

Proposed changes to the Middle School Handbook for the 2022-23 school year are outlined below.

Tardy Policy

Current Language:

Tardy Policy:

Any time a student arrives to school after 7:45am, he/she must report directly to the main office to sign in and get a pass to class. Any student who arrives in homeroom after the 7:45am bell is considered tardy. Students will be asked to provide the reason for their tardiness.

Proposed Language:

Tardy Policy:

Being late or “tardy” to school deprives the student of valuable class time and disrupts others when the student joins the class late. A student is considered tardy if they are not in class at the beginning of the first block of the day, at 7:45 a.m. A student who is late to school must first report to the Main Office and will be issued a “tardy slip” allowing the student to proceed to class. A student who is late and who proceeds directly to class without a “tardy slip” may be disciplined. Students who are late to school more than five times in a trimester will be assigned detention for each tardy beyond 5 days, unless they receive an administrative waiver for special, documented circumstances (physical illness, mental illness, religious reasons, bereavement) that justify the lateness. Parents must notify the main office no later than 7:30 a.m. to report their student’s late arrival and will be required to produce formal documentation in order to receive an administrative waiver. After school detentions because of excessive tardies will be from 2:15 to 3:00 p.m.

Dress Code/Student Appearance

Current Language:

Dress Code:

At Manchester-Essex Middle School, students should follow a dress code policy of Dress for Success. We believe that what you choose to wear should reflect respect for yourself, others and our school. While respecting self-expression, we request that students follow these guidelines:

- Dress that is clearly disruptive of the school environment will not be allowed. This may include but is not limited to apparel that advocates or displays illegal or inappropriate items or activities as well as clothing that displays messages or images that harass, demean, or intimidate an individual or group of individuals based on race, color, gender, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.
- Hats, coats and sunglasses are not permitted to be worn during school; these items should be placed in your locker upon arrival at school, and left there throughout the day.

- Pants/shorts/skirts must be worn securely at the waist. Baggy pants that display undergarments are not permitted. Shorts and skirts should be of an appropriate length (mid-thigh) for all school-sponsored activities.
- Shirts and tops must completely cover the mid-section; tank tops and other tops should cover all undergarments.
- Students must always wear shoes at school.

Proposed Language:

Student Appearance:

Students are expected to keep themselves appropriately attired at all times and are expected to comply with reasonable requests from school personnel.

Any clothing, jewelry, or accessories promoting behavior that is deemed harmful by school administration is prohibited. Also, shoes or appropriate footwear must be worn at all times for proper sanitation and health. Any clothing article is prohibited if it is deemed obscene, profane, lewd, or vulgar, or if it is deemed to harass, threaten, intimidate or demean an individual or group of individuals because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

Violation of the above shall be handled immediately through the cooperation of the student, his/her/their parents, and the school administration. The administration reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of clothing within the guidelines provided. Such a determination shall be made in coordination with the school district's goals for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES

NOTE: This school year we procedurally changed the Yellow/Red Card System. The full discipline policy language from the handbook is not included below. The proposed language section below only replaces the current yellow/red card language.

Current Language:

At Manchester-Essex Middle School, we follow a philosophy of progressive discipline through the use of a yellow and red card system. Borrowed from the game of soccer, a yellow card signifies a minor error in judgment and serves as a reminder that one's behavior is unacceptable and needs to change. If a student receives three yellow cards a month, he/she may automatically earn a red card.

If a student makes a more significant error in judgment, he/she may be issued a red card. A red card automatically leads to a detention after school until 3:00pm, where you will reflect upon your behavior and decisions, and how you can avoid making the same mistakes again. Three yellow cards is the equivalent of one red card.

If a student is issued a yellow or red card, he/she should remain calm, change his/her behavior, and speak to the teacher at an appropriate time (this may be after class, in the hallway, or in the main office). A student should always know the reason for his/her error in judgment and why he/she was issued a yellow or red card. If you do not know why, you should have a conversation with the staff member who issued it.

Proposed Language:

Unacceptable behaviors are managed at both the classroom and office level. Minor errors in judgment (including, but not limited to class misconduct, profanity, minor hallway misbehavior) are managed by the classroom teacher. Teacher-directed consequences include warnings, emails or phone calls home, and teacher detentions during lunch or after school.

If a student makes a more significant error in judgment (including, but not limited to cheating, fighting, vandalism, repeated class misconduct), a referral to the office will be made. Office referrals result in a meeting between the student and Dean of Students and/or Principal. Office-directed consequences include loss of privileges, office detention during lunch or after school, and phone calls/meetings with parents. Major behavior violations will result in more significant consequences such as in-school/out-of-school suspension and expulsion.

Using our RULER social-emotional approach, office referrals will also include a debrief/"Blueprint" meeting between the student, referring teacher, and administrator. During this time, the student will reflect on their feelings and behavior, how it impacted their teacher and/or peers, and make a plan for handling situations better in the future.

ACCEPTABLE USE:

- Yellow highlights are proposed additions.
- Red text will be removed.

Electronic Devices/Acceptable Use Policy:

Students are permitted to bring personal electronic devices to school if they do not impede the school day. It is suggested that students limit any electronic devices to something that can be locked in a locker. Students who choose to bring a personal electronic device to school do so at their own risk.

When the school day begins at 7:45 a.m., students are required to turn off cell phones and

personal computers and store them in lockers or backpacks. Smart watches are allowed in school but are to be used as a normal timepiece only. All communication applications on the smart watch (texting/email/voice/etc.) as well as video and picture-capturing applications should be disabled during school hours. Students who are observed engaging in non-approved smart watch, cell phone, or personal computer usage will have the device taken away and stored in the middle school office until the end of the school day when the student can retrieve it. The student may also be issued a consequence for inappropriate electronic device usage. If students receive multiple warnings but continue to be distracted by or disruptive with personal electronic devices, parents will be contacted and additional consequences may be put into place.

Students will be assigned a Chromebook and charger at the beginning of the school year and are required to use this school-provided device while at school. Strict adherence to the internet acceptable use policy must be maintained while using these devices. Students who violate the internet use policy [~~Remove: while using a personal reading device~~] will be subject to disciplinary guidelines as laid out in the Code of Conduct, [~~Remove: including yellow and red cards~~] parental notification, and possible involvement of law enforcement notification, as required. Parents/ Guardians will be provided a written copy of the Acceptable Internet Policy, along with a form for the student and parent(s) or guardian to sign as an acknowledgement that they have received and are aware of the requirements and consequences.

MANCHESTER ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Manchester-Essex Regional Middle School

Student and Parent/Guardian Handbook 2021-22 School Year

Joanne Maino, Principal
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(978) 526-2022



WELCOME

Welcome to Manchester-Essex Regional Middle School! We are pleased to welcome parents, guardians, community members, colleagues and, most of all, students to our learning community.

Our school is built upon a philosophy of meeting the needs of the middle school student. We believe the middle school student is a unique learner whose needs are particular and specific to this age group, and as a result, must be approached in very specific ways. We strive to educate the whole child while providing structure and support, challenge and consistency, all within the context of understanding the unique social and emotional needs and the rapidly changing brains and bodies of middle school students. Middle school students must feel supported and safe in order to learn and expand their potential. As part of the middle school team model, our staff meets regularly with one another to discuss student progress as well as any academic, social, emotional, or behavioral concerns.

With student learning as our ultimate goal, we strive to create an environment where students will become engaged, creative, resilient learners who are ready to take their next academic step upon moving on from Manchester-Essex Regional Middle School.

We look forward to a wonderful school year, and cannot wait to begin our journey. Welcome to Middle School!

Respectfully,
Joanne Maino, Principal

TABLE OF CONTENTS

NOTE: Page numbers need to be updated

Page 2	Welcome
Page 3	Schedule
Pages 3	Contacting Middle School Staff
Page 4	Middle School Model
Page 4	Attendance Policies (including after school activities)
Pages 5	Parent/Guardian Organizations
Page 5	Staying Informed
Page 5	Parent/Guardian Meetings
Pages 5	Clubs/Activities
Page 5-6	Athletics
Pages 6-7	Building/Facilities
Page 7	Grades/Report Cards
Pages 8-9	Guidance, Counseling and Support
Pages 9-10	School Nurse/Health Room
Page 10	Homework
Pages 10-11	Network of Support
Pages 11-14	Discipline Policies
Pages 14-15	Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan
Page 15-16	Notice of Non-Discrimination
Pages 16-17	Internet Acceptable Use Policy
Pages 17	Health Education
Pages 19	Zero Tolerance
Page 19	Student Searches and Locker Privileges
Pages 20	Fundraising
Page 20	Friable Asbestos
Pages 21-22	Summary of Regulations Pertaining to Student Records
Page 23	Community Resources

SCHEDULE

The Middle School runs on a six day cycle. In a six day cycle, students attend five core classes and two periods of exploratory classes. Cores consist of:

- Science
- Social Studies
- English
- Math
- Middle School Academy (6th grade)
- Foreign Language (7th and 8th grade)

Exploratory classes consist of the following:

<u>Sixth Grade</u>	<u>Seventh Grade</u>	<u>Eighth Grade</u>
PE	PE	PE
Health	Health	Health
Music	Music	Music
Art	Art	Art
Engineering	Engineering	Engineering

The middle school schedule is a rotating, waterfall schedule with a dropped class each day. During the fourth block of the day, students will have a 30 minute supervised lunch and recess.

