



Student Handbook  
20232-20243

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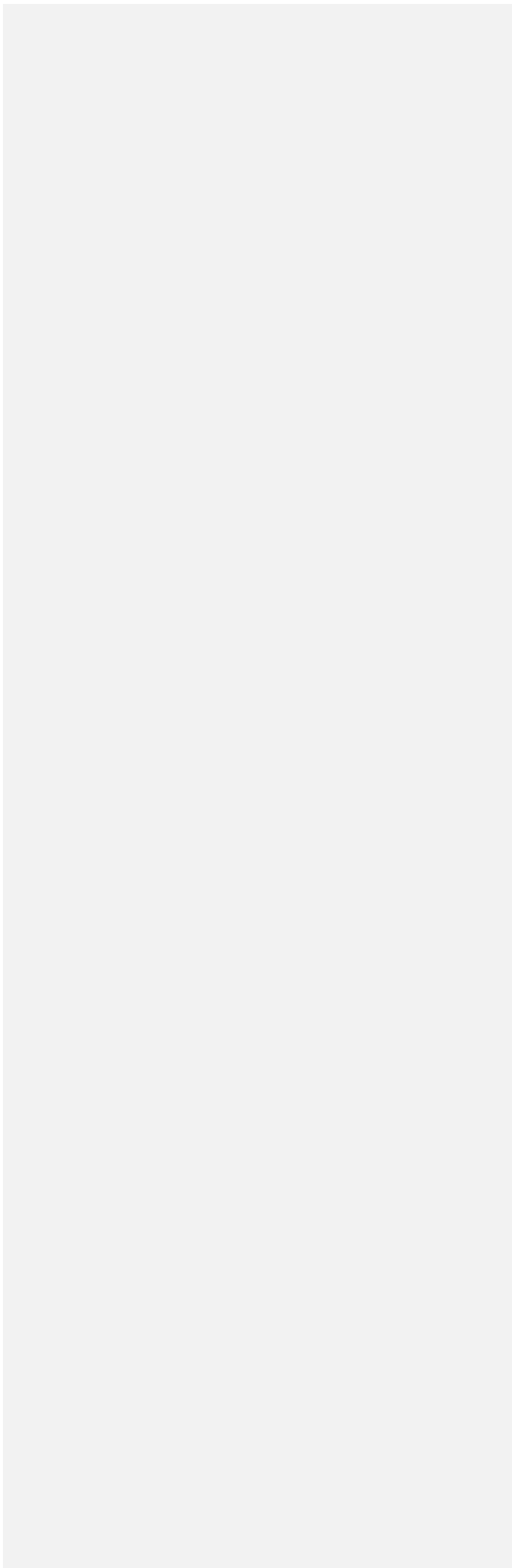
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### **MSA's Mascot**

The Phoenix—MSA's mascot—is a thing of fire and light, the colors of passion and never ending inspiration and creativity. Regardless of cultural interpretation, the phoenix is recognized universally as a thing of excellence and beauty. Each student at the Mississippi School of the Arts holds the same promise. Each individual can be the source of creativity and inspiration. Each administrator, faculty, staff member, and student can share the light...





## **Imagine**

**“If you can imagine it, you can dream it.  
If you dream it, you can become it.”**

**William Arthur Ward**

## **Create**

**“Imagination is the beginning of  
creation.**

**You imagine what you desire, you will what  
you imagine, and at last you create what you  
will.”**

**George Bernard Shaw**

## **Realize**

**“It has never been my object to record my  
dreams—  
just the determination to realize them.”**

**Man Ray**

## **MSA Alma Mater**

Lyrics by Jeanne Lebow, Ph.D.

Music by S. Patton Rice

### **Verse 1**

From the land of sweet magnolia,  
From the land of longleaf pine,  
From the land of spreading live oaks,  
We bring talents to combine.  
Shadows of the Whitworth campus  
Grace us as we work each day,  
Molding ourselves into artists  
Through song, ~~and~~ stage, film, pen and clay.

### **Chorus**

With the ancient firebird glorious,  
We will share a spark divine.  
Like the magic, feathered phoenix,  
Now we rise, we fly, we shine.

### **Repeat**

Like the magic, feathered phoenix,  
Now we rise, we fly, we shine.

### **Verse 2**

From the winding Mississippi,  
Pascagoula, and the Pearl,  
From the Delta to the bayous,  
Rivers of our talents swirl.  
Now in Johnson and in Lampton,  
We create, we work and play.  
Raising candles high, we students  
Light the heart of MSA.

### **Chorus & Repeat**

# Student Handbook

**Mississippi School of the Arts  
P.O. Box 229  
Brookhaven, MS 39602-0229  
Phone: (601) 823-1300  
Toll Free: 1-866-672-7871  
Fax: (601) 823-1555  
Website: <http://www.msabrookhaven.org>**

The Mississippi State Board of Education, the Mississippi Department of Education, the Mississippi School of the Arts, the Mississippi School for the Blind, the Mississippi School for the Deaf, and the Mississippi School for Math and Science do not discriminate based on race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, or disability in the provision of educational programs and services or employment opportunities and benefits. The following office has been designated to handle inquiries and complaints regarding the nondiscrimination policies of the above-mentioned entities:

School Records Officer  
Mississippi School of the Arts  
308 West Cherokee Street  
Brookhaven, MS 39601  
(601) 823-1300

## State Board of Education

Mrs. Rosemary G. Aultman, Chair

Mr. Glen East, Vice-Chair

Dr. Wendi Barrett

~~Dr. Angela Bass~~

~~Dr. Karen Elam~~

Mr. Charlie Frugée

~~Miss Micah Hill~~

Mr. Bill Jacobs

Dr. Ronnie McGehee

Mr. Matt Miller

Mrs. Mary Werner

~~Miss Amy Zhang~~

**Commented [KK1]:** Micah's term expires in April 2023 so she will not be a board member when the new school year starts.

## State Superintendent of Education

~~Carey Wright, Ed.D.~~ Dr. Robert P. Taylor

Michael D. Kent

**Commented [KK2]:** Mike Kent, Interim through June 30, 2023

**Commented [EM3R2]:** Michael D. Kent

## Chief Academic Officer

~~Kim Benton, Ed.D.~~

Dr. Donna Boone, Ph.D.

## Executive Director

~~Suzanne Hirsch, Ed.D.~~ Ed. D.

**Commented [EM4]:** We give their type of degrees for the leaders (different that the board)

# Overview

Welcome to the Mississippi School of the Arts (MSA)! Throughout time all people have expressed themselves through the arts. The accomplishments of Mississippi artists are without question, evidenced throughout our state's long history of artistic excellence. By selecting MSA, you will become an important part of that heritage. You have chosen a school where the educational environment will focus on creative expression, experimentation, and innovation within rigorous disciplines of study. Comprehensive residential and academic curricula prepare high school students for further study or the pursuit of employment.

MSA is located on the historic Whitworth College Campus in Brookhaven, about sixty miles south of Jackson. The campus is designated as a Mississippi Landmark and on the National Register of Historic Places. Construction and renovation of campus facilities are ongoing and dependent upon funding for capital improvements. The Mississippi School of the Arts is a residential school that provides advanced programs of study in dance, literary, media arts, theatre, visual arts and vocal music, for artistically gifted eleventh and twelfth grade students from throughout Mississippi. An instrumental music program will be added as funding and facilities become available.

## Preface

Admission to MSA is for one academic school year during which time a student must remain in good standing, both academically and residentially to retain their enrollment. Students deemed unwilling to accept the responsibility and commitment necessary to be successful at MSA will be dismissed according to policy.

Successful attendance at MSA is dependent upon student willingness and ability to follow the rules and regulations set forth in this handbook and administered by the school. The administration will enforce all rules and regulations in a reasonable manner, evaluating student progress on a regular basis.

To provide guidance, students and their parents/guardians should read the handbook carefully. Prior to the start of the year, parents and students will receive copies of the handbook for reference. At that time, students and parents will sign a contract stating that they have been given notice of the school rules and regulations including disciplinary policies found in this handbook. Please refer questions concerning the handbook to the Principal or the Executive Director.

The Mississippi School of the Arts is a special state residential public high school. **Attendance at the Mississippi School of the Arts is a privilege, not a right.** A student's right to access a free public education exists at the local school district in which the individual resides. Failure to comply with policies and procedures of the Mississippi School of the Arts may result in dismissal.

The policies set forth in this student handbook provide a reasonable guide for acceptable student behavior at [the Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#). Student, faculty, staff, and parent comments of suggestions are an integral part of the yearly evaluation and revision of the handbook. This handbook

as approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) governs all policies applicable to the schools governed by the SBE and is a publication of the [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#).

Student enrollment may be as a resident or a commuter. A student cannot have a dorm room if they are commuting. A change from resident to commuter status requires parental permission regardless of the age of the student. MSA reserves the right to require a student to become a commuter if they are not meeting requirements of living in a residential facility or if housing space is needed. All school regulations and policies affecting residential students apply equally to commuter students. Commuter students are required to participate in all academic school programs and are entitled to participate in residential life curriculum and activities sponsored by the school. Students must live within 25 miles of MSA to commute to school.

In addition to the policies and procedures outlined in the handbook, all MSA students and employees must abide by all applicable policies and procedures of the Brookhaven School District, state, and federal laws.

The guidelines in this handbook change over time and may be expanded or updated throughout the year. MSA will communicate handbook amendments to students and parents via school announcements, mail, e-mail, or website postings prior to the implementation of any changes.

## History and Purpose

The Mississippi School of the Arts (MSA) was created by legislative enactment during the 1999 regular session. Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 37-140-1 to 37-140-15 authorizes the following:

1. The Mississippi School of the Arts shall be a residential school for eleventh and twelfth grade high school students located on the campus of Whitworth College in Brookhaven, Mississippi.
2. The State Board of Education shall govern the school.
3. The purpose of the school shall be to provide a more challenging educational experience for artistically talented and gifted students of the state to develop their full potential, including the teaching of humanities, creative writing, literature, theatre, music, dance, and visual arts.
4. To the extent possible, the State Board of Education shall enter into agreements with the Board of Trustees of the Brookhaven School District for the dual enrollment of students for the purpose of teaching academic subjects to students attending the school, and the local school board shall be fully authorized to offer any such courses to students attending the school.

## Vision

At [the Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#), we envision a challenging, dynamic, supportive community of diverse learners where artists imagine, create, and realize a better world in which to live and work.

## Mission

The mission of the [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#) is to provide a challenging academic and arts education for artistically gifted and talented Mississippi students in a residential learning environment that promotes honor, integrity, service, and life-long learning.

## Philosophy

The [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#) recognizes the unique needs for the state of Mississippi in providing a challenging educational experience for artistically talented and gifted students for them to develop to their full potential in the areas of creative writing, dance, the humanities, literature, music, media arts, theatre, and the visual arts. The academic and residential life programs at MSA are designed to challenge each student based on individual needs, talents, capabilities, backgrounds, and

interests while meeting requirements necessary for high school graduation, college admission, and employment in a global ~~work-place~~[workplace](#).

Upon completion of campus facilities, the academic curriculum at MSA will provide students with arts and non-arts courses in six major programs of study: dance, music (vocal and instrumental), theatre, visual arts, media arts, and literary arts. Until additional capital improvement funds are available, MSA will limit major programs to dance, literary arts, media arts, theatre, visual arts, and vocal music. Non-arts curriculum includes courses such as English language arts, social studies, math, science, and foreign language. Opportunities at MSA will enable students to delve into all aspects of the curriculum to combine their creative abilities with other essential tools needed to succeed in the world of the future.

