result in a warning and/or lunch detention. It will be documented on the student's discipline file. If there is a second offense, parents will be contacted, the incident will be documented in the student's file, and lunch detentions and/or Saturday school will be assigned. If a student does not attend an assigned Saturday school, he/she will be assigned a one day suspension upon return to school.

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## MVUSD DEFINITION OF BULLYING

### What is Bullying?

- Bullying is exposing a person to abusive actions repeatedly over time and becomes a concern when hurtful or aggressive behavior toward an individual or group appears to be unprovoked, intentional, and (usually) repeated.
- Bullying is a form of violence which involves a real or perceived imbalance of power, with the more powerful child or group attacking those who are less powerful. Bullying may be *physical* (hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing), *verbal* (taunting, malicious teasing, name calling, threatening), or *emotional* (spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, extorting, or intimidating).
- Bullying can include any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including: communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, directed toward one or more students that has or can reasonably be predicted to have the effect of placing a reasonable student in fear of harm to himself/herself or his/her property; cause the student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on his/her physical or mental health; or cause the student to experience substantial interferences with his/her academic performance or ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.
- Bullying also includes one or more acts by a pupil or group of pupils directed against another pupil that constitutes sexual harassment, hate violence, or severe or pervasive intentional harassment, threats, or intimidation that is disruptive, causes disorder, and invades the rights of others by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment, and includes acts that are committed personally or by means of an electronic act, as defined, that has any of the effects described above on a reasonable student.
- Electronic act means the transmission of a communication, including, but not limited to, a message, text, sound, image, or post on a social network Internet web site, by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager. A post on a social network Internet web site shall include, but is not limited to, the posting or creation of a burn page or the creation of a credible impersonation or false profile for the purpose of causing a reasonable student any of the effects of bullying described above.
- Reasonable student means a student, including, but not limited to, a student who has been identified as a student with a disability, who exercises average care, skill, and judgment in conduct for a person of his/her age, or for a person of his/her age with his/her disability.

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Bullying is an act of **repeated aggressive behavior** in order to intentionally hurt another person, physically or mentally. Bullying is characterized by an individual behaving in a certain way to gain power over another person. Bullying can also be defined as when a person is "exposed, **repeatedly and over time**, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons." A negative action is defined as "when a person intentionally inflicts injury or discomfort upon another person, through physical contact, through words or in other ways".

The U.S. National Center for Education Statistics suggests that bullying can be classified into two categories:

## Direct Bullying

Direct bullying is a repeated act that involves a great deal of physical aggression, such as shoving and poking, throwing things, slapping, choking, punching and kicking, beating, stabbing, pulling hair, scratching, biting, scraping, and pinching. Direct bullying can also be threatening, challenging or calling someone names directly to their face.

## Indirect Bullying

Indirect bullying is characterized by attempting to socially isolate the victim. This isolation is achieved through a wide variety of techniques, including spreading gossip, refusing to socialize with the victim, bullying other people who wish to socialize with the victim, and criticizing the victim's manner of dress and other socially-significant markers (including the victim's race, religion, disability, sex, or sexual preference, etc.) Other forms of indirect bullying which are more subtle and more likely to be verbal, such as name calling, the silent treatment, arguing others into submission, manipulation, gossip/false gossip, lies, rumors, false rumors, staring, giggling, laughing at the victim, saying certain words that trigger a reaction from a past event, and mocking.

**For the school to determine if an action will be defined as bullying, the action must have four elements:**

- 1. Be an act of aggression**
- 2. The act must be done to INTENTIONALLY hurt another person**
- 3. The act must be done more than once**
- 4. There needs to be an imbalance of power either socially, in numbers, or physically.**

*NOTE: Even if the act is not determined to be bullying, if it is a negative act it will still be dealt with by the school as a discipline issue.*

## What is *not* considered Bullying?

According to Ronit Baras of the Family Matters project, when talking about bullying, it is very important for parents (and teachers and kids) to understand what bullying is not. Many times, **a single act** or behavior is out of proportion, but it **is not considered bullying**. Some people think that bullying is any aggressive behavior and although such behaviors are a source of concern and need attention, it is important to separate them from bullying. As defined earlier, **bullying is recurring and deliberate abuse of power**.

## Student Concerns that are NOT Examples of Bullying

- 1. Not liking someone** - It is very natural that people do not like everyone around them and, as unpleasant as it may be to know someone does not like you, verbal and non-verbal messages of "I don't like you" are not acts of bullying.
- 2. Being excluded** - Again, it is very natural for people to gather around a group of friends and we cannot be friends with everyone, so it is acceptable that when kids have a party or play a game, they will include their friends and exclude others. It is very important to remind kids they do the same thing sometimes too and, although exclusion is unpleasant, it is not an act of bullying.
- 3. Accidentally bumping into someone** - When people bump into others, the reaction depends mostly on the bumped person's mood. If they have had a bad day, they think it was an act of aggressive behavior, but if they are in the good mood, they smile back and attract an apology. This is also relevant for playing a sport, like when kids throwing the ball at each other and hit someone on the head. It is very important for teachers and parents to explain that some accidents happen without any bad intention and it is important not to create a big conflict, because it was not an act of bullying.

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**4. Making other kids play things a certain way** - Again, this is very natural behavior. Wanting things to be done our way is normal and is not an act of bullying. To make sure kids do not fall into considering it as an aggressive or "bossy" behavior, we need to teach them assertiveness. If your kids come home and complain that Jane is very bossy and she always wants things to be done her way, you can show them that they want it too and that Jane is miserable, because she is not flexible enough and she will suffer in life for insisting that things be done her way. Again, although it is not fun or pleasant, this is not bullying.