Four of five core classes meet five out of six days; the day it does not meet is called the “drop.” You can determine what day of the cycle a given school day is by visiting the Middle School website and clicking on the MS Day Schedule under Quick Links on the home page.

ME BLOCK

ME Block takes place each school day for 20 minutes, from 1:55 - 2:15 p.m.. The purpose of ME Block is to allow time within the school day for students to practice academic skill building, get a head start on homework, read quietly, work with partners on project work, and to generally decompress from a hectic schedule.

Please see the following bell schedule:

Times	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
7:45 8:42	A	G	F	D	C	B
8:44 9:34	B	A	G	F	D	C
9:36 10:30	C	B	A	G	F	D
10:30 12:00 Lunches	D	C	B	A	G	F
12:05 12:55	E	E	E	E	E	E
12:58 1:52	F	D	C	B	A	G
1:55 2:15	ME	ME	ME	ME	ME	ME

CONTACTING MIDDLE SCHOOL STAFF

At Manchester-Essex Regional Middle School, we strive to be proactive in our communication and welcome your input, concerns, praise and thoughts.

Please directly contact the staff member involved with any question or concern you may have. If contacting the staff member directly does not resolve the situation, please contact the appropriate counselor or department head, and then the principal. Please allow 24-48 hours for staff to return emails and phone calls.

In order to determine who to contact for information, please contact the teacher who most directly works with your child. The following graph may be helpful in determining who to contact. If you have a question about:

Question/Concern	Contact
An assignment	Your child, Teacher
A grade	Teacher
Current status in class	Teacher
Academic struggles	Teacher, Counselor, Dean
Friendships, social dynamics	Counselor, Dean
Team-based activity	Team Leader
Scheduling a team meeting	Team Leader
A behavioral issue	Teacher, Dean, Principal
Bullying concern	Dean, Principal

To reach a staff member by phone, please call (978) 526-2022 and use the directory to dial by name. Please reference the MERMS website for faculty and staff email addresses.

MIDDLE SCHOOL MODEL

Manchester-Essex Middle School believes in educating our students as middle level learners. The core of this philosophy is centered on "This We Believe" from the Association for Middle Level Education. Educating students in the middle school model means that students learn on a team, where staff share students in classes and regularly meet to discuss student successes and struggles, provide interventions to support the whole child, and plan interdisciplinary lessons. We believe that middle school students learn in a unique way, and as such, must be taught in a developmentally appropriate, engaging way that reflects these beliefs.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

The middle school day begins at 7:45am and ends at 2:15pm. There is a warning bell at 7:40am, which signals that there is 5 minutes until students must be in homeroom.

Students may begin arriving to school at 7:15am, but not earlier. Middle School students should report to the cafeteria upon arrival to school, and are only permitted to be elsewhere in the building before the start of school with permission from a staff member.

Students may get to and from school by taking the bus, being dropped off/picked up by car, walking or riding their bike. Bus drop-off/pickup is in front of the middle school wing, car drop-off/pickup is along the driveway adjacent to the turf field, and if a bike is used, it should be locked to the bike rack provided near the community entrance to the school.

For your child to ride the bus, he/she will need a bus pass, including for the late buses. To sign up for a bus pass, please contact Avi Urbas in the District Office. MERSD uses Salter Transportation for our bus transportation. Please note: school policies, procedures and consequences apply to riding the bus, which is a privilege which may be revoked. Those who disobey bus rules are disobeying school rules. Students who are disruptive on the bus may be subject to disciplinary action, assigned seating on the bus, suspended and/or lose bus-riding privileges, provided it does not cause an undue hardship.

Tardy Policy: Any time a student arrives to school after 7:45am, he/she must report directly to the main office to sign in and get a pass to class. Any student who arrives in homeroom after the 7:45am bell is considered tardy. Students will be asked to provide the reason for their tardiness.

Dismissal Policy: If a student must be excused early, he/she must bring a note from his/her parent/guardian to the Middle School Main Office in the morning, explaining the reason and

the dismissal time. Parents/guardians may also email Mrs. Hunt in the main office. When students are dismissed during the school day, a parent/guardian or other adult (approved by the parent/guardian in writing) must enter the Main Office to sign the student out of school. Students are not permitted to leave school grounds during the school day without being signed out by a parent/guardian (or adult approved by the parent/guardian), including medical dismissal by the nurse. Parents/guardians are requested to schedule students' appointments outside of school hours whenever possible.

Regular school attendance is shown to be one of the most important factors in determining a student's success in school. If a student's attendance is impacted by tardies, dismissals or absences, it will be addressed by the school. The student will meet with the dean of students or principal, the student's parent/guardians will be contacted and/or a meeting held, and in instances where student attendance does not improve, collateral agencies will be involved, including the Essex County Juvenile Court.

To report your child absent: Please contact Carolyn Houde at (978) 526-2022, x1102 or HoudeC@mersd.org to inform the school of your child's absence. If your child is marked absent and we have not received notice from the parent/guardian, you will receive a phone call informing you of your child's absence; please contact Cathy Hunt to confirm that your child is absent.

Excused Absences: According to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71B, Section 3, student absence may occur only for physical illness, mental illness, or religious reasons. Any student who is absent for three or more consecutive days is requested to provide a note from a medical or religious personnel to the Main Office.

Unexcused Absences: Students may not miss school except for excusable reasons outlined above. Even if the absence is approved by a parent/guardian, the school will make the final determination as to whether an absence may be excused. Vacations while school is in session are not permitted. Absence from school for a family vacation is not recognized as a legal absence under state statutes, and teachers will not be expected to provide work ahead of time for students who are absent for a vacation. Upon return from a vacation, it is the student's responsibility to seek work from teachers and make up any work missed that is still permitted to be completed.

Attendance at After School Activities: Only students who attend Manchester Essex Middle School are permitted to attend after school activities. This includes extra curricular clubs and school dances.

PARENT/GUARDIAN ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations enable parents to become more familiar with and to support the school and its programs. All interested parents are encouraged to join.

Parents of Manchester-Essex Middle School:

The PMEMS is a parent-run organization. PMEMS supports school programs and initiatives through fund-raising and building community support.

Middle School Council:

As per Massachusetts General Law, MERMS is required to have a site-based school council that consists of parents/guardians, staff members and community members. If more staff or parents/guardians are interested than space, an election will be held to determine positions. Requests for participation will occur via email in early September each year. Meetings occur monthly in the middle school main office.

STAYING INFORMED

To stay up-to-date on happenings at MERMS, please go to our website, <http://www.merms.mersd.org> and visit:

- Aspen:
 - Ensure your contact information is correct in Aspen for parent/guardian emails so you receive all correspondence.
 - Login to view student grades.
- Middle School Calendar
- Team 6, Team 7 and Team 8 pages
- Athletic schedules
- MERMS Twitter feed
- MERMS Facebook page
- District news and calendar
- Budget page
- School and district strategic plan
- Weekly Principal's Newsletter

PARENT/GUARDIAN MEETINGS

You may request a team meeting at any time if you are concerned about your child's progress in multiple classes. If you are concerned about progress in one class, please contact that teacher directly for more information. To request a team meeting, please contact your child's team leader.

Two evening meetings are held during the school year for general/specific information about student progress and planning. Open House for sixth, seventh, and eighth grade parents/guardians is held in the evening in September. Sixth

Grade Transition Night for parents/guardians is held in the spring.

Parent/Guardian-Teacher Conferences are held twice a year in October/November and March. Teams will send conference invitations only to parents/guardians of students who require additional intervention and support. Conference dates are listed in the district calendar. If you are not invited to a conference but would like to meet with your child's team or a teacher, please contact that teacher or the team leader to schedule a meeting at another time.

CLUBS/ACTIVITIES

We encourage student involvement in after-school clubs as a way to make new friends, get involved in causes that make a difference, and relax and enjoy fun & creative activities within the school community. After-school clubs vary from year to year. Morning announcements about club offerings are made throughout the year, the school website is updated regularly, and additional announcements will come via email using contact information in Aspen. Some clubs are run through MERSD, while other clubs take place on campus, but are run through outside organizations such as Parks/Rec or the YMCA. Clubs that may be offered from year-to-year include:

- Student Council
- Math Team
- Homework Club
- Journalism Club
- Theater (through the YMCA)
- Mountain Biking Club
- Running Club
- Art Club

If your child would like to participate in a club that is not offered, and there are a sufficient number of interested students to sign up, please contact Mrs. Maino to help facilitate organizing a group through an outside organization.