The faculty at MSA is distinguished by a depth and diversity of experiences and qualifications brought to specific areas of the academic program. MSA teachers must have a minimum of five years' experience and/or a higher collegiate degree with teaching experience; all campus faculty members meet the qualifications for Highly Qualified Teachers. Guiding students to their personal best through challenges and risk-taking in a supportive learning environment will be a primary goal of the school faculty and administration.

### School Colors and Mascot

The school colors are red and black. The phoenix is the school mascot.

### Governance

The Mississippi Legislature vested the State Board of Education with the authority to govern and supervise the school. The Executive Director, the chief administrative officer of the school shall administer the school in accordance with the policies established by the State Board. The Executive Director shall be responsible for those administrative duties and functions prescribed by the Board, and the Board, in its discretion, may delegate to the Executive Director such powers, as it deems appropriate.

The Executive Director—with the assistance of the Principal, School Finance Officer, the Director of Advancement, Residential Life, Food Services, and School Safety, School Records Officer, and the Technology Coordinator along with the faculty and staff—is directed and empowered to carry out all mandates of the legislature and the policies of the State Board of Education.

### Community and State Partnerships

Working closely with the Mississippi Department of Education; the Mississippi Department of Archives and History; and the Bureau of Buildings, Grounds and Real Property Management; Albert and Associates and Belinda Stewart Architects have designed a campus that will blend the restored historic buildings and contemporary new construction.

During the spring of 2000, the city of Brookhaven transferred the Whitworth College Campus, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, to the state of Mississippi. In addition, the city donated \$3,000,000 in bond proceeds to the [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) and received a \$1,500,000 HUD grant for use in campus improvements. Through an agreement with the Brookhaven School District, students take some non-arts courses at Brookhaven High School located approximately one-half mile from MSA.

The Mississippi School of the Arts Foundation was organized to provide support for the [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#). This supportive organization assists MSA by funding special events, projects, scholarships, and providing benevolent assistance to individual students in need. Matching funds for grants have generated diverse resources for campus improvements.

### Admissions

Students apply to the [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) during their sophomore year in high school in order to be admitted as juniors to MSA. The admissions process consists of two phases. In the

**Commented [KK5]:** The MSA website does not list a Director for School Safety. MSA may have one who is not listed on the website. That is fine. However, if MSA does not have a Director of School Safety, you may want to remove School Safety from the list. Otherwise, it could be argued that MSA said it was providing a person dedicated to safety when it was not. Another option, if there is no Director of School Safety, would be to change the sentence to include "campus security" in the list instead a Director of School Safety.

**Commented [SH6R5]:** Sandra Palomarez is Director of Safety, Maintenance and Facilities. I asked our technology coordinator to fix the website. She is a current sheriff deputy, served in military and served with police departments in Washington, California, and Mississippi.

application phase, students will be assessed through a review of the required forms, coursework, and recommendations. Students who meet the application criteria will be invited to MSA to participate in an on-site audition and interview. After the on-site audition, all applicants will receive notification of their admissions status.

MSA programs of study require two years for completion. Auditions are held in the spring for admission at the beginning of the fall semester. MSA will not conduct mid-year auditions or allow admission after the beginning of the school year. Students may not be admitted as seniors.

MSA will accept residential and commuting students. Available classroom space will determine the number of commuting students admitted. The geographic distance of the student's referring school to MSA will help determine residential status. Students who live outside the local area will receive priority in residential assignments.

Applicants for admission to the [Mississippi School of the Arts \(MSA\)](#) must meet the following criteria:

- Be a resident of Mississippi;
- Be a current tenth grader with a minimum of 12 Carnegie units/credits of study upon the completion of the tenth grade;
- Have earned Carnegie units of study in the following courses upon completion of the tenth grade<sup>1</sup>
  - English—2 credits (English I and II),
  - Mathematics—2 credits (Including Algebra I),
  - Physical Education—0.5 credit,
  - Science—2 credits (Biology and Chemistry recommended),
  - Social Studies—2 credits (Including World History, ~~World Geography~~, and Mississippi Studies),
  - Health—0.5 credit,
  - Business and Technology—1 credit (in accordance with Appendix A of MS Public School Accountability Standards) and
  - Foreign Language—Students are encouraged to complete at least 1 unit of ~~the 2 units required for college admission; a foreign language~~
- Have an overall high school grade point average of 2.5 at the conclusion of tenth grade (Schools must include all arts course grades in calculating overall GPA);<sup>2</sup>
- Submit a completed application packet, **copy of cumulative folder, and discipline record**;
- Demonstrate artistic achievement in the visual, performing, or literary arts through an audition;<sup>3</sup>
- Complete an interview (by invitation);

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<sup>1</sup> Students that do not meet the required coursework may ask for an exception from the Executive Director and/or Principal of MSA. There must be an extenuating circumstance (e.g. relocation due to natural disaster, school course availability, [school curriculum dictates](#), or long term illness) in order to qualify for an exception and documentation will be required. If a student is missing some of the requested courses listed, students must be able to take all the required coursework while enrolled for a timely graduation.

<sup>2</sup> All students who make it through the audition phase of the admissions process must provide a final transcript at the end of their sophomore year.

<sup>3</sup> Six programs of study for students entering the eleventh grade will be offered: dance, literary arts, media arts, theatre, visual arts, and vocal music.



- Audition and/or present a portfolio for review (by invitation): Visual and Literary Arts require students to submit a portfolio in the arts discipline in which they are applying;
- Students must take the ACT a minimum of one time prior to the start of their junior year (there is no minimum score required).

Acceptance to MSA is contingent on providing all required information and documentation, including but not limited to a complete and accurate application packet, cumulative folder and discipline record. Failure to provide all required information and documentation may result in the revocation of acceptance to attend MSA.

Student success is the primary goal of MSA educational programs. Students must apply as tenth graders and be admitted as juniors. MSA does not admit new students at midterm or those students who would be classified as seniors. However, if a student has recently moved to the state and has studied at an arts school that has programs comparable to those at MSA (e.g., New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts, North Carolina School of the Arts), the Principal and the Executive Director may review the student's transcripts and arts portfolio to determine admission to the school and whether the student could be successful within program requirements. In such circumstances, auditions may be required to verify student accomplishments. The decision of the administration regarding admissions due to special circumstances is final.

## Respect for Persons, Property and Privacy

Students are expected to be fully and always respectful of other people, including faculty, staff, other students, and guests on campus. Examples of inappropriate behavior that might violate this expectation include:

1. Use of language not deemed respectful or in good taste.
2. Engaging in inappropriate physical contact or improper demonstrations of affection or attraction.
3. Any form of harassment, hazing, or bullying, whether verbal or nonverbal.
4. Taking any property without the owner's express consent is considered theft. This policy includes ~~the access to~~ accessing the contents of backpacks or bags without specific permission to do so. The cost of willful damage to School property will be charged to a student's personal account.
5. Any form of vandalism or abuse of the School's or another's personal property is unacceptable. Trespassing on property not owned by the School is also a violation of this standard. The cost of willful damage to School property will be charged to a student's personal account.
6. Violating any federal, state, or local laws.
7. Engaging in behavior ~~with that~~ with that jeopardizes the welfare or good nature of the School or any members of the School community.
8. Students should be aware that certain activities outside of School hours or off School property may result in loss of School privileges or other disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Examples of such outside conduct include: violations of laws; underage purchase of alcohol; drug use, sale or possession; or use or misuse of digital content which does, or could compromise the welfare of any member of the School community or the reputation or function ~~for of~~ for the School.
9. Students are expected to always remain on campus except when leaving campus is scheduled, accompanied by staff, or approved by the School.
10. Girls and boys must respect the absolute privacy of each ~~other's others'~~ other's others' residential campuses.

This is not to be considered an exhaustive list of inappropriate behavior.

# Academics

The focus of the student academic program includes curriculum, instruction, assessment, academic and career counseling, special programs, recruiting, and outreach. Faculty will develop programs of study; design instructional strategies; supervise classroom management, special projects, evening practice and studies; and supervise various other activities deemed necessary for the continuous academic growth of all students. The staff includes the Executive Director, Principal, faculty, counselor, library media specialist, school nurse, and support staff.

The MSA philosophy mandates that every student, teacher, staff member, and administrator be responsible, contributing members of the learning community. The diverse, unique backgrounds of school community members will support the philosophy that everyone is a caretaker of MSA and, therefore, must act with integrity, honesty, and concern for the well-being of all. MSA will encourage and foster the on-going development of a strong value system and a sense of social responsibility.

## Philosophy

The Mississippi School of the Arts was created by the Mississippi Legislature to provide a challenging educational experience for artistically talented and gifted students of the state to develop their full potential. MSA seeks to create a unique educational environment providing superlative classroom instruction, renowned artists-in-residence, lectures from performers who lead in their artistic fields, field trips, mentorship, and student and faculty performances and art exhibitions.

The basic promise of MSA academic life is that students can attain academic and artistic success when all participants, including parents, students, faculty, staff, administration, and the surrounding community, work together to create a support system allowing students to take advantage of the unique opportunities available.

The philosophy of academic life at MSA is that all efforts will be made to ensure student academic success and that students will progress to their utmost in the [ir](#) arts and non-arts academic life. Students should recognize that study at MSA is a privilege and comes with responsibilities that they must uphold to fully capitalize on the unique opportunities offered. Students must meet state graduation requirements and additional MSA requirements to receive a diploma. (See the State and MSA Graduation Requirements in this handbook.)

Courses listed in the **Approved Courses for the Secondary School of Mississippi**, as well as other state-approved courses, will be accepted for credit. In addition to the successful completion of the required Carnegie units, a student must meet testing requirements as set forth by the Mississippi Department of Education to graduate.

## MSA Student Honor Code

Students shall pledge to work diligently to uphold the values of academic integrity.

As a student at the Mississippi School of Arts, I will uphold the values of academic integrity. In keeping with the principles of academic honesty and productive citizenship, I pledge a personal commitment to the fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. *"I will respect others and honor their rights, privileges, and belongings. I will value differences among people, customs, and ideologies, while opposing hatred, bigotry, and bias toward others. Furthermore, I will..."* model and promote ideals of *"...human dignity in my academic, social, and residential settings while working to create a living and learning environment that is safe and secure for all."*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The MSA Student Honor Code was adapted from The Southern Miss Code of Honor. Quoted sections are italicized and enclosed in quotes.

## Bell Schedule

### MSA Regular Class Schedule (subject to change)

7:35 a.m.	Warning bell for bus loading
7:40 a.m.	Bus leaves for BHS
<b>8:00-9:34 a.m.</b>	<b>Block 1</b>
9:34-9:55 a.m.	Tutorial Sessions or Morning Break
<b>9:55-11:29 a.m.</b>	<b>Block 2</b>
11:29-12:14 p.m.	Lunch
<b>12:14-1:48 p.m.</b>	<b>Block 3</b>
<b>1:52 -3:26 p.m.</b>	<b>Block 4</b>
<b>3:30-5:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Tutorial/Online/Production Block</b>

### Teacher as the Authority in the Classroom

The [Mississippi School of the Arts](#) MSA is governed by the State Board of Education. MSA recognizes that the teacher as the authority in the classroom matters and supports that the teacher in any decision that is in compliance with the written discipline code of conduct. Such recognition shall include the right of the teacher to remove from the classroom to the office of the principal any student who, in the professional judgment of the teacher, is disrupting the learning environment, to the office of the principal.