**5. A single act of telling a joke about someone** - Making fun of other people is not fun for them, but the difference between having a sense of humor and making fun of someone is very fine. It is important to teach kids (and grownups) that things they say as jokes should also be amusing for the others. If not, they should stop. Unless it happens over and over again and done deliberately to hurt someone, telling jokes about people is not bullying.

**6. Arguments** - Arguments are just heated disagreements between two (or more) people (or groups). It is natural that people have different interests and disagree on many things. Think about it, most of us have disagreements with ourselves, so it is very understandable to have disagreements with others. The argument itself is not a form of bullying, although some people turn arguments into bullying, because they want to win the argument so much. They use every means to get what they want and find a weakness in the other person, abuse knowledge or trust they have gained and use it against the other person. It is very important to distinguish between natural disagreements and bullying during an argument.

**7. Expression of unpleasant thoughts or feelings regarding others** - Again, communication requires at least two players. Although it may be unpleasant to hear what someone thinks about you, it is not a form of bullying but a very natural thing. In every communication, there are disagreements and some form of judgment about each other's attitude and behavior. If someone says to you, "I think this was not a nice gesture" or "You insulted me when you said this", this is not bullying but an expression of thoughts and feelings.

**8. Isolated acts of harassment, aggressive behavior, intimidation or meanness** - The definition of bullying states that there is **repetition in the behavior**. Bullying is a conscious, repeated, hostile, aggressive behavior of an individual or a group abusing their position with the intention to harm others or gain real or perceived power. Therefore, anything that happens once is not an act of bullying.

All the behaviors above are unpleasant and may need to be addressed, but they are not treated as bullying.

## What to do if you are being Bullied

Now that we know that **Bullying is a "repeated aggressive behavior that takes place over time"**, what actions should you and your child take if it is happening to them?

**Tell a parent-** Too many times students are taught to handle things themselves. Being bullied may be a new experience for your child. You as a parent have more life experience to help your child deal with it. As a parent, it is important to pay attention to what your kids are telling you and find out if things are happening more than once. **If you as a parent have a concern, please contact DMMS as soon as possible.**

**Tell a trusted adult at school** (counselor, teacher, administrator) **The number one reason bullying occurs at school is because the school does not know about it. If the school does not know about it, they cannot stop it.**

**Work with your school** – Remember your school wants to stop bullying as much as you do. Work with them as a team and devise solutions together. ***Standing up for yourself is not snitching!*** You can also make an anonymous report online through Blackboard Connect. Go to the DMMS website and click on the link.

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## **MVUSD DRESS CODE**

All students are expected to know MVUSD Dress Code expectations. Parents we need your support with this, so we ask that you review the Dress Code with your student prior to shopping for school attire so that school-appropriate clothing is chosen. School clothing should be safe and should not cause undue attention or be offensive to others. The focus of school is education and students should be properly and modestly dressed. NOTE: Students who are not appropriately dressed will be brought to Student Services until someone can bring the student appropriate clothing. Our focus is on learning, and we don't want students to miss instructional time, yet we need to make sure our students are dressed for academic success.

See PE department website or syllabus for P.E. dress code guidelines.

### **DRESS AND GROOMING**

**AR 5132(a)**

The Governing Board believes that the responsibility for the dress and grooming of a student rests primarily with the student and his or her parents or guardians and that appropriate dress and grooming contribute to a productive learning environment.

Therefore, the Board expects students to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to wear clothes that are suitable for the school activities in which they participate.

School-directed changes to a student's attire or grooming should be the least restrictive and disruptive to the student's school day. Any school dress code enforcement actions should minimize the potential loss of educational time. Administration and enforcement of the dress code shall be gender neutral and consistent.

This policy applies to all individual schools. Schools may not enact more restrictive or less restrictive dress and grooming codes.

### **Minimum Safe Attire**

**Student attire and grooming must permit the student to participate in learning without posing a risk to the health or safety of any student or school district personnel.**

- a) **Students must wear clothing including both a shirt with pants or skirt, or the equivalent (for example dresses, leggings, or shorts) and shoes.**
- b) **When the body is standing straight, clothing must cover the chest, back, torso, stomach, and lower extremities from armpit to armpit to mid-thigh. Tops must have a strap and at no time may any part of a student's buttocks be exposed.**
- c) **Clothing must cover all undergarments. No underwear or undergarments may be visible at any time. Clothing may not be see through.**
- d) **Outside sports apparel and hats that are not directly related to the current school of attendance are prohibited.**
- e) **Clothing must be suitable for all scheduled classroom activities including physical education, science labs, shop classes, field trips and other activities where unique hazards or specialized attire or safety gear is required. Bare feet are not permitted at any time.**

**Attire and/or grooming depicting or advocating violence, weapons, criminal activity, gang-related activity (including clothes, accessories, or colors identified by MPD as gang-affiliated), use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs, pornography, foul language, hate speech, or clothing that could be considered dangerous or that could be used as a weapon are prohibited.**

### **Dress Code Enforcement**

No list of dress and appearance guidelines for students can be written that will anticipate all potential dress and grooming extremes. In the case of questionable dress or grooming that is not specifically covered in the list above, the administration will make the final decision. Appropriate action will be taken at that time, and when necessary, contact will be made seeking parental cooperation and assistance.

The administration retains the sole discretion to make the final determination whether clothing, jewelry, accessories and/or appearance meet acceptable standards. All school certificated and classified personnel shall be responsible for reporting violations of this dress code. When a dress code violation occurs, the students will be required to change into proper attire. Continued violations of the dress code will be considered defiance and will be referred to administration for disciplinary action.

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