ATHLETICS

Middle School Sports and some High School Sports are open to middle school students. Students may participate in interscholastic athletic teams if they meet the academic and physical guidelines set forth by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) and the administration of the Middle School. 7th and 8th grade students may be able to participate in high school sports if a waiver is granted by the MIAA for participation, and there is space available. This MIAA waiver is requested on an annual basis. Generally, middle school sports are open to 7th and 8th graders; if space permits, we may open some middle school sports to 6th graders.

For the 17-18 school year, students may participate in:

- Middle School Co-Ed Cross Country
- Middle School Field Hockey
- Middle School Basketball
- High School Sports as determined by the MIAA

These sports activities are open to any student who wishes to participate with the understanding that some teams have a limited number of persons per team, while others have an unlimited roster. To learn more about middle school athletics, visit <http://www.mersd.org> or contact our Athletics Department.

BUILDING & FACILITIES

Our building and grounds is a beautiful facility which is a center of our communities. In order to keep our building safe and maintained, we have several policies and procedures that should be followed.

Leaving The Classroom During Class

To leave the classroom, a student needs teacher permission, and once granted, must print their first and last name, time and destination on the classroom sign-out sheet. Upon return to the classroom, the student should sign back in. With teacher permission, students may go to their locker, the bathroom, the nurse, the library, or the main office.

Cafeteria

Students have the opportunity to purchase breakfast or lunch in the middle/high school cafeteria. Students may pay at the time of purchase or use their PIN to deduct from their account. Students may buy lunch or bring lunch.

Lunch and recess run from 10:30 to 12:00 every day with one half hour allocated to each grade. Grades rotate through this schedule each year, so that students do not have the same lunch time each year.

Lunch is a time for students to relax, eat, and socialize with peers. All students must eat lunch in the cafeteria unless other arrangements have been made with a faculty or staff member. Once in the cafeteria, students may only leave to go to the bathroom or main office; to do so, he/she must get permission from an adult, sign out, and sign back in upon return.

Occasionally, a student may have a reason to be with a teacher or principal during lunch instead of going to the cafeteria. In this situation, the student should first get their lunch (from the cafeteria or their locker), and report to the teacher's classroom as directed.

The cafeteria is a common space that should be respected, and this involves respecting oneself, peers, our space, and food/drink we are eating. As a result, students are expected

to follow basic rules in the cafeteria:

- Remain in one seat during lunch;
- Respect yourself, your peers, our space and your food;
- Do not throw food or drink;
- You are dismissed to recess or class only when dismissed by an adult;
- Only one student may sit at a seat;
- Use technology only with permission from an adult.

Students who break these rules will receive progressive consequences, including yellow cards, red cards, assigned seating or lunch detentions.

Students who arrive to school prior to the 7:40am bell will report to the cafeteria, but please no earlier than 7:15am.

Elevator Use

Elevator use by students is only permitted with nurse approval, and is limited for use by those with medical conditions. If you have received nurse approval, you may have one student help you with books and materials.

Learning Commons

Students may access the learning commons any day after school. The learning commons is generally open until 3:30pm each day. Students may only access the learning commons before school or during the school day by getting a pass from a teacher. Students are not permitted, before or during the school day, to visit the learning commons without permission. Teachers may take classes to the learning commons to do research or to select reading books.

Most materials can be checked out for three weeks and can be renewed. Please get any borrowed books back on time.

All sixth graders will visit the learning commons in September to learn what resources are available.

Lockers

Students are assigned one locker at the beginning of the year and will be held responsible for it for the entire year. Students are not permitted to change lockers with others or to share with friends; if you have a problem, speak with your homeroom teacher. Sixth grade students are given the opportunity to practice with locker combinations during the first week of school.

All locker contents should be placed behind the door frame so that the locker will not jam. If an article is too big for a locker, bring it to the office for storage. The school is not responsible for lost or damaged valuables left in lockers.

Lockers are school property loaned to students for the duration of the school year. Lockers may be inspected by school personnel at any time if there is a reasonable suspicion that it contains something illegal, dangerous, or disruptive to

the operation of the school.

Students should think of the school as their home away from home and, as such, treat it with the same respect and responsibility as they do their own homes. Littering, graffiti, and/or damaging school property in any way are unacceptable. Violations of these rules may result in consequences ranging from yellow and red cards to paying for the cost of repair of the damage, internal or external suspension, parental notification, and police involvement.

GRADES/REPORT CARDS

The MERSD ASPEN portal is an online tool that allows students and families to monitor their progress in school. ASPEN gives access to student grades and other information from anywhere there is internet access. To access the ASPEN Portal, go to our school website, and click on Aspen Login.

Report cards will no longer be mailed home during the school year. Instead, parents/guardians will be emailed when trimester grades have been reported. Trimester dates are posted on the MERSD calendar on the district website.

Grades are expected to be updated every two weeks by staff. As a result, progress reports are no longer provided. If you have a question about a particular grade or assignment, please speak with your child first, and then contact the teacher directly for additional information. Due to individual assignment weighting, note that grades reported in Aspen at the beginning of a term may not be an accurate reflection of a student's overall grades over the course of the entire term. If you lose your username or password for Aspen, please contact Mrs. House or email aspenhelp@mersd.org.

A+ = 98-100	A = 93-97	A- = 90-92
B+ = 87-89	B = 83-86	B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79	C = 73-76	C- = 70-72
D+ = 67-69	D = 63-66	D- = 60-62
F = 59 or below	N = audit	I = incomplete*

*A grade of "I" for incomplete may be assigned when a student has had an extended and excused absence. Incompletes not made up will become a failing grade.

Exploratory Grading: Students in Grade 6 will receive Pass or Fail grades for Health, Physical Education, Art, General Music/Band/Chorus, and Engineering. Students in Grade 7 and 8 will receive letter grades for all exploratory classes.

COUNSELING & SUPPORT

The mission of the Manchester-Essex Guidance Department is to provide a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program that promotes the academic, college/career, and personal/social growth of all students.

School counselors advocate for equity, access, and success for every student by collaborating with faculty, parents, and the community. At the Middle School, counselors work proactively to deliver a counseling curriculum that systematically reaches each and every student in an effort to maximize student potential and academic achievement and to foster social and civic responsibility. The service delivery system includes whole grade and small group practices, as well as individual meetings with students in order to address the developmental milestones and challenges associated with each grade level. It is through guidance curriculum, responsive services, individual planning, and system support that counselors are able to assist students with their planning and decision making. School counselors are committed to ensuring that students are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills needed to be effective students, responsible citizens, productive workers, and life-long learners as members of a changing society.

Role of the School Adjustment Counselor:

The role of the middle school counselor is to foster student independence, responsibility, and to assist the student in taking an active role in his/her learning. The counselor also facilitates communication between school, home, and student to promote self-advocacy, self-monitoring and academic success.

Middle school counselors implement the counseling program by providing curriculum to all. This may be delivered in a classroom, direct-instruction setting, through small group instruction, or more intensively in a one-on-one setting, depending on the needs of students.

Areas of Counseling Support

- Academic coaching
- Organizational study and test-taking skills
- Education in understanding self and others
- Coping strategies
- Peer relationships and effective social skills
- Communication, problem-solving, decision-making and conflict resolution
- Career awareness, exploration and planning

Individual Student Planning

- Goal-setting/decision-making
- Academic planning
- Education in understanding of self, including strengths and weaknesses
- Transition planning

Responsive Services (provided as required)

- Individual and small group counseling
- Individual/family/school crisis intervention
- Peer facilitation
- Consultation/collaboration
- Referrals

System Support

- Professional development
- Consultation, collaboration, and teaming
- Program management and operation

Counseling Programs:

Throughout the year guidance programs will facilitate transition, address social and academic demands, review the importance of organization and study skills, encourage responsibility for learning and promote self-advocacy.

6th and 7th Grade Programs

- Orientation day
- Fall introductions
- Organization/time management presentation
- Small transition group meetings
- Test preparation/test taking strategies
- Parent/Guardian orientation night
- 6th grade student visit
- Course selection/scheduling
- Team meetings

8th Grade Programs

- Fall introductions
- Private school applications
- Technical/Agricultural school visits and applications
- Small group course selection meetings
- Course selection/scheduling
- High school scheduling
- Introduction to Naviance
- Team meetings

Transcripts:

Students applying to a private school that wish to have a copy of middle school academic records sent must submit to Dean of Students and Support a Release of Information Form signed by parents. These forms are available in the middle school office. The information sent, upon a parents' written request, will include a seventh grade transcript, grades earned for the first trimester of eighth grade, standardized test scores and any special education testing if it will be helpful to future academic placement.

These requests must be submitted to the guidance office three weeks before the application deadline.

Official copies of middle school records must be signed, sealed, and mailed from the Middle School directly to the individual school. If students or parents wish to hand carry a copy of records, this may be done, although the record will be stamped "Unofficial".