The principal shall determine the proper placement for the student, who may not be returned to the classroom until a conference of some kind has been held with the parent, guardian, or custodian during which the disrupting behavior is discussed, and agreements are reached that no further disruption will be tolerated. If the principal does not approve of the determination of the teacher to remove the student from the classroom, the student may not be removed from the classroom, and the principal, upon request from the teacher, must provide justification for his or her disapproval.

A student who causes a disruption in the classroom, on school property or vehicles, or at school-related activities may be subject to discipline actions. School officials, the reporting teacher, and the student's parent will develop a behavior modification plan for a student who causes a disruption in the classroom, on school property or vehicles, or at school-related activities for a second time during the school year.

### Classroom Misbehavior

MSA holds [all each](#) students accountable for his or her behavior while attending class, participating in field trips, attending concerts, or at any period of time that the student is otherwise representing the Mississippi School of the Arts or is under the supervision and is the responsibility of the school. As the ultimate authority in the classroom, the teacher is charged with classroom management. Students may not carry or play musical instruments in classrooms, except with advance written approval by the instructor. Wearing sunglasses in class is not acceptable. Hats are allowed at the teacher's discretion. Classroom misbehavior includes, but is not limited to, disrespect, disruption, failure or refusal to follow directions, failure to complete classroom assignments in a timely manner, or failure to stay awake in class. When an incident occurs that cannot be resolved by the instructor, it is referred to the Principal.

## Subject Area Testing

In keeping with **State Board of Education Policy**, students must take academic end-of-course tests to graduate.

Students entering MSA who have not passed the required Subject Area Tests may be tested during the first testing administration scheduled for transfer students and re-testers. MSA faculty and staff will work with students and parents in preparing and successfully completing each test required for graduation. In addition, MSA will work with students who have not passed the Subject Area Tests to accomplish the alternative assessment options through ACT or dual enrollment/dual credit coursework to insure graduation.

## Graduation Requirements

In addition to eight mandatory Carnegie Units of arts classes while enrolled, the [Mississippi School of the Arts](#) requires courses outlined by the Mississippi Department of Education for graduation, which can be found at [www.mdek12.org](http://www.mdek12.org).

## Special Education

It is the policy of the Mississippi [School of the Arts](#) to comply with all provisions of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Carl Perkins Act of 1984, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of ~~1983~~1973, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA). Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving federal financial assistance. No discrimination against any person with a disability will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs and practices of the school. To ensure the school's compliance, as it applies to students with disabilities, the following procedures have been adopted.

1. The 504 Coordinator (MSA Principal) and counselor will seek to **detect students with special education needs**, by examining the records of current and incoming students.
2. The 504 Committee will consist of the Principal, an academic counselor, an MSA teacher and the Federal Programs Staff of the Brookhaven School District.
3. The Special Education Director of the Brookhaven School District serves as the MSA Special Education liaison and may be reached at (601) 835-1211.
4. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) committee will consist of all required members pursuant to 34 C.F.R. § 300.321; Miss. Admin. Code 7-3:74.19, State Board Policy Chapter 74, Rule 74.19, § 300.321.
5. The Mississippi State Board of Education, the Mississippi Department of Education, and the Mississippi School of the Arts do not discriminate based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or disability in the provision of educational programs and services or employment opportunities and benefits. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment must be handled in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Mississippi Department of Education Board Policy Part 3, Chapter 99, Rule 99.1.

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## Discipline of Students with IDEA and Section 504 Eligibility

Students with disabilities are responsible for adhering to the same rules of conduct as students without disabilities. The school complies with all provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Mississippi laws, and State Board Policy Chapter 74, Rule 74.19 when implementing discipline procedures for students with disabilities.

## Mississippi Scholars

The Mississippi Scholars mission is to encourage and motivate all high school students to complete a defined, rigorous academic course of study that prepares them for successful transition to college or university coursework or vocational and technical training necessary to enter today's competitive job market. The State Scholars Initiative is a national program, operating across the country. It utilizes business leaders to motivate students to complete a more challenging course of study in high school.

Mississippi joined the State Scholars Initiative in 2003. Since then, thousands of Mississippi High School students have graduated with the Mississippi Scholars distinction. The Mississippi Scholars course of study gives students the foundation they need to succeed in a technical school, community college, university, the military, or industry.

Although this community sponsored program is optional for students, MSA encourages students to participate and will help facilitate their course schedules so that they can be successful. Mississippi Scholars are high school students who have completed the Scholars course of Study, a specific sequence of academic courses in math, science, language arts, and social studies. The Mississippi Scholars philosophy is based on the belief that is better to pass an academically challenging course than to get a higher grade in an easier course.

MSA began participating in the Mississippi Scholars Program in 2005. Students who complete the Mississippi Scholars Program will be recognized at Graduation and the Academic Awards Program. These students will also receive a Mississippi Scholars medal and a seal on the transcript and diploma.

Graduating as a Mississippi Scholar means a student:

- Acquires advanced academic skills,
- Develops sound decision making and critical thinking skills,
- Is prepared for college and reduces the likelihood of needing costly remedial courses,
- Is a stronger candidate for certain types of financial aid and scholarships, and
- Has enhanced opportunities for placement and future advancement with local and international employers.

### Mississippi Scholars Course of Study Requirements

Content Area	Credits Required	Courses Required
English Language Arts	4	English I (1), English II (1), two additional English credits above English II and approved for IHL admission
Mathematics	4	Algebra I (1), Geometry (1), Algebra II (1) and any one Carnegie Unit of comparable rigor and content may come from Mathematics courses approved for Mississippi Scholars credit
Science	4	Biology I (1), Chemistry (1) <b>and</b> any two Carnegie Units of comparable rigor and content <u>above Biology I and Chemistry</u> (Physics [1] preferred; 1 may come from CTE course)
Social Studies	4	World Geography (.5), Mississippi Studies (.5), World History <u>Studies</u> (1), U.S. History (1), U.S. Government (.5), <u>and</u> Economics (.5)
Advanced Electives	2	Foreign Language I (1), Foreign Language II (1), <u>a</u> 5 <sup>th</sup> Math or Science of higher rigor or any 2 Dual Credit classes
Arts	1	1 Credit or two units of the 2-course sequence Computer Graphics Technology I & II
Additional Expectations:		80 Hours of Community Service; <u>2.5</u> Cumulative High School GPA; <u>19</u> on ACT composite score; <u>95%</u> School Attendance during MSA enrollment; <u>Three</u> Letters of Recommendation from Principal, Guidance Counselor, and <u>business</u> /community leader if there are more than 4 <u>out-of-school</u> suspensions; <u>and no out-of-school suspension</u>
<b>Please Note: In addition to the above courses, Mississippi Scholars must complete any remaining state-mandated high school and MSA graduation requirements.</b>		

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Advanced Placement, online, Dual Enrollment, and Dual Credit courses may be substituted in Mississippi Scholars Subject Areas, but are not required (e.g., AP U.S. History instead of regular U.S. History).

## Progress Reports and Report Cards

Student progress reports and report cards will be mailed to parents near the middle—or at the end—of each nine-week grading period. Student grade reports are meant to ensure that parents are knowledgeable about their child’s academic progress at MSA and BHS. Parents with questions about progress reports or report cards should discuss their concerns with the teacher. Please call 601-823-1300 to arrange a conference, if desired.

## Academic Records

The MSA counselor works cooperatively with the MSA registrar in maintaining academic records per the guidelines set by the Mississippi Department of Education and federal law. Current and former students may request transcripts with the Transcript Request Form with all information completed prior to submission to be sent to colleges, scholarship agencies, etc. by contacting either individual.

## Transcripts and Other Educational Records

From time to time, students and/or their parents may request official or unofficial transcripts during the eleventh and twelfth grade for college applications, acceptance to special programs, etc. Transcripts requested prior to graduation are provided free of charge. After graduation, each student is provided a free, sealed official transcript. For student use, an unofficial copy is also included with official graduation documents. Thereafter, requests for additional transcripts must be made using the MSA Request for Transcript Form. The cost for each additional transcript for Alumni is \$5.00 to defer costs of postage and handling. The **MSA Request for Transcript** form can be downloaded on the MSA website – [www.msabrookhaven.org](http://www.msabrookhaven.org).

When a student withdraws from the [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](http://www.msabrookhaven.org), the school where the student is seeking enrollment must request official education records. Cumulative records will be mailed to the enrolling school’s guidance office upon receipt of an official request providing that parent(s) or guardian(s) have completed the MSA Enrollment Withdrawal Form. Parental request is not sufficient for the release of school records unless the student is documented as enrolled in Home School.

## Grading Scale

Reports of student progress will be sent home at the end of the first five weeks of each nine-week period and each semester grading period. Information will be available on a daily basis via Internet access. The parent is responsible for checking the report card carefully and contacting the school with questions. If a student has a failing grade, a conference may be scheduled between the teacher and the parent or guardian.

### *MSA Grading Scale—All Courses*

A	90-100	4.0
B	80-89	3.0
C	70-79	2.0
D	65-69	1.0
F	Below 65	Failing

**The lowest passing grade is a 65.**

Online courses and Brookhaven High School may have different grading scales. The grade earned will be recorded on student transcripts as stipulated by those institutions.

## Grading Policies

The grading policies for each class are determined by the teacher and are communicated to the student through information distributed at the beginning of each semester. Interim or progress reports, phone

calls, and other methods of communicating with parents will provide any additional reports that evaluate each student on related issues such as attitude, completion of projects, and homework. End-of-the-semester assignments may include performing in a concert or recital, presenting artworks in an exhibit, or group or individual performances and may be part of the final grade.

Due to the expectations of the school, end of year performances, some competitions, exhibits and showcases in courses are not optional and must be completed to receive credit for coursework.

### **Incomplete Grades**

If the work is not completed according to assignment timelines and make-up policies in relation to excused absences, the teacher will assign the student an "F" or a zero (0) for the assignment, depending upon the amount of work submitted. Under special circumstances (e.g., extended hospitalization, documented illness at home) a student may petition the Principal for more time; granting extensions will be left to the discretion of the Principal.

### **Make Up Work**

Students with excused absences—including school-approved absences—may make up tests, class work, exams, lab work, or assignments without penalty if make-up deadlines are met. Students must turn in or make up work that was due on the day the student was absent immediately upon return to class following the absence. The amount of time provided to make up work that was assigned during the absence would be equal to the number of days of the excused absence plus one day. Students who fail to complete and turn in assignments within the stipulated time shall receive a zero for the assignment. Teachers shall not allow students more time than policy allows.

In the event of an extended illness or prolonged excused absence due to extenuating circumstances approved by the Principal, teachers will be cooperative in providing make-up opportunities. The ultimate responsibility for obtaining and returning completed make-up work rests with the student.

### **Grade Challenges**

The faculty maintains all grades for students. If a student disagrees with an assigned grade, he/she must request a meeting with the teacher within ten working days of issuance. If still not satisfied, the student may file a letter explaining the challenge of the grade [to-with](#) the Principal delineating the steps the student has taken up to this point. Within ten (10) business days of receiving the letter, the Principal will meet, either jointly or separately, with all involved parties to make a decision. The final step is to appeal to the Executive Director. The decision of the Executive Director is final.

### **Course Selections**

Rising seniors should refer to high school graduation requirements and college entrance requirements, as well as their performance as a junior, when making course selections. Pursuit of classes to enhance a college or university major is encouraged. To graduate from MSA, students must select and successfully complete an arts discipline major consisting of eight (8) required Carnegie units.

The school will operate generally in a four-block with an extended fifth block as needed for rehearsals, online classes, or tutorials. Student schedules will include classes, rehearsals, projects, research projects, assemblies, presentations, required field trips and other academic assignments and experiences throughout the day, into the evening, and on weekends. MSA will provide a minimum of 180 days of instruction as required by state law, Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-91(2)(e) and(i). Some courses may be scheduled in late afternoon or at night.

### **Schedule Changes**

Students select courses to fulfill their major fields of study and graduation requirements. Students may not request schedule changes to choose a specific teacher. The counselor or designated staff member will make all schedule changes based on the availability of space. Requests must be made by the first five days of any half credit courses or ten days of any full credit courses. Until formally notified in writing,

students must follow their schedules as assigned. Course adjustments at BHS must be requested through MSA. Students must continue to attend BHS courses as assigned until their schedule is changed.

## Dropping a Class

Students who wish to drop a class must seek an appointment with the MSA counselor for advice. If the counselor determines that a student should drop a course, and the parent/guardian has approved the action, the change will be made. If a student drops a one (1) unit course after the first ten (10) days of the course, a letter grade of "F" will be assigned and a numerical grade equal to the student's average in the course as of that date. If a student drops a half (.5) unit course after the first five (5) days of the course, a letter grade of "F" will be assigned and a numerical grade equal to the student's average in the course as of that date.

If dropping a course results in a student taking less than a full-time load (four 1.0 credit courses), campus work duty will be assigned for the duration of the time remaining in the semester. In such a situation, the student must report for work duty as if they are attending a class. Tardies and absences will be recorded.

## Advanced Placement Program (AP)

MSA offers AP courses in several academic programs. The AP program is sponsored by the College Board ([www.apcentralap.collegeboard.org](http://www.apcentralap.collegeboard.org)) and is a national curriculum that allows students to earn college credit through examination. Highly motivated students who do not enroll in the AP class but are willing to independently prepare, may also register to take an AP exam. Although there are no prerequisites for enrollment in an AP course and all students are encouraged to take rigorous courses, students with strong reading and writing skills usually do better in these programs of study. Students' past grades in a subject area will help determine if AP courses are best for them.

The [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#) offers AP courses to provide students with an opportunity to take challenging work—essentially courses taught at the collegiate level that require significantly more work than the standard high school subject area class. Students who achieve a qualifying score (3 or better) on the AP U.-S. History examination (for example) may receive 3 or more hours of college credit at some colleges and universities that give credit by AP examination.

The benefits of AP courses for students include:

1. The AP curriculum requires that students develop strong study skills, which will greatly benefit them in college. AP classes foster academic maturity and self-esteem.
2. Successful completion of AP courses helps students stand out in the college admissions process. College admissions personnel rate students who take AP courses higher than those who don't.
3. MSA gives additional weight to AP classes in computing class rank and quality point average.
4. Students can earn a minimum of 3 hours of college credit as a high school student for every AP examination they pass.

The benefits of AP courses for parents/guardians include:

1. Students receive excellent academic preparation, which improves their chances of being successful in college by building strong study, time management, and critical thinking skills.
2. Tuition expenses are reduced because the cost of an AP exam is less than a 3-hour college course.

**All** MSA AP teachers attend summer institutes, which are recommended for Advanced Placement certification; the College Board approves course syllabi. MSA expects students who enroll in an AP class to take the AP examination. MSA offers courses in the following subjects: AP U.S. History, AP English Literature, and AP English Language. Brookhaven High School offers AP courses in science and mathematics areas, which MSA students may take if enrolled in those classes. Depending upon the numbers of interested students, all AP subjects may not be offered every year.

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Field Code Changed



Refer to the College Board website for average costs of the tests. Financial assistance is available for students who qualify. Students or parents should contact the MSA counselor for more information. Questions about the AP program or fees can be addressed to the MSA counselor or MSA AP teachers.

## Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment/Collegiate Academy

MSA partners with Copiah-Lincoln Community College (Co-Lin) to offer dual credit and dual enrollment opportunities to students through online and in the MSA class schedule. Dual enrollment is when a student is enrolled in a community college while enrolled in high school and receives college credit for work. Dual Credit is when a student is enrolled at both the community college and high school and receives both high school and post-secondary credit for coursework. To enroll, students must meet minimum ACT and Carnegie Unit requirements as set by the college. Class fees and textbook costs associated with the courses are the responsibility of the enrolled students and their parents. Students and their families are responsible ~~to follow for following~~ Copiah-Lincoln Community College's deadlines with regard to dropping or withdrawing as well as any fees associated with these actions. Students must meet attendance requirements set by the college to receive credit for the coursework. Transcripts documenting the course can only be retrieved after the student graduates from high school and submits a final high school transcript with a transcript request form directly to the college. Students are responsible for honoring all rules and regulations as set forth by the college while enrolled. For 2023-2024, all fees will be paid by the MSA except fees associated with dropping/withdrawing from a class. ~~All fees should be paid directly to the college through the student's online account or to the Copiah-Lincoln Community College business office. Students are not allowed to register for courses for the next semester until their balance is paid in full. It is suggested that all fees are paid in full for the fall semester by October 31 and March 31 for the spring semester.~~

Through a partnership with Co-Lin, juniors can apply to be a part of a pilot Collegiate Academy program to pursue an Associate's Degree while at MSA through Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit. The dual enrollment/dual credit coursework will support graduation requirements of the MSA as well as degree requirements of the College. If the student needs additional coursework for the Associate's Degree, they have the opportunity to enroll in the summer for coursework to complete the Associate's degree and MSA graduation requirements. Fees Related costs for the classes will be paid by the MSA while enrolled whileand maintaining eligibility requirements as deemed by the MSA and Co-Lin. Student application procedures will be established and distributed in summer 2023 with an application deadline in early fall 2023. The program will begin in January 2024 with an anticipated completion date in May 2025.

## Off Blocks for Students

Students are not allowed to be in active classrooms if they are on off blocks unless they have work to do for a course directly taught by that classroom teacher. If the student needs to meet with a teacher, he or she must make an appointment that is outside of class time for the teacher and the student (before school, after school, planning period). If at any time a student that needs to work in a classroom on a project for that teacher distracts other students or the teacher, he or she must leave the classroom.

## Attendance

The State of Mississippi, as expressed by the Compulsory School Attendance Statute, has established responsible attendance habits as a priority for all Mississippi students. A compulsory-school-age child is defined by Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-91(2)(f). Parents need to support the school by having their student arrive to school on time.

When a compulsory-school-age student has accumulated five unexcused absences, the school shall report the absences to the appropriate school attendance officer in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-91(6). In accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-91(4), a compulsory-school-age child who has an absence that is more than thirty-seven percent (37%) of the instructional day must be considered absent the entire school day.

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Commented [KK13]: Will MSA pay the fees associated with dropping or withdrawing a class? The earlier part of the paragraph indicates that is the parents' responsibility. If that is the case, we may want to state that MSA is responsible for all fees except those associated with dropping/withdrawing from a class. If MSA will pay all fees, then we need to adjust the earlier part of the paragraph. Later in the handbook, it indicates that students will reimburse MSA if they fail or drop a course. This just needs to be clarified.

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An excused absence is an absence from school for all day(s) or for any number of periods of the day under circumstances granted by law or recognized by the school. A complete list of all excused absences may be found at Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-91(4). The principal or superintendent must approve pre-arranged absences. The parent/guardian should inform the school in writing at least two days prior to the absence. No excused pre-arranged absences will be granted during exams.

## **Class Attendance**

To take full advantage of the opportunities offered at MSA, students must keep absences to an absolute minimum. Absences from class are either excused or unexcused. Excused absences are given for illness (confirmed by a note from the MSA nurse, other designated staff, or a physician), school-related activities, required family activities, and other justified requests received and approved two (2) days prior to the absence by the Principal in writing. The final authority on approval of requests or absences rests with the Principal based upon review of the recommendation from the classroom teacher. It is recommended whenever possible that family activities, recurring medical appointments at home, and other scheduled activities requiring the student to leave campus are-be scheduled during extended weekends and school holidays to facilitate the fullest classroom attendance. **Medical excuses must be given to the Attendance Secretary in the Principal's office immediately upon the first school day the student returns. If desired, a medical excuse may be faxed directly from the doctor's office to the Attendance Secretary at 601-823-1555. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the fax arrives. Students must not leave excuses at the desk in the Student Life Center. Failure to provide an excuse will result in an unexcused absence.**

To participate in any school functions (prom, dances, performances, rehearsals, clubs, meetings, etc.) students must be present a minimum of 63% of the school day of or prior to the function. In addition, students missing two or more class periods will not be allowed to check out of the dormitory in the after-school hours.

## **Absences Due to School-Related or Approved Functions**

All school related academic functions and academic field trips are requested through the Principal's office and considered excused absences. Students on academic or disciplinary probation or suspension may not be allowed to participate in school related/approved functions until given permission from the Principal. Absences due to participation in school or sports activities at Brookhaven High School are excused.

Absences due to "ride leaving early" or parent/guardian or other authorized adult arriving early to pick a student up before dismissal time are unexcused unless the reason for such early departure is a required family activity or other justified request which would substantiate an excused absence. Absences incurred because students ride the train or bus home are considered excused because the schedules of public transportation cannot be altered according to the MSA schedule. All other excuses are considered unexcused until proper documentation on the correct form is produced, following approved processes.

## **Tardiness and Absenteeism**

Students must report to class on time. During the first few days of school, schedule adjustments may cause delays in getting to class. Beginning with the third full day of school of each semester, students will receive consequences for tardiness.

### **Definitions:**

**Tardy:** Students are tardy if they arrive after time for a class to begin. Three (3) tardies that are less than 30 minutes equal one (1) unexcused absence. An unexcused tardy that exceeds 30 minutes is automatically counted as an unexcused absence. Tardies and absences are calculated by individual class period. Commuter students must consider traffic patterns to be on time for first period class and/or the bus ride to BHS. Only the MSA administration, faculty, counselor, librarian, or school nurse may grant an excused tardy.

**Absence:** When a student misses 30 minutes or more in a class, an absence will be recorded. Absences fall into two categories: excused and unexcused. The following are examples of excused absences:

1. **Authorized school activities** with prior approval by the Executive Director including field trips, athletic contests, student conventions, music festivals, exhibitions, performances, [and](#) etc.;
2. **Illness or injury** which prevents students from being physically able to attend school (for MSA students living on campus, the school nurse or a doctor must provide an excuse to verify the illness);
3. **Isolation** ordered by a county health officer, State Board of Health, or appropriate school official;
4. **Death or serious illness** of a member of the immediate family (i.e., children, spouse, grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters, including stepbrothers and stepsisters);
5. **Medical or dental appointments** when an approval is acquired from the Executive Director or Principal in advance, except in the case of an emergency;
6. **Required attendance** at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal if the child is party to the action or under subpoena as a witness;
7. **Required or suggested attendance** or observance of a religious event;
8. **Valid educational opportunities** such as travel including vacations or other family travel when an approval is acquired from the Executive Director or Principal in advance; and
9. **Demonstration** to the Executive Director or Principal in advance when conditions are sufficient to warrant absence from school.