The Essex Technical High School is an option for students who are interested in pursuing a high school education that includes a technical component. All students in Grade 8

attend an informational session pertaining to the programs available; applications are available through middle school guidance. Essex Tech offers an open house for students and families in the fall.

SCHOOL NURSE AND HEALTH ROOM

The school nurse provides assessment, treatment and follow-up for all students with any illness or injury. All injuries that occur while at school should be reported immediately to the adult in charge and should be followed up by the nurse or trainer as soon as possible. If students are ill or injured, they should obtain a pass from the classroom teacher before going to the health office. If the school nurse is not available, report to the main office.

All entering students must present a record of immunizations for review by the school nurse. *No student will be permitted to attend class without proof that all required immunizations are up to date, with the exception of the student whose parent or guardian states in writing that immunization conflicts with his/her sincere religious beliefs or for medical reasons (M.G.L., c.76, s.15& 15c).*

The nurse provides state-mandated screenings (M.G.L., c. 71, s.57). These screenings include hearing, vision, scoliosis, and height and weight. Specific screenings include, Vision & Hearing and BMI in Grade 7 and Spinal or Postural Screenings for scoliosis in Grades 6, 7, & 8. If you choose not to have the screenings performed by the school nurse, you must put this request in writing to the nurse. The screening must then be documented on the physical examination completed by the child's physician or nurse practitioner. The school nurse is an excellent resource for information on any health issues or concerns that students or parents have. The nurse has a list of community health agencies that serve this district, as well as educational material on a number of health-related topics. The School nurse is not available for athletic and extracurricular events or programs held before or after regular school hours. The parent/guardian is responsible for directly notifying the appropriate advisor or coach of any medical issues. If students have any medical concerns regarding these types of school activities please contact the school nurse for assistance.

Medications:

The nurse is not permitted to give any medication without written parental consent. The student may receive acetaminophen and other MD approved over-the-counter medications if the parent checks and signs the appropriate area on the school emergency card.

All medications must be in a pharmacy or manufacturer-labeled container. A parent, guardian or parent/guardian

designated responsible adult shall deliver all medications to the school nurse. No more than a thirty (30) day supply of the medication shall be stored at the school. Parents/guardians may retrieve medications from the school at any time. Parents/guardians will be notified of all unused, discontinued or outdated medications and asked to retrieve such medication from the school. All medication not picked up by the parent/guardian at the end of the school year will be destroyed by the school nurse.

Physical Examinations (M.G.L., ch71, 2.57): All students participating in team athletics require a physical examination annually. These exams should be given by the family physician and submitted to the Athletics Department.

Other Health Issues: Parents of students with special concerns or who are considered “at risk” (those with diabetes, asthma, seizures, severe allergies, etc.) should advise the school nurse of the condition, any medications taken by the student, possible side effects of such medication, and the manner in which acute episodes should be handled. Conferences with teachers can be arranged through the school nurse.

If students’ oral temperature is over 99.6 degrees Fahrenheit, they must be kept at home until the temperature has been normal (under 99.6) for at least twenty-four (24) hours. If students return to school with a fever or develop an oral temperature over 99.6 during the school day, students will be sent home after evaluation by the school nurse.

If students develop a highly contagious disease such as chicken pox, strep throat, impetigo, pertussis, bacterial conjunctivitis or head lice, please notify the nurse at once. Any of these conditions will result in the student being sent home after an evaluation by the nurse.

An antibiotic or other treatment approved by a health care professional must be administered for a minimum of twenty-four hours before students will be permitted to return to school. Students who have had chicken pox must be evaluated by the school nurse before they will be permitted to return to school.

HOMEWORK

The goal of homework is to reinforce learning from that day’s classes or to work on portions of long-term projects. Homework should not be a struggle or cause undue anxiety. If students are having particular difficulty with an assignment or are spending an excessive amount of time completing homework, please ask a parent or guardian to write a note to the teacher explaining the situation. Students will not be penalized for incomplete homework during these situations.

At times, homework may be assigned on the weekends. Although it may vary, students should generally plan for nightly homework that takes approximately:

- 6th Grade: 60 minutes
- 7th Grade: 90 minutes
- 8th Grade: 2 hours

Long-term projects may be assigned in addition to nightly homework. If a student does not have assigned homework, he or she should spend time reading, studying, or working on long-term projects. Teaching teams are available for extra help sessions upon request.

Please note that in instances of students’ absences during regularly scheduled school days, teachers will not be expected to provide homework ahead of time, as it is not always possible to predict the pace of curriculum. Students missing classwork and homework will need to make up missed assignments upon his/her return to school.

NETWORK OF SUPPORT

Staff Members:

All staff members are concerned with students’ emotional, social, and academic well-being and progress. There will be differences between teachers’ class requirements, teaching styles, and discipline, but students should be certain that teachers are here to help inspire students and expand their potentials. Teachers are available after school for extra help. Sometimes, teachers will offer a study session; other times, students will need to request extra help from a teacher. Do not hesitate to seek out a trusted teacher for help with emotional, social, or academic struggles or challenges.

If students are having academic problems, they may meet with the School Adjustment Counselor or Dean of Students and Support to design an appropriate extra help schedule. Extra help time is also an opportunity to do work missed due to absence.

Homework Club:

Homework Club is available after school up to four days a week. It is a safe, quiet, structured place to receive support and guidance in homework and project completion until 3:15.

Counselors:

The School Adjustment Counselor is prepared to support each student in the middle school. The counselor will arrange to meet with students in the fall, but students should seek the counselor out whenever they need help. Students can also make an appointment by simply speaking to a counselor

directly before school, during lunch, or after school, as well as stopping into the main office.

Parents/Guardians:

Parents/guardians are a crucial part of the educational team. Middle school teachers, counselors, and administrators encourage students to continue to rely on parents for support and resource information, even though middle schoolers may resist accepting help. Students are encouraged to share with parents/guardians what they are learning.

Friends and Peers:

Middle school extracurricular activities are planned to help students meet new people and make friends. We hope students will take part in those that are of interest. Extracurricular activities can be the best way to become part of the MERMS community.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES

At times, everyone makes mistakes. How we respond, how we reflect, and how we change our behavior says much about us. We encourage students to learn from mistakes, so they can avoid making the same one again. In the middle school, we follow progressive discipline, meaning students are issued consequences with increasing severity based on repeated offenses.

All the information included in this handbook exists to ensure that students are able to learn in an atmosphere that supports student education: one that is safe and encourages you and others to take advantage of educational opportunities. In order to learn effectively, students must listen, take appropriate risks, share and work cooperatively and without interference. These policies apply to all students before school, during the school day, after school, at school activities, during field trips and on transportation.

Safe Learning Environment:

The number one priority in our school is student safety – both physical and emotional – so that students are available and ready to learn. Students whose behavior or words impede one's own or another student's learning, disrupt the school day, or are offensive in nature are subject to disciplinary action and a change in behavior must immediately occur.

Yellow and Red Cards:

At Manchester-Essex Middle School, we follow a philosophy of progressive discipline through the use of a yellow and red card system. Borrowed from the game of soccer, a yellow card signifies a minor error in judgment and serves as a reminder that one's behavior is unacceptable and needs to change. If a student receives three yellow cards a month, he/she may automatically earn a red card.

If a student makes a more significant error in judgment, he/she may be issued a red card. A red card automatically leads to a detention after school until 3:00pm, where you will reflect upon your behavior and decisions, and how you can avoid making the same mistakes again. Three yellow cards is the equivalent of one red card.

If a student is issued a yellow or red card, he/she should remain calm, change his/her behavior, and speak to the teacher at an appropriate time (this may be after class, in the hallway, or in the main office). A student should always know the reason for his/her error in judgment and why he/she was issued a yellow or red card. If you do not know why, you should have a conversation with the staff member who issued it.

Note for School Committee: Removed Green Card Language

Dress Code:

At Manchester-Essex Middle School, students should follow a dress code policy of Dress for Success. We believe that what you choose to wear should reflect respect for yourself, others and our school. While respecting self-expression, we request that students follow these guidelines:

- Dress that is clearly disruptive of the school environment will not be allowed. This may include but is not limited to apparel that advocates or displays illegal or inappropriate items or activities as well as clothing that displays messages or images that harass, demean, or intimidate an individual or group of individuals based on race, color, gender, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.
- Hats, coats and sunglasses are not permitted to be worn during school; these items should be placed in your locker upon arrival at school, and left there throughout the day.
- Pants/shorts/skirts must be worn securely at the waist. Baggy pants that display undergarments are not permitted. Shorts and skirts should be of an appropriate length (mid-thigh) for all school-sponsored activities.
- Shirts and tops must completely cover the mid-section; tank tops and other tops should cover all undergarments.
- Students must always wear shoes at school.

Electronic Devices/Acceptable Use Policy:

Students are permitted to bring personal electronic devices to school if they do not impede the school day. It is suggested that students limit any electronic devices to something that can be locked in a locker. Students who choose to bring a personal electronic device to school do so at their own risk.

When the school day begins at 7:40, students are required to turn off any electronic device and store them in their lockers. Devices that are found in a student's possession during the

school day will be taken from the student and stored in the middle school office until the end of the school day, when the student can retrieve it. The student may also be issued a yellow card for inappropriate electronic device usage. If students continue to be distracted by or disruptive with personal electronic devices, parents will be contacted and additional consequences may be put into place.

Strict adherence to the internet acceptable use policy must be maintained while using these devices. Students who violate the internet use policy while using a personal reading device will be subject to disciplinary guidelines as laid out in the Code of Conduct, including yellow and red cards, parental notification, and law enforcement notification. Parents/Guardians will be provided a written copy of the Acceptable Internet Policy, along with a form for the student and parent(s) or guardian to sign as an acknowledgement that they have received and are aware of the requirements and consequences

Food/Drink:

Please limit any beverages outside the cafeteria to water. Snacks in the classroom may be permitted, at teacher discretion.

Cheating:

Plagiarism is the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as your own. All students' work must be his/her own. To pass in another's work as his/her own is a serious violation of this Code of Conduct. Any student involved with cheating (either the person doing the copying or the one allowing material to be copied), will be held responsible and receive a consequence. Although it will depend on the situation, students may be provided the opportunity to redo or complete the work again for credit, if accompanied by a behavioral consequence and discussed with the teacher, parent/guardian, student and principal. The goal and purpose is for students to avoid making the same mistake again.

Students may not forge any note or other official paper for themselves or another student nor may they have someone forge an official paper. Violation of this rule will result in office detention and parental notification.

Harassment:

Every student should be able to attend Manchester-Essex Middle School without being harassed by other students, teachers, or staff. The Manchester-Essex School Committee has a policy regarding this. Read it carefully. It contains important information about what harassment is and what students can do if they believe they are being harassed.

Insubordination:

Students may not refuse any reasonable request made to them by a staff member. If a staff member asks a student to

do a certain task or asks him/her for specific information and he/she refuses, the student is insubordinate. Students who are insubordinate may be issued a yellow or red card or face additional consequences including suspension.

Tobacco Possession/Use (including electronic cigarettes and vape products):

Students are not permitted to carry matches, lighters or any form of tobacco. Violation of this will result in confiscation of the material and consequences will be put into place. The use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, the school facilities or on the school grounds or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel is prohibited (MGL Chapter 74, Section 37H). Violation of this law may result in school consequences, as well as fines, a required tobacco educational program, suspension, or other consequences.

Alcohol/Drugs/Substances:

Manchester-Essex Middle School has a Zero Tolerance Policy. Alcohol or drugs are prohibited in school, on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities. You may not bring, use or accept alcohol or drugs. Violation of this will result in parental notification and may include detention, suspension, law enforcement notification, counseling, among possible other consequences.

Before/After School:

Students should not be in the building before school. If a student does arrive to school early (please not earlier than 7:15am), he/she should report to the cafeteria.

After school time is meant for seeking extra help, participation in organized school activities, using the learning commons, and occasional detentions. If you remain after school, you must be supervised by an adult until the end of the activity.

The school nurse is not available for athletic and extracurricular events or programs held before or after regular school hours. The parent/guardian is responsible for directly notifying the appropriate advisor or coach of any medical issues. If you have any medical concerns regarding these types of school activities please contact the school nurse for assistance.

Outstanding Obligations:

Students who lose or damage school property assigned to them must reimburse the school for the loss or damage. Examples of such items are instructional material, library books, desks, lockers, musical instruments, science equipment, etc.

Out of school suspensions (Offenses not related to M.G.L. c.

71, sec. 37H and 37H½):

A student serving an out of school suspension is not to be in the school building or on school grounds or at any school functions unless he or she has been readmitted to school or has received permission from the Principal to enter the building. Any student whose continuing presence poses a danger to individuals or to property or poses a material and substantial disruption of the order of the school may be removed from school immediately. Such emergency removals may be made if, in the administrator's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption, and such removal shall not exceed two (2) school days.

In an emergency removal situation the administrator shall:

- Make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parents of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal, and other applicable matters
- Provide written notice to the student and parent consistent with the due process requirements for a short term and, when appropriate long term suspension
- Provide the student an opportunity to be heard within two (2) school days, unless there is mutual agreement to extend the time for the hearing
- Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing and in writing no later than the following school day.

Short-Term Suspension (Offenses not related to M.G.L. c. 71, sec. 37H and 37H½):

The Principal may issue a short-term suspension, meaning ten (10) days or less, to a student whose conduct does not comply with the provisions of this Student Handbook. Prior to suspension, the student is entitled to written notice of:

- The charge;
- The basis for the charge;
- The potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
- The opportunity for the student, with their parent present, to have a hearing with the administrator concerning the suspension, including an opportunity to present their side of the story and/or dispute the charge;
- The date, time and location of the hearing;
- The right of the student and the student's parent to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate.

For short-term suspensions, the Principal will make reasonable efforts to notify the parent of the opportunity to attend the hearing. A minimum to two attempts to contact the parent in a manner specified by the parent for emergency notification shall be considered reasonable. If the administrator is unable to reach the parent, and has documented the attempts to

contact the parent, the administrator may proceed with the hearing without the parent present. After such hearing, the administrator shall provide written notice of:

- The decision maker's findings of fact and decision
- The discipline if a penalty is to be imposed;
- The effective date of the disciplinary action.

A student may challenge his/her suspension. For example, if a suspension is issued by the High School Assistant Principal, it may be appealed to the Middle School Principal (who is the Superintendent's designee for appeals of suspension by the Assistant Principal); if the suspension was issued by the Principal, then it may be appealed to the Superintendent. If a student chooses to appeal the suspension, he/she must do so in writing within five (5) calendar days after the initial conference was held. Disciplinary action may be deferred at the discretion of the administrator hearing the appeal.

Long-Term Suspension (Offenses not related to M.G.L. c. 71, sec. 37H and 37H½/2):

The Principal may issue a long-term suspension, meaning an out of school suspension for more than ten (10) days, to a student whose conduct does not comply with the provisions of this Student Handbook. Prior to being suspended, the student is entitled to all of the notice elements of a short term suspension (see above), plus the following:

- In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the administrator may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
- Notice of the disciplinary measures that student faces as a result;
- Notice of the date, time and place of a disciplinary hearing;
- The right to be represented by a parent, attorney or advocate;
- The right to question and present witnesses and present evidence, though the student may not be compelled to do so;
- The right to request that the hearing be recorded by the administrator, and a copy of the audio recording provided to the student or parent upon request; and
- The administrator's decision, the specific grounds for the decision and the right to appeal the decision. The written decision shall include:
 - Identification of the disciplinary offence, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants in the hearing;
 - The key facts and conclusions reached;
 - The length and effective date of suspension as well as a date of return to school;

- The opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal
- The right to appeal the decision to the Superintendent or designee, including the process for appeal.

If a student chooses to appeal the suspension, he/she must do so in writing within five (5) calendar days after the decision is received. An extension of seven (7) days will be granted if such an extension is requested within the initial five (5) days. The Superintendent shall hold a hearing on the student's appeal within three (3) school days of receiving the student's request for an appeal unless parent/ student requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days . The Superintendent shall provide the student written notice of the date, time and place of the hearing. After the Superintendent has conducted the hearing, the Superintendent shall give written notice to the student of the decision, which shall be final.

Expulsions:

Expulsion is the most severe sanction the school can impose. It means permanent removal from the school system. A student may be expelled by the Principal for conduct covered by M.G.L. c. 71 37H and 37H ½ (e.g., possession of a weapon, possession of controlled substance, assault on a teacher, convicted of a felony). Any other exclusion from school shall not exceed ninety (90) school days.

Due Process:

Students will always be given the opportunity to present their perception of any disciplinary situation in which they may be involved. In cases where suspension or expulsion is a possible consequence, all rights to due process hearings will be followed.

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN

The Manchester-Essex School District Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is a requirement under M.G.G. c. 71, §370. The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (“Plan”) is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber-bullying, and the district is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. Our principals are responsible for the overall implementation and oversight of the Plan. The Plan shall be reviewed and updated biennially.

The entire School Committee Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan are available on the Manchester Essex website under School Committee.

Student Harassment:

The Manchester Essex School District is committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment. Harassment by administrators, certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals at school or at school sponsored events is unlawful and is strictly prohibited. The Manchester-Essex Regional School District requires all employees and students to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect for their fellow employees, students and all members of the school community.

Definition of Harassment:

Harassment includes communications such as jokes, comments, innuendoes, notes, display of pictures or symbols, gestures, or other conduct, which offends or shows disrespect to others.