Minor illness (menstrual cramps, headaches, minor colds) is not considered a justifiable reason to miss classes. When an unplanned absence occurs because of injury or illness, parents of commuter students must contact the school immediately by calling the Administrative Office. Upon return, the student must provide a doctor's excuse for the absence. The school nurse will provide a **Health Center Pass** to the Attendance Secretary each day that a student is ill on campus. The Attendance Secretary will e-mail a **Daily Attendance Report** to the teachers to notify them of excused absences so that teachers will know whether students are allowed to make up work missed.

A student who is ill must inform the nurse as soon as possible. Students who do not check in with the nurse will not receive an excuse for illness and will receive a disciplinary action for skipping class. Parents cannot give permission to a student to stay in their rooms without consultation with the school nurse.

1. Going to the nurse does not automatically excuse a student from class. The nurse and/or a doctor must substantiate the seriousness of the illness. A minor illness does not justify an excused absence.
2. At any time during the school day, an excused absence will be granted providing the student has gone to nurse or other designated adult and has a substantiated illness.
3. Students excused from two or more classes because of illness shall not attend school functions that day and are expected to remain in the residence hall room except for meals unless written permission from a physician or the school nurse is provided. Students excused from class attendance must receive permission from the nurse to leave the residence hall. Students cannot attend any school functions when confined to "bed rest" unless approval is obtained from the nurse or a physician.
4. When a student is not returning to school from a holiday and/or weekend at home because of illness, the parents must contact the school immediately. The absence will be recorded as excused upon return of the student to MSA with a doctor's excuse.
5. [The absences of](#) students with unsubstantiated illnesses who refuse to go to class will [result in the absences being](#) recorded as unexcused. Excessive unexcused absences will result in notification of the School Attendance Officer.
6. Violation of the above policies may result in an unexcused absence and disciplinary action.
7. Parents are requested to carefully consider allowing students to miss class due to minor illnesses as these absences disrupt their academic progress.

When a commuter student is suddenly absent for other reasons, his or her parents must call the school Attendance Secretary to explain the absence. The determination of excused or unexcused will be made after the phone call. Parents have permission to grant one absence per semester with the Parent Excuse Form and if it is turned in compliant with procedures for all excused absences.

**Parents should refrain from allowing their child to check out early—especially on Fridays—or return to school late on Mondays after they have been home for the weekend. Students may not check out until 2:00 p.m. on full days of class scheduled for go home Fridays. Excused absences are the exception.**

An absence that occurs due to a MSA (or BHS) imposed disciplinary action shall not be counted as a separate violation of the policy against the number of allowed unexcused absences. When a student accumulates five (5) unexcused absences in a single course, a report will be made to the school School Attendance Officer. Pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-91(4), students who have been suspended are considered unexcused and only major grades may be made up.

Regular school attendance is required by the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law, Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-91. Under this Law, parents must inform MSA of the reason for the child's absence and the school policy and/or administration are required to designate the absence as excused or unexcused. Please see the previous page for the nine reasons a student may receive an excused absence under Mississippi Law. Any parent found in non-compliance with the Law may be subject to fines and/or imprisonment.

**All excuses for absences must be turned in within three days of returning from an absence in order to complete make up work.**

### **Excessive Absences and Tardies**

Excessive, unexcused absences and tardies have been troublesome on the MSA campus. When students leave their rooms in the morning, students must take books, equipment, supplies, and personal items necessary for the day. When students have an off block, ample spaces exist in the common areas of the dorm (e.g., cafeteria, patio, library, computer lab, and fitness center) and outside on the campus to accommodate student needs. Students must not visit classes that are in session and should not be present in the Johnson Institute unless they are scheduled to be in class or with a teacher by appointment.

To emphasize the importance of regular school attendance, students and their parents will receive a copy of the MSA attendance policy at registration. Students and parents will sign a contract acknowledging that they have received the document and understand that regular school attendance is necessary to ensure academic success. To remain in good standing at MSA, students must be prepared for class, be on time, and attend class every day. Absences will be monitored each semester. Any student with 5 or more unexcused absences will be placed on an attendance plan, which could affect the student's privilege plan. **Students with less than 95% attendance per year (based on unexcused absences) will also be ineligible for honors at graduation.**

### **Permission for Planned Absence**

When a parent requires a student to leave school for reasons other than school vacations or off campus weekends, the Principal must grant permission **prior to the absence**. An excused absence approval will be forwarded to the Attendance Secretary so that the student may notify teachers prior to the excused absence. Students may be excused for the following essential reasons: college days, medical, religious, and family emergency reasons, or family commitments.

### **Requests for College Days**

For college days, students should submit a Request for College Day Form to the Attendance Secretary at least five days prior to departure. In general, seniors are allowed two college days. If more days are

needed for a single trip (e.g., for traveling out of state or additional college visits, auditions, or interviews), students must acquire the approval of the Principal in advance. Juniors are allowed one college day. College days are not permitted the week of exams. If college days are planned during exam week, it will count as an unexcused absence. Students must take as few college days as possible to ensure that absences are not detrimental to their academic progress. Class work and homework must be completed in the prescribed time designated in the Make-Up Policy.

## Field Trips

Field trips are an important extension of the curriculum. Students are afforded many opportunities during the school year to travel in state and out-of-state. With this privilege comes the responsibility to exhibit expected behaviors while representing MSA. Trip administrators, teachers, or staff members in charge will communicate expectations, and the policies of the student handbook are applicable during all travels. Violators will be referred to the Principal. All students should travel in MSA provided transportation. Under special circumstances, students may drive their cars when written parental permission has been provided in advance. In such situations, students will follow behind the bus when possible. Students will sign out of school and drive at their own risk for school functions if this request is granted in advance. Students are encouraged to participate in all field trips sponsored by the school or their teachers. Students are responsible for contacting teachers prior to missing a class for any field trip scheduled by another instructor.

The following guidelines will govern school-sponsored trips:

- Students are responsible for obtaining class and homework assignments missed as a result of field trips. All work must be completed in accordance with the [makeMake-Up Policy](#).
- The General Permissions Information Form [signed by parents](#) provides parental [signature authority](#) allowing students to participate in all school sponsored field trips. Additional permission slips for [out-out-of-state](#) travel will be required for students to participate.
- Rules and regulations found in the MSA handbook pertain to all school-sponsored trips.
- A student without all required signed permission forms and/or assessed fees by the trip date may not participate in the field trip.
- A student not meeting basic academic requirements may be denied participation in the field trip.

## Assembly Attendance

Students must attend all assigned assemblies unless excused by the Principal. A student excused from an assembly is responsible for obtaining any information and/or announcements from the assembly that was missed. Students must sit in areas assigned to their specific class. Students who do not have classes scheduled will sit in the section supervised by the school staff.

## Appropriate Content

The [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) is a public high school on a campus that includes residential support services. The school seeks to provide a safe and healthy, positive learning environment. In keeping with this philosophy, things such as tobacco, drug, or alcohol usage, profanity, violence, abuse, lewdness, nudity, sexuality, or any other suggestive subject matter is not considered appropriate content in student generated works created in any medium (e.g., written, performed, electronic, artworks, video, photographs, [or](#) cartoons). Additionally, work created of a controversial nature, shall be discussed and approved with the sponsoring adult/teacher, as well as the administration, prior to the presentation of the work. This policy applies to all aspects of the campus; students and faculty members shall refrain from generating, producing, or performing works that might be questionable. Written and published works may have to be edited to be appropriate for use in a public school context where students are minor children. Questions regarding appropriate content should be addressed to the Principal or Executive Director. Students and their parents will sign a contract at registration stating that they know and understand policies related to appropriate content. There may be additional parameters set in the classroom or specific departments to further protect the students and school. For questionable content, students will submit an approval form in advance prior to creating the work.

## Free Speech, Assembly, and Publication

Students are entitled to freedom of expression if the expression does not disrupt and/or interfere with normal school operations and discipline. Profane, vulgar, racist, or harassing words by their nature disrupt the educational environment and may not be used. Students are responsible, when assembling, for exhibiting appropriate behavior and policies of the school as established in this handbook.

## Visual Art Senior Work Donation Policy

The [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#) requests that all graduating seniors select one piece of artwork created during their two-year study at the school to be considered for donation to the permanent collection.

The selection process will be as follows:

1. The visual art instructors will work together to select four pieces of art that have been deemed of high quality from each senior portfolio.
2. The student will select one of the four choices to be donated to the school.
3. After each student has selected their work of art to be considered for donation, all of the seniors selected pieces will be put on display from time to time as part of the rotating art exhibits.
4. Students understand that ~~after~~ 12 months after graduation, the artwork not in the permanent collection may be sold to benefit the art department, donated to a good cause, or displayed in venues off of MSA's campus.

Storage of artwork after graduation:

Students are responsible ~~for taking to take~~ all their artwork home shortly after school is out. Any artwork left on school property that was not donated in the selection process will either be recycled or disposed of as the instructors/administration sees fit. A student forfeits the ownership of ~~any~~the art piece that is left.

## Visual Art Sales

MSA does not broker art sales of student work to private collectors or businesses. Any work sought by independent collectors must be ~~purchased or obtained from~~dealt through the student directly. If the piece was generated in class, and the student is still enrolled at MSA, prior approval must be requested from the administration before ~~the work is sold or donated~~selling or donating the work.

## Tutoring and Required Study Hours

Students may request meetings with instructors when extra assistance is needed. Teachers are available during their planning periods and at the scheduled break. If tutorial sessions are requested, MSA staff will work with students and parents to accommodate individual needs to the degree possible. However, **when a student needs one-on-one tutoring (other than peer tutoring), it is the responsibility of the parent to locate a tutor and pay any costs incurred.** When students are on academic probation, mandatory study hours during the day or night may be assigned.

During evening study hours ~~which that~~ may vary according to student privilege plans, Monday through Thursday, students will respect the quiet atmosphere needed for studying, rehearsals, practices, and studio work. Depending on academic status and privilege plans, students may be assigned to a specific area for closely supervised study time. Some students may be assigned to the library during study hours for online course monitoring. Students are expected to respect any assigned quiet areas during the study hours.

## Library

Students attending MSA are granted the privilege to use the available resources of the library as long as policies and procedures are followed. Each student is responsible for the proper use and timely return of books and materials checked out. Before the end of each semester, students must return all items checked out of the library before going home. Failure to return books, materials, and equipment by the appointed time could result in fines up to and including the cost of replacement. Students must pay all fines or replacement costs assessed by the library. Library hours will be posted at the beginning

of each semester. In addition to the resources of the MSA library, students may use the local county library that is located north of Lampton Auditorium.

The MSA library is an academic instructional space, and students are expected to behave accordingly. Sitting or lying on the floor is inappropriate. **Eating, drinking, or playing musical instruments is not permitted except during club meetings or special events. Listening to or playing music—except for specific class assignments—is forbidden without headphones.**

### **Textbooks and Other Media—Electronic and Print**

Textbooks and other media (e.g., music, CDs, tapes, prints, library books, tools, and equipment) are the property of MSA and are provided without cost or at minimal cost for students enrolled at the school. Students must exercise care in using and maintaining school property. The student assigned responsibility for textbooks or other media must pay for property lost or damaged. In the event MSA property is lost or damaged, the current value of the item to be replaced will determine the amount owed MSA by the student. For damages, the teacher will assess a fine after examining the books and media as they are returned.