By law, what constitutes harassment is determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with the characteristic on which the harassment is based. What one person may consider acceptable behavior may reasonably be viewed as harassment by another person. Therefore, individuals should consider how their words and actions might reasonably be viewed by other individuals. It is also important for individuals to make it clear to others when a particular behavior or communication is unwelcome, intimidating, hostile or offensive.

Sexual Harassment:

While all types of harassment are prohibited, sexual harassment requires particular attention. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Acceptance of or submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or education.
2. The individual's response to such conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting an employee or as a basis for educational, disciplinary, or other decisions affecting a student.
3. Such conduct interferes with an individual's job duties, education or participation in extra-curricular activities.

Retaliation Prohibited:

Retaliation against any individual who has brought harassment or other inappropriate behavior to the attention of the school or who has cooperated in an investigation of a complaint under this policy is unlawful and will not be tolerated by the Manchester-Essex Regional School District.

Investigation:

Any individual who believes he/she has been harassed or who has witnessed or learned about the harassment of another person in the school environment should inform the Dean of

Students and Support and/or the Principal as soon as possible. If the individual does not wish to discuss the issue with him/her, or if she/he does not address the problem in an effective manner, the individual should inform the Superintendent or the Title IX Coordinator.

The Manchester-Essex School District will promptly investigate every complaint of harassment. If it determines that harassment has occurred, it will take appropriate action to end the harassment and to ensure that it is not repeated. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law and under applicable collective bargaining agreements.

In certain cases, the harassment of a student may constitute child abuse under state law. The Manchester Essex School District will comply with all legal requirements governing the reporting of suspected cases of child abuse and will report suspected criminal activity to the appropriate authorities.

Disciplinary Consequences:

Persons who engage in harassment or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to reprimand, suspension, termination or other sanctions as determined by the school administration and/or school committee, subject to applicable procedural requirements.

Closure of a Complaint:

When an investigation has been completed, school personnel will inform the complainant of the results and file a report with the Coordinator for Title IX/Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act/Chapter 622.

The Manchester-Essex School District urges all individuals in the school community to bring any concerns or complaints of harassment to the attention of school personnel so that they can resolve the issue. The state agency responsible for enforcing laws prohibiting harassment is the Office of Civil Rights which is located at the J. W. McCormick Building, Post Office Square, Boston, MA 02109. The agency responsible for enforcing federal laws prohibiting harassment in the employment context is the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which is located at the John F. Kennedy Building, Room 275, Government Center, Boston, MA 02203, (617) 565-3200. The agency responsible for enforcing the federal law prohibiting harassment on the basis of sex is the Office for Civil Rights within the United States Department of Education, which is located at J. W. McCormick Building, Post Office Square, Boston, MA 02109.

Administrative Procedures:

The Superintendent is directed to develop administrative procedures that implement this policy. These procedures are to be developmentally appropriate and are available in the Superintendent's office.

When an investigation involves minor children, parents will be notified - in accordance with administrative procedures.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

The Manchester-Essex School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, homelessness, national origin, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability in admission to, access to, employment in, or treatment in its programs and activities.

The Coordinator for Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971 is the Superintendent or designee. Julie Riley can be reached at Manchester-Essex School District, 36 Lincoln Street, Manchester, MA 01944 978-526-2022.

Inquiries regarding the application of the Manchester-Essex Schools' nondiscrimination policy may be referred to Julie Riley, Coordinator, as named above or the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202 (or the Regional Director, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, J. W. McCormick Building, P. O. Square, Boston, MA 02109.

Dissemination of Policy:

1. This policy shall be conspicuously posted throughout each school building in areas accessible to students.
2. This policy shall appear in the Calendar Handbook.

Education of the School Community on Title IX:

1. Students: On an annual basis, all students in grades 6 through 12 shall have one class for one day devoted to education on sexual harassment. Under the leadership of the TITLE IX Coordinator, members of the sexual harassment committee will provide this training and distribute appropriate materials to students. Substitute coverage will be provided for those staff members who are conducting the training. Large assemblies will not be used as they are unsuitable for the dissemination of such information.
2. Parents: On an annual basis, time shall be allotted during Parents' Night in the fall for a presentation on Title IX by the TITLE IX Coordinator to all parents in attendance. Additionally, printed materials shall be distributed to parents.

INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

The Manchester-Essex Middle and High Schools' network

provides users, which are staff and students, with access to a multitude of instructional resources from both local and remote repositories of electronically stored information. The intent of this policy is to ensure that all uses of the MRHS network are consistent with the purpose of the network and comply with our instructional goals around digital citizenship and internet safety

Purpose:

The purpose of the MERSD network is to advance and promote educational opportunities, innovation and educational excellence, and to provide students and teachers access to a world wide array of educational resources.

Personal uses are prohibited. Access to the resources of the network will improve learning and teaching through research, student access to information, teacher training, collaboration and dissemination of successful educational practices, methods, and materials.

Network Use:

The MERSD network shall be used in a manner consistent with the purpose of the network, the administration rules for using the network, and with School Committee Policies. Communications using networked resources will be considered publications and will be governed by School Committee and administrative policies regarding publications.

Users are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible, ethical, and polite manner while using the network. Staff and student access to the Internet is provided with the understanding that some material that can be accessed on the Internet may be inaccurate, and that some resources may contain material that is deemed contrary to prevailing community standards or inappropriate for classroom use. Access of such resources will not be permitted. If such inappropriate material is inadvertently encountered, it shall be the user's responsibility to disengage immediately.

Responsibilities:

Access to the MERSD network and the Internet is a privilege, not a right, extended by the MRHS to staff, students, and other users for the purpose stated above.

Users have the responsibility to respect and protect the rights of other users in our network community and on the Internet. It is in violation of this policy without the authorization of the Superintendent, to reveal names, personal address or phone numbers. Users are expected to act in a responsible, ethical and legal manner, in accordance with the MRHS network and School Committee policies, in conformance with the purposes of the other networks they use on the Internet, and in compliance with the laws of Massachusetts and the United States.

Student Violation of Acceptable Use Policy (AUP):

Entering/Participating in Chat Room/Instant Messenger:

1 st	Warning by appropriate staff member-teacher detention, e-mail note to Principal/ cc: Tech Department
2 nd	One office detention, account suspension for that day plus up to three additional days, e-mail to Principal /cc:Tech Department

Downloading/Loading of Games, Unapproved Files, Morpheus, Nintendo:

1 st	Warning by appropriate staff member teacher detention, e-mail note to Principal/cc:Tech Department, account suspension for that day plus up to one additional day
2 nd	One office detention, account suspension for that day, plus up to three additional days, e- mail note to Principal/cc: Tech Department
3 rd	Account suspension for that day plus up to five additional days
4 th	Account suspension for that day plus up to remainder of semester; suspension hearing.

Using a Network Account Other Than Their Own Student Account:

1 st	One office detention, account suspension for that day plus up to three additional days, e- mail to Principal/ cc:Tech Department
2 nd	Account suspension for that day plus up to five additional days
3 rd	Account suspension for that day plus up to remainder of semester; suspension hearing

Entering/Viewing of an Inappropriate Internet Site:

1 st	One office detention, account suspension for that day plus up to three additional days, e- mail to Principal/ cc:Tech Department
2 nd	Account suspension for that day plus up to five additional days
3 rd	Account suspension for that day plus up to remainder of semester; suspension hearing

Manipulating/Publishing/Posting of Inappropriate Internet Site:

1 st	Account Suspension for that day plus up to remainder of semester; suspension hearing
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Any punishment for the above violation will be reported to the student's teachers, library and guidance as the computers

in these areas are restricted to the student during the time of punishment.

Network Usage Guidelines:

All use of the MERSD network must be consistent with its purposes as stated above. This policy does not attempt to articulate all required or proscribed behavior by users of the network. In any specific situation, we rely upon each individual's judgment of appropriate conduct. To assist in such judgment, the following general guidelines are offered:

1. Any use for illegal purposes, or in support of illegal activities, is prohibited.
2. Any use for political or commercial purposes is prohibited.
3. The use of electronic mail in any manner that is contrary to MRHS network and School Committee Policy is prohibited.
4. Any use that disrupts the educational and administrative goals of the Manchester-Essex Regional Middle/ High School is prohibited.
5. Any use of a MRHS network account by anyone but the authorized owner of the account is prohibited.
6. **Copyrighted Material:** One copy of copyrighted material may be downloaded for a user's personal use. Any reproduction of copyrighted material without explicit permission is prohibited.
7. **Privacy:** Network storage areas will be treated like school lockers, which may be inspected at anytime. Internet messages are public communication and are not private. All communications including text and images may be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or the receiver. Network administrators may review communications to maintain integrity system-wide and ensure that students are using the system in a responsible manner.
8. **Storage capacity:** Users are expected to remain within allocated disk space and delete E-mail or other material, which takes up excessive storage space.
9. **Illegal copying:** Users should neither download nor install any commercial software, shareware, or freeware onto network drives or disks, unless they have written permission from the Network Administrator; nor should they copy other people's work or intrude into other people's files.
10. **Communications:** Users are responsible for the content

of all text, audio or images that they place or send over the Internet. Fraudulent, harassing or obscene messages are prohibited. No abusive, profane or offensive language should be used to communicate on the MRHS network or on the Internet.