### **Equipment**

While enrolled at the [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#), students have diverse opportunities to use instructional resources and equipment. Available resources range from headphones to darkroom equipment, cameras, computers, and projectors in addition to hand and power tools. Various equipment and accessories are available dependent upon the specific course a student is taking or upon the nature of projects assigned.

To ensure that MSA educational resources receive proper use, care, maintenance, and protection, Parents must be financially responsible for loss or damage of school property and equipment. At no time shall students transport these resources outside the MSA designated walking area or on school trips without prior permission. All equipment must be returned to MSA prior to any scheduled breaks for the holidays to avoid paying a fine.

Equipment, such as cameras and computers, can be used for indeterminate periods of time when properly cared for and protected. Students who lose or damage school equipment resources will be responsible for full replacement value or repair costs. **No food or drink should be near equipment.**

### **Classroom Assessment**

The Principal will establish a schedule for the administration of classroom assessments so that no student has more than two state or semester assessments scheduled on any school day. Teachers must administer all assessments and have prior approval from the Principal to deviate from the approved schedule.

### **Exams and Exemptions**

MSA exam schedules will be coordinated with those at Brookhaven High School. In keeping with the MSA philosophy of the importance of demonstrating knowledge acquired in dance, literary arts, media arts, theatre, visual arts, vocal music and other content areas over time, there will be no exemptions from exams in arts courses at MSA. Teacher, peer, and self-assessments are integral components of meaningful learning. Exemptions for academic courses may be granted for the end of course exams if students have met attendance and grade expectations as set forth at the beginning of the year by the Principal.

Students who are absent from an examination must contact their teachers on the day they miss the exam or receive permission to make up the exam from the Principal. If the student fails to contact the teacher or the Principal, the student will receive a zero for that examination. Students with unexcused absences will not be allowed to makeup final term/class exams.

## Academic Probation Policies

**Academic Probation** is a period of time set by an administrator during which a student is given a chance to improve academic achievement demonstrated in specified terms of prior instruction. The Principal will conduct a review of the academic progress of all students on a regular basis with assistance from teachers, staff, and the counselor. When needed, the staff will design and implement an improvement plan with the assistance of parents and the student.

The review of academic progress will help determine the student's ability to attain and maintain success in prescribed course work and to create strategies to assist those in need of assistance. Upon review of grades, course work, and attendance, the staff will make recommendations for students not successful in their schoolwork. Students will be placed on Academic Probation if they have:

1. Earned a nine-weeks final grade below 65 in one or more courses, and/or
2. Earned a final grade of C or below ( $\leq 79$ ) in one or more major arts discipline courses.

To assist with academic progress, students on academic probation will have specific strategies developed to meet their individual needs. Students on academic probation may be required to curtail extracurricular activities when deemed appropriate by the faculty or administration. Teachers and/or administrators may assign tutorials, study times, and/or assigned practice times to help students reach the expectations of the class and school.

## Academic Probationary Process

The Principal or Counselor will notify students, parents, and teachers in writing of students placed on academic probation. After notification, MSA will arrange a conference with the student and a parent/guardian to discuss a contract including future plans and expectations of the student and the manner in which the student must meet the prescribed requirements. The parents, student, faculty, Principal, Executive Director, and the counselor will receive copies of the signed contract. Students who fail to make required minimum academic progress and/or to improve attendance during the probationary term will be evaluated for dismissal.

Students placed on probation twice, even though not necessarily back-to-back, will retain probationary status until graduation or dismissal from the school. Before a student is considered for dismissal, the students and/or his or her parents or guardians may provide, in writing, an explanation for academic performance, attendance, or behavior deficiencies, a possible remediation plan, and reasons the student should remain at MSA. Parents and/or students may initiate a meeting for consideration of status at any time by contacting the counselor.

## Promotion, Retention, and Early Graduation

As authorized by *Miss. Code Ann.* § 37-140-3, the ~~Mississippi School of the Arts~~ MSA is a two-year residential high school for juniors and seniors. To be admitted and classified as a junior at the MSA, students must have earned a minimum of 12 Carnegie units of instruction, including those courses specified for admission. After completion of the junior year at MSA, ~~to be promoted and classified as a senior,~~ a student must have earned a total of 18 Carnegie units to be promoted and classified as a senior.

**Because the programs of study at the Mississippi School of the Arts MSA are sequential and require two years of study to receive an in-depth curriculum in a specific literary, visual, or performing arts discipline,** mandated courses must be taken in the sequence specific in the *MSA Course Description Booklet* and will not be scheduled as individual study courses.

In the event of extenuating circumstances, the Executive Director may determine whether a student may continue to study at the Mississippi School of the Arts MSA longer than two years.

Because of the nature of the visual and performing arts disciplines and the rigorous, in-depth programs of study at advanced levels of accomplishment, most students will require four semesters to complete MSA graduation requirements. When students enroll at the MSA, students commit to a two-year



program of study. Therefore, students should not expect to graduate early. In the case of extreme circumstances, the Executive Director may decide whether a student may be allowed to graduate early.

## **Dropout Prevention Plan**

While attrition will occur with each class that enrolls at state special schools governed by the State Board of Education, students come to the school anticipating success, having completed a significant admissions process. While a residential school is not for everyone, the programming, select faculty, and special residential experiences will support continued involvement and success for all enrolled students. The goal of the school is graduation and pursuit of further learning.

A student who fails to meet standards for attendance, academics and/or behavior will be returned to his/her home school where his/her right to access an appropriate public education lies. Any students with special education needs will be assisted in accordance with their Least Restrictive Environment and federal/state law.

1. College and Career Planning
  - a. On-site print and electronic college and career information, catalogs, and application materials
  - b. Campus visits by recruiters from in-state and out-of-state colleges, universities, and other institutions of higher learning
  - c. Transition to college, financial aid, and other workshops relevant to high school students
  - d. Guest speakers and artists who are professionals working in relevant fields of interest among the students
2. Intervention Programs
  - a. Attendance monitoring
  - b. Grade progress reviews throughout grading periods
  - c. Tutorial and/or study blocks supervised by a staff/faculty member
  - d. Ongoing communication between the faculty, administration, and residential life staff regarding individual needs
3. School, Family, and Community Partnerships
  - a. Student data sharing through school package for student records
  - b. E-mail links between parents, teachers, administration, and students
  - c. Real time access by parents to student attendance, grades, assignments via the Internet through the school package for student records
  - d. Additional support for individual students from community and parent groups
4. Support for Transition back to Home Schools
  - a. Communication with parents and students
  - b. Emotional support throughout the decision-making process
  - c. Prompt transfer of records and data upon request of the new school
  - d. Monitoring to ensure that students enroll in new school

## **Summer School**

With prior written approval from the Principal and acceptance from a local district or other approved school, a student may attend summer school to remediate a failed non-arts course or to complete courses needed to fulfill graduation requirements. Before permission to attend Summer School is granted, academic officials will review student records to determine academic needs. Students must obtain approval before summer school begins. The student must provide a course description from the institution attended. Approval rests with the administration of MSA. The course description, the length of the course, and other factors deemed important by the administration will impact the final decision. Students may not enroll in summer school to facilitate a request for early graduation.

## **On-Line Courses**

Occasionally, MSA students may seek enrollment in on-line courses to fulfill their academic course needs. All requests must meet the same criteria as those set forth for summer school courses. Students

who request on-line courses must show evidence of being responsible in self-directed learning situations. Students enrolled in virtual courses while enrolled at the [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#) must be scheduled for an on-line course monitoring block, like a regular class period. This block is usually scheduled in the library where work is monitored, and testing occurs in a secure area under the supervision of the media specialist or another staff member. Students who enroll in an on-line course must successfully complete the course or an "F" will be assigned and a numerical grade equal to the student's average in the course as of that date. If a student drops the course prior to the withdrawal deadline, there will be no penalty. If a student is enrolled in an online course that continues all semester (two nine weeks), he or she is only required to work in the library each day for a period of 45 minutes. If the course is to be completed in one nine weeks, students must remain in the library for the entire block.

### **MSA Individual Study Courses**

Students who are interested in working individually with an arts teacher to research a specific aspect of their arts discipline must discuss the proposal with the instructor. Working with the faculty member to craft a written proposal based on key content in the Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks, the student must submit the final written proposal—including the supervising teacher's signature—to the Principal for approval. **The proposal must be approved prior to the beginning of the semester in which the student wants to schedule the independent study.** Individual study courses will not be scheduled during a faculty member's planning period. Exceptions to the approval process will not be made due to lack of advance planning.

### **Credit Recovery**

Due to the nature and purpose of the [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#) as a special state school, the academic curriculum does not provide options for credit recovery. Because students are eleventh graders when they are admitted and a 2.5 overall GPA is required for admission, the school curriculum does not offer courses or have the human or material resources for the remediation necessary for credit recovery of content failed in the first two years of high school.

### **Academic Honors**

#### **Grade Point Average/Quality Point Average**

The grade point average (GPA) will be determined for ninth and tenth grades when students are admitted to MSA. GPA will be calculated at the end of the eleventh grade and at the end of the twelfth grade to determine class rank and honor graduates. All courses for which Carnegie units have been awarded (including eighth grade) will be used to determine grade point averages.

Overall grade point averages will be composed on a 100-point scale adding weight to quality points for Advanced Placement, Honors, and Accelerated courses. Numeric grades transferred from other schools will be recorded as shown on the transcript. If the transferring school does not provide a numeric grade, the MSA grading scale will be used for conversion to a numeric equivalent. If the transferring school does not provide quality points, the MSA quality points for each letter grade given to a student will be A (4.0), B (3.0), C (2.0), D (1.0), and F (0.0). Due to the excessive numbers of districts and varying weighted course policies, class rank will be based upon the weight and quality points according to MSA policy regardless of the student's previous school's policies. Courses will be listed on the transcripts as they were taken, but all grades will be maintained at the MSA policy. The quality points earned for each course taken toward graduation requirements make up the student's Quality Point Average (QPA).

#### **Valedictorian and Salutatorian**

A Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be named for each graduating senior class. These students must have followed a college preparatory curriculum as defined by course content required for acceptance into Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning. At the end of the spring semester of the senior year, the student with the highest accumulated QPA, including weighted averages for AP, Honors, and Accelerated courses, will be named Valedictorian. The student with the second highest accumulated QPA, including weighted averages for AP, honors, and accelerated courses, will be named

Salutarian. Seniors with chronic absenteeism (less than 95% attendance per year based upon unexcused absences) will be ineligible for the title of Valedictorian or Salutarian. The only exception is in an extenuating circumstance as deemed approved by the administration. If a tie should occur, the following factors shall be examined in the following order by a Graduation Committee appointed by the Principal until a clear ranking is established: (1) The unweighted numeric grade point average of each student; (2) ACT and/or SAT scores; (3) Whether the student has completed the Mississippi Scholars curriculum; (4) The total number of courses attempted; (5) School service; and (6) Participation in extracurricular activities. In addition to grades, students who qualify for Valedictorian or Salutarian must be in good standing in relation to attendance with 95% attendance per year (effective beginning with the class of 2021 and after) and discipline—having had no academic dishonesty referrals (e.g., cheating or plagiarism), or suspensions while at MSA. The decision of the Graduation Committee is final. The Graduation Committee reserves the right to revoke the honor of Valedictorian or Salutarian if after rankings are announced the designees violate any of the qualifying criteria.

### **Class Rank and Honor Graduates**

Student QPA at the end of the spring semester of the twelfth grade will determine student class rank (e.g., 3.25). In addition, a category of special honor graduates will include students with a QPA of 3.75 or higher. Special honor graduates will wear a gold cord at graduation. Students with a QPA of 3.25-3.749 will be classified as honor graduates. Honor graduates will wear a silver cord. In addition to grades, students being considered for Special Honors or Honors must be in good standing in relation to discipline—having had no more than two academic dishonesty referrals (e.g., cheating or plagiarism) while at MSA.

### **Diploma Pathways**

MSA offers diploma pathways of Academic Distinguished, Academic, and Traditional diplomas, which are chosen in junior year. These designations are monitored for compliance and will be indicated on the student's final transcript at graduation. The pathways are established by the Mississippi Department of Education and can be referenced at <https://www.mdek12.org/ESE/diploma>.

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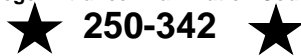
### **Awards Ceremonies**

Near the end of the school year, students will be honored during an awards program. Students and faculty members will take part in planning the program. The categories of honors to be recognized are academic achievement, subject areas, citizenship, attendance, and residential life.

### **College Testing Programs**

The MSA administration will make a good faith effort to avoid scheduling activities on most weekends when the ACT is scheduled. MSA will not provide transportation to testing sites unless they are within the immediate area of Brookhaven. Students are encouraged to take the ACT and SAT as often as possible to attain the highest score possible. Registration packets are available in the counselor's office or students may register on-line. Students are responsible for their own registration and payment of fees. To receive permission to leave campus to take the SAT, the student must provide verification of their scheduled participation in the SAT. All juniors are encouraged to take the PSAT that will be administered on the MSA Campus in October each year. PSAT registration costs are normally around \$15.00. Each test has the possibility of a fee waiver for students who meet financial need criteria as established by the separate testing institutions.

**MSA College Entrance Examination Code (CEEB)**



**ACT Registration**

**ACT Registration: <http://www.actstudent.org/regist/dates.html>**

**ACT Online Preparation: <http://www.actstudent.org/onlineprep/index.html>**

#### SAT Registration

SAT Registration: <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/calenefees.html>

SAT Online Preparation: [http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/prep\\_one/prep\\_one.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/prep_one/prep_one.html)

#### PSAT Registration

PSAT Registration: <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/reg/dates.html>

PSAT Online Preparation: <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html>

### Publications

Publications of the school may include newspapers, a yearbook, a literary magazine, or other media. All publications are part of the humanities curriculum and, therefore, do not form a public forum. The school administration and faculty will direct the nature and function of school-sponsored publications. The final product must reflect and fulfill the MSA vision and mission.

To ensure compliance with the MSA vision, mission, and the Student Code of Conduct, student speeches, advertisements, posters, and handouts must be cleared through the Executive Director or Principal before being released, posted, distributed, or presented to others via print or electronic means.

### Beta Club

The MSA Beta Club is an affiliate of the National Beta Club with the mission to promote the ideals of character, service, and leadership among students. To be invited to become a member of the Beta Club—or to continue membership—students must meet academic criteria: an overall numerical grade point average of 90.00 or higher, fulfill required service, and maintain a good disciplinary record as stated in the *MSA Beta Club Standing Rules*. Disciplinary records will be reviewed before invitations for membership are issued; a student who has received an academic dishonesty referral (e.g., cheating or plagiarism), one or more Level III offenses, or has been suspended from school shall not be eligible for membership.

### Arts Ambassadors

Arts Ambassadors are students who project the vision and mission of MSA as official representatives for the school in greeting prospective students, new students, community members, and campus visitors. Arts Ambassadors are responsible for aiding in recruiting new students, working with the recruiting and admissions department for public relations events, and helping with on-site auditions. MSA students may apply to the Arts Ambassador Program in the junior and/or senior years of study.

Arts Ambassadors must attend all meetings or have prior approval by sponsor to miss a meeting. Students may be dismissed from membership for **failure to meet the program's minimum expectations (see Arts Ambassador Manual) or by not upholding the school's mission and vision.**

### Student Government Association

The Mississippi School of the Arts Student Government Association (SGA) is a body of elected student representatives whose goals include providing a bridge between student, faculty, staff, and administration; organizing extracurricular activities, and to assist in the governance of the MSA community.

Students who seek election to SGA must complete a nomination form, have an overall 2.5 GPA, have a good disciplinary record (no academic dishonesty referrals [e.g., cheating or plagiarism], Level III disciplinary offenses, or no suspensions), and acquire the signatures of 10 peers, and the representative of the office for which they seek election. Elections will be held at the beginning of the fall semester. If questions arise concerning disciplinary records, the Principal or Executive Director will make a final decision.

## Student Organizations and Clubs

Students may form and join lawful groups for common purposes that are consistent with the vision and mission of MSA. Clubs will be co-curricular serving the educational purpose of MSA. Students have the responsibility, and will be required, to conduct the activities of the organization in a manner that reflects compatibility with the school and its purpose, policies, and procedures. To meet, all student organizations must have an adult sponsor approved by the MSA administration. Sponsors must attend and supervise all meetings and club activities. Club members shall choose a specific date and time for meetings that repeats monthly (e.g., the first Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the cafeteria). A listing of dates must be submitted to the Attendance Secretary at the beginning of the school year after the first club meeting. Sponsors should check available dates on the MSA Master calendar before offering options to club members. The Attendance Secretary maintains the master calendar. If students wish to organize a new club, the initiator must complete a MSA **Club Proposal Form**, acquire the signatures of ten students who wish to join the club, and submit the information to the Executive Director for approval.

## Who's Who Elections

Within each arts discipline (dance, literary arts, media arts, theatre, visual arts, and vocal music), ~~a~~ candidate will be nominated for each category of Who's Who. The categories proposed for Who's Who must be approved by the Principal and/or Executive Director. Due to a disproportionate ratio of male and females in the MSA student population, two students (regardless of gender) will be selected for each category at the junior and senior levels. When the nominations are complete, six names will be placed on the ballot to run for Who's Who.

The same process will be followed for Mr. and Miss MSA for nominations; one male and one female student will be selected. If there is no eligible candidate in one gender, there will be a Mr. or Miss MSA. To be considered for Mr. and Miss MSA, students must have at least a 2.5 overall QPA for the current school year, no failing grade in any course, and a good disciplinary record—no academic dishonesty referrals (e.g., cheating or plagiarism), and no suspensions. All Who's Who elections will take place second semester. If questions arise concerning disciplinary records, the Principal or Executive Director will make a final decision.

## Athletics

In keeping with the MSA Wellness Policy, MSA encourages students to be actively involved in physical activities. To the extent possible, MSA students may choose to participate in organized sports programs within the community or at Brookhaven High School. However, since students are enrolled at MSA to focus ~~on~~ in depth ~~student in~~ the visual and performing arts ~~that which~~ require extra time and commitment, involvement in sports must not conflict with arts courses, rehearsals, performances, or other mandatory educational activities.

MSA is a member of the Mississippi High School Activities Association. MSA students who qualify are eligible to participate in the athletic programs at Brookhaven High School as their schedules permit. The athletic program at BHS is extensive with opportunities for both males and females. The coaches are directly responsible for maintaining high qualities of performance and sportsmanship. Interested students should talk with a coach of a particular sport for more information. Grades, conduct, and attendance all play important roles in athletic success. For eligibility requirements, please refer to the Brookhaven High School handbook. Students should check enrollment requirements at BHS in relation to the sport in which he or she is interested.

## For Parents

### Family Involvement and Communication

Continuous family involvement and communication is an essential element to students successfully adjusting to life away from home. The MSA environment will provide security, support, materials, and

structure to help students continue an academic path to graduation. Ongoing interactive support, communication, and commitment from MSA and parents/guardians are imperative.

Opportunities for parent involvement in student life are multifaceted. Informational and orientation meetings, telephone and campus conferences, varied forms of communication, and options for monitoring student progress via the Internet are just a few of the programs in place to encourage continuous communication.

The Parent Network—connects parents to MSA and builds a statewide support system to advise and promote school programs and student activities.

MSA publishes a regular newsletter that discusses important academic and college admissions topics. Parents/guardians may also request that their e-mail address be added to a parent listserv in order to receive e-mails that students receive regarding college admissions, scholarships, college entrance testing, summer program, [and](#) etc. The MSA counselor welcomes communication from parents/guardians and will communicate to parents/guardians as needed to address concerns about their student.

### **Expectations for Parents**

MSA parents/legal guardians are fully responsible for the behavior and performance of their children while enrolled at MSA. When requested, parents/legal guardians must provide all information and appropriate documentation required by the school and the Mississippi Department of Education. Important aspects of parental support are encouraging and enforcing appropriate student behavior, monitoring schoolwork and grades, and keeping up with all school activities and information as reported in correspondence, internet reports, letters, the school web site, and other notices.

Parent(s) and/or guardian(s) should reveal all information regarding any exceptional needs that their child may have (i.e., IEP, 504 Plan, medical, behavioral, [or](#) psychological) to ensure that student educational needs are met. Parental failure to provide such information prohibits appropriate scheduling and provision of necessary support services. Failure to provide vital medical information affecting the overall health of the school residential environment to appropriate administration could result in revocation of admittance or dismissal of the student to their local school district. Parents must be diligent in updating changes in address and other contact information with the school registrar to ensure communication in events of an emergency. Parent(s) and/or guardian(s) are fully responsible for providing any custodial agreements effecting students, especially those regarding restrictions of visitors/family members.

### **Costs**

Students pay no tuition at the [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#), a state public residential high school. Legislative appropriations support most of the costs for attendance at MSA. Parents will be responsible for expenses such as room and board, incidental fees, laundry, spending money, and for individual expenses.

### **Incidental Fees**

As stipulated by Miss. Code Ann. § 37-7-335, [the Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) may charge reasonable fees for supplemental instructional materials and supplies; other fees designated that are relevant to a valid curriculum educational objective, including transportation; [fees for](#) extracurricular activities; and [fees for](#) any other educational activities of the school, ~~but not that are not designated as being~~ related to specific curriculum objectives (e.g., competitions, [or](#) sports events).

In keeping with code requirements, [the MSA's](#) fee policies include a financial hardship waiver. Students who wish to apply for a hardship waiver to be exempt from instructional fees must provide the same documentation required for exemption from room and board payments. MSA maintains information related to financial hardships in the strictest of confidence. **Qualifying for a financial hardship waiver does not exempt students from fees for optional services (e.g., vehicle registration).**

The fee schedule for the school year is as follows and is subject to change with advance notice. The charges below do not include fines for loss or damage to school property; expenses for standardized tests that are optional; club memberships; school yearbooks; class rings; graduation expenses; entertainment; dances; field trips, or etc.

### Student Fees

**Financial hardship waivers apply to the required fees listed below. All students who do not meet hardship criteria that have been verified through documentation must pay the following fees.**

Documentation must meet the requirements set forth by MSA and State Board of Education policies and state law. Failure to provide documentation requested will result in denial of hardship waivers. Fees for a specific arts discipline apply only to those students enrolled in specific courses. Payments may be made for room and board as well as fees on one check. The memo line should state the indicated amounts for each. Any checks received without designation on the memo line will be divided as deemed necessary by MSA.