11. **Inappropriate materials:** Access of material that has been deemed inappropriate for educational use is prohibited. Should users encounter such material by accident, they should disengage. Students should report such encounters to their teacher immediately.
12. **Violations:** The district reserves the right to deny, revoke or suspend specific user privileges or may take other disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion from school, for violations of this policy. In the event that there is a claim that a student has violated any of the guidelines in this policy, she/he will be provided with written notice of the suspected violation and an opportunity to be heard. The District will advise appropriate law enforcement agencies of illegal activities conducted through the MRHS Network. The District also will cooperate fully with local, state or federal officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through the MRHS Network.
13. Develop procedures for implementation.

Notifications:

A copy of this policy will be distributed to all employees of the District and must be incorporated into all student handbooks published in the District.

HEALTH EDUCATION

The Statement of Purpose and the Supporting Educational Philosophy adopted by the Manchester-Essex School Committee recognizes that development of responsible citizens and the full development of student potential are major objectives; these objectives will not be achieved if students are unaware of how they may develop and maintain good physical and mental health. Therefore, Health Education, including an understanding of Human Sexuality, will be part of the curriculum.

The following sections provide criteria to govern the development and administration of the Health Education program:

1. The current seventh and eighth grade Health Education program shall be structured to include the biological, psychological, emotional, and interpersonal aspects of human sexuality.
2. Information on abortion shall be provided at the seventh and eighth grade levels only in response to direct student

inquiries, and only to the extent that it is appropriate for the maturity level and needs of the student involved as determined by the staff member.

3. All presentations on the topic of human sexuality shall be conducted in a manner that is:
 - a. consistent with accepted medical practice;
 - b. consistent with the maturity level and needs of the students involved and
 - c. sensitive to the feelings of the students involved.
4. Responsible decision making shall be stressed as an integral part of all units on human sexuality.
5. Health Education, including an in-depth discussion of human sexuality, shall be a requirement for graduation in the High School. This requirement shall be fulfilled through any of those courses designated in the Health Education curriculum.
6. The program in Grades 9-12 shall be coordinated to insure that all students shall have access to the information present in the seventh and eighth grade curriculum as well as current information on birth control and abortion.
7. All students shall be made aware of the informational and counseling services available to them at any time through the student services department.
8. Any student may be excused from attendance at instructional sessions dealing with the topic of human sexuality if he/she or, in the case of a student being less than 18 years of age, his/her parent submits the request in writing to the principal. Any student may be excused from the entire Health Education course and its requirement for high school graduation if the student or the student's parent, in the case of a student being less than 18 years of age, presents a written request to the Superintendent
 - a. requesting such an exemption on the basis that the course conflicts with deeply-held religious or moral values and explains the conflict, and . . .
 - b. that a partial exemption will not meet the parents' and/or student's objections, and . . .
 - c. the request for exemption is received prior to the beginning of the course. The Superintendent may waive this requirement if the request was delayed due to extenuating circumstances.
9. Internet Safety and Social Media Awareness and Safety will be taught with the Social Consciousness and Online Safety Units.

If these criteria are met, the Superintendent is authorized by the School Committee to exempt the student. The Superintendent will review with the School Committee the

number and nature of exemptions requested and their disposition. Such reviews will be presented annually or more often if appropriate. To the extent possible, names of students and parents requesting exemptions and other identifying information will be kept confidential.

10. Opportunities will be provided for community input for the updating of the Health Education Curriculum.
11. All materials and teaching strategies used for instruction relative to human sexuality shall be consistent with this policy and open for review by any parent.
12. The Director of Curriculum shall have the responsibility for the review of materials and strategies to determine their appropriateness for inclusion in the Health Education Curriculum. In situations where a grant is applicable, application procedures will be followed.

Youth Risk Behavior Survey:

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey is given to all students grade seventh through 12 on a bi-annual basis. This survey provides valuable information on current adolescent behaviors such as substance abuse, sexual activity, depression, bullying, physical activity, computer time and nutrition. The results of this survey are provided to the school committee and community and used to evaluate, revise and implement appropriate and relevant programming, health curriculum and services. Parents will receive notification at the beginning of the school year in which the survey will take place. A signed form is required if the student is to be omitted from taking this survey.

Student Health:

A physical examination of any pupil(s) attending or proposing to attend the District Schools may be required, if at the discretion of the Superintendent, Principal or School Nurse, such examination is in the interest of protecting the health of other pupils or the staff attending the school or when a child's performance in school appears to be impaired by illness or other physical problems. The pupil shall submit to such examination by a physician designated or approved by the District School Committee without unreasonable delay, and a copy of the report of such examination shall be forwarded to the Superintendent of Schools. Parents shall be advised of any disease, defect, or disability requiring treatment. As an alternative, students who are over the age of 18 and/or parents may arrange for an examination by a physician of their choice, at their expense. If the Superintendent shall deem it necessary for the protection and health of other pupils, such pupil may be excluded pending the report of the physical examination.

Physical examinations will be required annually for students planning to participate in competitive athletics, at the parent's or student's expense.

ZERO TOLERANCE

Use, Possession and Distribution of Drugs and Alcoholic Beverages When under School Control: On-campus or at School-related Activities off Campus:

It is the legal and social responsibility of the District School Committee to establish policies and encourage administrative action that will promote a school environment free from usage, possession or distribution of drugs and alcoholic beverages. Drugs and alcoholic beverages shall mean any controlled as defined in Section 94 (C) of Massachusetts General Laws. The School Committee also encourages educational programs that provide every child with a good understanding of the physical, psychological, and social dangers associated with drugs and alcoholic beverage usage. Therefore:

1. The School Administration shall direct the staff to plan and conduct a variety of learning activities that emphasize adequate knowledge of drugs and alcoholic beverages and their effects. Opportunities to participate in individual and group discussions about personal and/or social problems related to drugs and alcoholic beverages will be provided.
2. Employees of the School District, including bus contractors and their employees, will report any students, other employees, or visitors to the school who display evidence of using, possessing or distributing drugs and/or alcoholic beverages. Reports should be made personally to the Assistant Principal, Principals, or to the Superintendent.
3. The parent or guardian of a student suspected of using a drugs alcoholic beverages will be notified in a timely manner. If the student's actions are disruptive to the educational process or school related activity, the Administration will require the parent or other appropriate authority to remove the student from the school grounds or the school sponsored activity.
4. Based on the results of a hearing conducted in accordance with School Committee policies and Massachusetts law, any student found to be in possession of or displaying the actions of one under the influence of any controlled substance or alcoholic beverages on school property or at a school sponsored activity shall be immediately suspended. The matter will be reported immediately to the police. The student shall be referred to the principal for progressive disciplinary action.
5. Based on the results of a hearing conducted in accordance with School Committee policies and Massachusetts law, any student found to be selling controlled substances or alcoholic beverages on school property or at a school-sponsored activity shall be suspended immediately and will be considered for expulsion. The matter will be reported immediately to the police.

6. Based on the results of a hearing conducted in accordance with School Committee policies and Massachusetts law, any student who knowingly and willfully assists another person in using controlled substances or alcoholic beverages on school property or at a school-sponsored activity shall be immediately suspended immediately and may be considered for expulsion. The matter will be reported to the police.
7. Violators of Section 4, 5, or 6 of this regulation will be ineligible, for a period of up to one year, to be determined by the principal or a designee, to participate in or hold office in any school organization, to participate in interscholastic athletics or competitions, or to attend or participate in any school-sponsored activity. The student and parent will participate in a school approved substance abuse rehabilitation program at the family's expense. This program will include a drug-testing component. Participation in the program will continue until the school and program counselor agree that the threat of continued substance abuse has been significantly reduced and the student has tested substance free for at least two months. Failure to comply with this section of the policy will result in a long- term suspension with readmission contingent upon compliance with the rehabilitation program for at least two months.
8. A student possessing and/or using a prescription drug in an authorized manner shall be exempt from the above regulations. It is recommended that the student advise the principal about taking a prescription drug in order to avoid a possible misunderstanding in the application of these regulations.

STUDENT SEARCHES AND LOCKER PRIVILEGES

Students and their personal belongings, including student vehicles, are subject to search by school personnel to the extent school personnel have a reasonable basis for suspecting that the search would reveal evidence that the student has violated the law or school rules. In the event of search of a student or his belongings, parents will be notified as soon as practical following the search. In the event a student refuses to cooperate with the search, the police may be summoned or the parents will be called.

Except as otherwise necessary due to exigent circumstances, searches will be conducted by school administrative staff members in the presence of another adult. In all cases the nature of the search must be reasonably related to the object sought and not excessively intrusive in light of the age and gender of the student.

School lockers and desks, which are assigned to students for their use remain the property of the school department and students should, therefore, have no expectation of privacy in these areas. Such areas are subject to search at any time, including but not limited to random searches by school officials and canine searches.* New Jersey v T.L.O. 53 U.S.L.W. 4083, 4087-4088.

FUNDRAISING

Fund Raising - Student Organizations:

All fund raising by any student organization directed by a Faculty Advisor, the Athletic Director, or the Coach of an athletic team shall operate under the authority of the School Committee and be conducted in accordance with the following provisions:

1. All fund-raising activities shall be presented in writing to the Principal for approval at least two weeks prior to the planned activity. Plans should be specific, naming those raising the funds, stating the intended use of such funds, and indicating the amounts to be raised.
1. The Principal will maintain a chronological listing of student sponsored fund-raising activities and post copies of updated listings on a designated bulletin board available to both students and faculty.
2. The School Committee favors fewer, more successful fund-raising drives to keep to a minimum the number of appeals for donations made to citizens and businesses.
3. The manner of fund raising helps form the public's perception of Manchester Essex and the communities it serves. Therefore, only those fund-raising proposals which are deemed appropriate and reflect favorably on the dignity and the seriousness of purpose of the District should be approved.
4. Each organization is accountable for funds it receives and may control the use of funds raised, as long as it is noted that the Faculty Advisor or Athletic Director and the Principal are ultimately responsible for any decision regarding the money's disbursement. All funds must be deposited and accounted for by procedures approved by the Superintendent and the Treasurer.
5. Repeated and willful violations of this policy may result in sanctions against the organization's right to operate fund-raising activities and/or the individual's right to participate in the organization.

Fund Raising - Parent Organizations:

The School Committee appreciates the significant contribution made by parents over the years in raising funds

to benefit Manchester/Essex programs and urges compliance with the following guidelines.

1. The nature of the fund raising and the manner in which it is conducted should reflect favorably upon Manchester Essex.
2. The parent group should notify the Principal in writing at least two weeks prior to the event of the nature and purpose of the fund-raising activity.
3. The parent group should obtain the approval of the Principal to utilize the proceeds of its fund-raising activities to benefit the school; the approval of the Principal and Faculty Advisor to utilize the proceeds to benefit a class or club; the approval of the Principal and Athletic Director to utilize the proceeds to benefit a team. The School Committee reserves the right of final acceptance or refusal of donated services or equipment.
4. Each parent group is accountable for funds it receives and should develop appropriate accounting procedures to record receipts and expenditures and for safeguarding the funds. The organization will identify the person or persons who will accept responsibility for the group and will identify the person in charge or the officer of the association in its publicity.

A copy of this policy will become part of the Calendar Handbook.

FRIABLE ASBESTOS

Manchester Essex is in compliance with all the requirements of the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). The Management Plan and inventory of asbestos-containing building materials is available for your inspection at the school administration office. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Business Office.

SUMMARY OF REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO STUDENT RECORDS

The State Board of Education has adopted Regulations Pertaining to Student Records. The development of these regulations, which have the force of law, was mandated by state laws enacted in 1972 and 1974. The regulations apply to all public elementary and secondary schools. (They also apply to all private schools which have state approval to provide special education services under Chapter 766, the

Special Education Act.) They are designed to insure parents' and students' rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of student records, and to assist school authorities in their responsibilities for the maintenance of student records.

The regulations apply to all information kept by a school committee on a student in a manner such that he or she may be individually identified. The regulations divide the record into two sections: the transcript and the temporary record. The transcript includes only the minimum information necessary to reflect the student's educational process. This information includes name, address, course titles, grades, credits, and grade level completed. The transcript is kept by the school system for at least sixty years after the student leaves the system.

The temporary record contains the majority of the information maintained by the school about the student. This may include such things as standardized test results, class rank, school-sponsored extracurricular activities, and evaluations and comments by teachers, counselors, and other persons; as well as other similar information. The temporary record is destroyed within seven years after the student leaves the school system.

The following is a summary of the major parent and student rights regarding their student records, as provided by the Regulations Pertaining to Student Records:

Inspection of Record:

A parent, or a student who has entered the ninth grade or is at least fourteen years old, has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The record must be made available to the parent or student no later than two days after the request, unless the parent or student consents to a delay.

The parent and student have the right to receive copies of any part of the record, although a reasonable fee may be charged for the cost of duplicating the materials.

Finally, the parent and student may request to have parts of the record interpreted by a qualified professional of the school, or may invite anyone else of their choosing to inspect or interpret the record with them.

Confidentiality of Record:

With a few exceptions, no individuals or organizations but the parents, student, and school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student record without the specific, informed, written consent of the parent or the student.

Directory Information:

This information includes name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, photo/video, participation in officially

recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student, and other similar information.

Students who object to the release of this information without their prior written approval must so state to the Principal, in writing, at the beginning of each school year. The Principal of each school will determine to whom this information will be released.

Upon receipt of a court order or lawfully issued subpoena the school shall comply, provided that the school makes a reasonable effort to notify the parent or eligible student of the order or subpoena in advance of compliance.

A school may release information regarding a student upon receipt of a request from the Department of Social Services, a probation officer, a justice of any court, or the Department of Youth Services under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 199, ss. 51B, 57, 69 and 69A respectively.

Amendment of Record:

The parent and student have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. In addition, the parent and student have the right to request that information in the record be amended or deleted. The parent and student have a right to a conference with the school Principal to make their objections known. Within a week after the conference, the Principal must render a decision in writing. If the parent and student are not satisfied with the decision, the regulations contain provisions through which the decision may be appealed to higher authorities in the school system.

Destruction of Student Records:

This is to inform you of the eventual destruction of students' records which are maintained by the school system. The records, which are described below, contain significant information that may be of importance. Because of this, you have the opportunity to examine and receive copies of any or all of the records, prior to their destruction.

In accordance with Department of Education regulations, different parts of the record will be destroyed at two points in the future. The majority of the information will be destroyed within five years of your graduation from high school.

Specifically, the information to be destroyed within seven (7) years from your graduation includes: results of standardized tests, including college board, personality, and intelligence tests; record of school-sponsored extracurricular activities; evaluations and reports by teachers, counselors, and others; attendance data; any and all Chapter 766 Special

Education records; all other information not listed below.

The following information may be destroyed only after sixty years: identifying information regarding student and parent or guardians; course titles and grades received; grade level completed and year completed. You have the right to examine and receive a copy of any or all of the above information at any time prior to its destruction. If you have any questions regarding records, please contact the Guidance Department at Manchester Essex.

Whenever a student is expelled for possession of a dangerous weapon or a controlled substance or assault on school staff, and the student applies for admission to another school, the Superintendent of the former school shall send written notification to the Superintendent of the new school of the reasons for such expulsion. The student is required to provide a complete copy of his/her school record when transferring to a new school district.

Hazing:

Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 269, requires that any person who is a "...principle (sic) organizer or participant in the crime of hazing...shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one hundred days, or by both such fine and imprisonment."

The term "hazing" is defined to include, but not be limited to, "...any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person."

Anyone who knows "...that another person is the victim of hazing...and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars."

Massachusetts Law, Chapter 622 Federal Law Title IX:

Massachusetts Law, Chapter 622, reads as follows:

"Every person shall have a right to attend the public schools of the town where he actually resides, subject to the following section. No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, gender identity, national origin or sexual orientation."

Federal Law Title IX reads as follows:

"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance..."

Manchester Essex Regional School District is in compliance with both of these laws. All courses of study, extracurricular activities, and services offered by the school are available without regard to race, color, sex, religion, gender identity, or national origin. Any student or parent or employee who feels he or she has been discriminated against should contact the Title IX Coordinator, through the Superintendent's Office at 978-526-4919. If the matter is not resolved within seven days, an appeal in writing should be sent to the Principal.

If the matter remains unresolved at the end of fourteen days, an appeal in writing may be made to the Superintendent, who will investigate the complaint and respond in writing within another fourteen days. The final step for complaints, if they are not resolved with the school officials, is the Bureau of Equal Opportunity in Boston for Chapter 622 violations, and the Office of Civil Rights at the R.K.O. General Building in Boston.

If the complainant does not wish to follow the route through the school officials, the complaint may be taken directly to the Bureau of Equal Opportunity or the Office of Civil Rights.

Please contact the Superintendent at 978-526-4919 regarding any question, which may arise.

Rehabilitative Act of 1973-Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitative Act of 1973 provides that: "no otherwise qualified handicapped individual...shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

It is the intention of Manchester Essex Regional School District to comply with this legislation. All courses of study, extracurricular activities, and services offered by the school are available without regard to handicap. The full text of Section 504 is available at the Superintendent's Office.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

<http://www.merms.mersd.org>

<http://www.mersd.org>

<http://www.manchester.ma.us/pages/index>

<http://www.essexma.org/pages/index>

Approved by the MERSD School Committee