### Required Fees for All Students

<b>Room &amp; Board</b>	\$1000 per year; \$500 per semester. \$250 is due on or before the first day of the fall semester (Term 1); the second payment for is due on or before the first day of Term 2. \$250 is due on or before the first day of second semester (Term 3) and \$250 on or before the first day of Term 4. <b>According to MSBE policy, students may be returned to their home schools for nonpayment of room and board.</b> MSA students who elect to commute rather than live on campus must pay \$250 per semester to help defray the overall costs of operating a state school that provides unique educational opportunities. Payments are due on the dates described above. Hardship waivers apply when families meet the qualifications.
<b>Visual Arts</b>	Per course fees: Painting I & II—\$25.00 each; Sculpture—\$30.00; Advanced Portfolio—\$30.00; Advanced Drawing and Painting—\$30.00; Senior Focus—\$30.00; Mixed Media - \$25.00; 2-D Media Exploration—\$25.00; 3-D Media Production—\$25.00; Digital Arts I and II—\$25.00 each; Photography— \$50.00 (if photography is included in the Intro to Design or only one nine weeks, the fee for that class will be \$25.) – These fees are not exhaustive, and students will be expected to provide an additional list of supplies as directed.
<b>Vocal Music</b>	1. Theory Workbooks (Consumable): Juniors—\$135.00. (Juniors will use the same book for their junior and senior years.) 2. \$20 for dry cleaning performance attire (required of all choir members regardless of waiver status)
<b>Dance</b>	\$20 costume fee for dry cleaning performance attire (required of all dance discipline students regardless of waiver status)
<b>Literary Arts</b>	Paper/Printer fee - \$25
<b>Media Arts</b>	Per course fees: \$25 each course. These fees are not exhaustive, and students will be expected to provide an additional list of supplies as directed.
<b>Theatre</b>	Paper/Printer fee - \$25
<b>Technology</b>	Computer Lab and Supplies: \$30.00 (all students).

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### Fees or Materials for All Students

Hardship waivers do not apply to these expenses.

<b>Student Services</b>	\$175 per year—Includes Health Center, Refrigerator, Mail Box, Student I.D. Badge, and local transportation (not special trips or field trips).
<b>Literary</b>	1. Student provided journal for writing. 2. \$10 - Cost of one Literary Magazine publication.
<b>Visual Arts</b>	1. Costs for specialized matting and shrink-wrapping will relate to the number and size of works prepared by individual student. 2. Required materials/supplies above what is provided by MSA—the art department provides a list for students during the summer.
<b>Theatre</b>	Costume Rental: Costs vary in relation to items required. Parents will be notified in advance if costume rental is incurred.
<b>Vocal Music</b>	1. Blank CDs for burning accompaniment performances; teacher will notify student when needed.

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	2. The regional and district competition fee amounts required for vocal music students do not include NATS (not a school-sponsored event). Parents will be notified in advance of additional costs for hotel, travel, or food for special conferences or events.
<b>All Students</b>	1. Competition and/or conference costs will include registration fees, hotel, food, and travel. Costs vary according to event. Parents will be notified in advance. 2. Field Trips: Costs will be based on transportation, tickets, meals, and other expenses related to each activity. Parents will be notified in advance.
<b>Seniors</b>	Graduation expenses (cap & gown rental; keepsake stole, cap, and tassel; diploma and cover) are approximately \$110. Students and parents will receive itemized information regarding graduation costs during the spring semester.

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## Costs for Optional Services

All students must pay the following fees if they elect to participate in the services offered.

<b>Dual Enrollment/Credit</b>	<del>Average \$220 per course including books and fees. All payments are paid directly to the Copiah-Lincoln Community College. Payment plans are available. Recommend all fees paid by October 31 for Fall semester and March 31 for Spring semester. Class fees are subject to change. Students with more than 15 credit hours will be charged the full tuition rate for dual credit courses. If a student enrolls in a dual credit/enrollment course and fails or drops the class after fees are assessed, the student will be responsible for reimbursement to MSA for costs incurred.</del>
<b>Vehicle Registration</b>	\$25.00; Car on campus is optional.
<b>Food Service Extras</b>	Student purchase of extras (e.g., ice cream, beverages not included in basic meal plan) will be based on current market value. Prices will be posted.
<b>Club Memberships &amp; Costs</b>	Club Membership Fees vary according to organizations; sponsors will notify students regarding club costs. Club memberships are optional.
<b>Senior Memorabilia</b>	MSA graduation costs do not include the expenses for special senior class memorabilia or announcements. All orders and payments go straight to the vendor; MSA does not handle these expenses.
<b>Class Rings</b>	Class rings are available for purchase from an outside vendor; prices vary in relation to the design that the student selects. All payments go straight to the vendor; MSA does not handle these expenses.
<b>Yearbook</b>	Average cost is \$60-70
<b>Literary Magazine</b>	\$10 for each copy
MSA reserves the right to increase fees for optional services based upon vendor requirements.	

## Fines for Policy Violations, Loss, or Damage

<b>Returned Check Charge</b>	\$35.00 per incident plus billed charges (applies only to offenders); all future payments must be made in cash or money order.
<b>Phone Calls Charged to MSA Accounts</b>	\$25.00 per incident plus billed costs for unauthorized calls charged to MSA accounts; (applies only to offenders)
<b>Lost Student I.D. Badge</b>	\$25 Replacement cost per incident
<b>Lost Temporary I.D. Badge</b>	\$50 Replacement cost per incident
<b>Lost Parking Permit</b>	\$5 Replacement cost per incident
<b>Lost Keys</b>	\$30.00—room key; Mailbox key—\$10.00; Wardrobe Key—\$5.00
<b>Other Lost or Damaged Items</b>	All students are responsible for replacement of lost or damaged textbooks, library books, cameras, computers, calculators, and other digital equipment and/or any other school property entrusted to them.
<b>Disassembly of Dorm Furniture</b>	\$100 reassembly fee. Students cannot put furniture together to avoid fees.
<b>Late pick up of students</b>	\$25/hour will be charged for late pick up of students after 6pm on mandatory go-home weekends.
<b>Late payment of fees</b>	\$10 per month late fee will be added for late payments due on all fees and/or room and board payments.

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## State Board of Education Room and Board Policy

The Mississippi Legislature mandates that the [Mississippi School of the Arts](#) MSA charge a fee for room and board. The amount of this fee as established by the Mississippi Legislature, may be paid in increments of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) for each semester or two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) for each term.

This fee shall be waived for those students who demonstrate a financial hardship.



**I. Application for a Financial Hardship Waiver**

Prior to enrollment for the school year, each parent or guardian applying for a financial hardship waiver of fees must complete an application and provide written evidence/documentation to verify the financial information and written confirmation of a household's circumstances must be provided at the time of application for a waiver of fees.

This documentation must consist of one of the following:

- a. Proof of enrollment in the State Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP ; or
- b. The most recent Mississippi Resident Income Tax Form showing adjusted gross income that would qualify the student for the National School Lunch Program (pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-7-335).

To receive a Financial Hardship Waiver for Room and Board or Instructional Fees, parents or guardians must:

- 1. Complete a Financial Hardship Application Form.
- 2. Fill out the Family Circumstances Form; and either Attach a copy of your most recent Mississippi Individual Income Tax Form.
  - A. Include tax return showing income of both parents and all dependents.
  - B. If parents file jointly, only one form is required.
  - C. If parents file singly, include copies of both tax returns.
  - D. W-2 statements are not acceptable.

or

If your child participates in the state Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP), include a copy of the CHIP card.

- 3. **Submit all materials to MSA prior to the deadlines set for each school year. Failure to meet deadlines will result in denial of hardship waivers. A change in status during the year will be considered for families as necessary.**

The [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) does not award room and board scholarships. However, the MSA Foundation provides information to each student upon request about how to solicit scholarship sponsors in hometown communities.

**II. Certification of Information**

The parent/guardian requesting a financial hardship waiver of fees must certify in writing that all information furnished to the school is true and correct and provide a social security number for each member of the household or indicate that such member does not have a social security number. Information provided for a waiver of fees may be verified at any time during the school year to determine if the student qualifies for a waiver of fees.

**III. Households**

Households receiving a waiver of fees must notify school officials during the school year of any change in income that would disqualify the student from waiver of fees.

**IV. Confidentiality**

The information provided in compliance with this hardship waiver shall be kept in the strictest of confidence with all files and personal disclosures restricted from review by the general public and shall be used solely for the purposes of determining the student's eligibility for the financial hardship waiver of fees.

**V. Refund of Fee**

If a student decides not to attend the [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) prior to moving into the dormitory prior to the beginning of the semester, one hundred percent (100%) of the fee paid may be refunded.

If a student ceases enrollment and moves from the dormitory, a proportional percentage of the fees paid shall be refunded, based on the number of days enrolled. Proration shall be based on a rate of \$500 (per semester) divided by the number of residential days (days per semester) to determine a daily cost.

No refund of the fee will be made after the end of the first nine-week period in either fall or spring semester. All requests for refunds must be made in writing no more than 30 days after withdrawal from enrollment to the [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) by completing the documentation required by the administrators' operating procedures. Any outstanding fines or fees will be deducted from payments received prior to issuing any refunds.

#### **VI. Failure to Adhere to Fee Policy**

MSA may dismiss any student for the failure to adhere to the prescribed procedures as described in the school's student handbook.

The implementation of the \$500.00 fee for room and board per semester will not impact other established policies and procedures.

#### **Reimbursement of Fees**

All fees, with the exception of room and board and food service accounts, are nonrefundable after the first day of classes. Application for a partial refund of the room and board fee may be made provided the student ceases enrollment prior to the end of the first nine weeks of each semester. Optional fees are nonrefundable.

#### **Fund Raising**

All student fundraising projects must be submitted to the faculty sponsor of an organization. If the sponsor approves the project, the faculty sponsor submits the request to the Principal and Executive Director for final approval. Requests should be submitted four (4) weeks in advance of the proposed activity. All funds raised must be submitted to the Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director for receipt, deposit, and proper accounting. An annual accounting should be submitted to the Executive Director in May. Fundraising projects must meet the goals of the MSA Wellness Policy. Parents are not permitted to fundraise as MSA representatives without prior approval of the Executive Director.

#### **Distribution of Non-MSA Printed Material**

Any information advocating non-MSA causes must be submitted to the Principal or Executive Director for approval and dissemination. Signs, posters, or other print materials must be approved prior to posting. The [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) does not post or distribute materials from commercial vendors or faith-based organizations.

#### **Media Policies**

MSA has a positive working relationship with the news media to promote the school and its mission. The Executive Director is the spokesperson for coordinating media coverage. All news releases, newsletters, public service announcements, publicity, promotional brochures, advertising (except for advertising for purchasing), graphics, photography, [and](#) etc. will be originated, produced, disseminated and/or approved by the Executive Director or designee. All students, clubs, and organizations affiliated with MSA must comply.

#### **Privacy Policy**

The administration, faculty, and staff at the [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) respect the right of privacy of the members of the student body. This guiding principle does not apply when disclosure is required to prevent clear and imminent danger to an individual or another member(s) of the MSA family, or when legal requirements demand that confidential information be revealed, or when a member of the administration, faculty, or staff becomes aware that an individual is making self-destructive choices.

Only information that is directly relevant to the purpose [of for](#) which the disclosure is made should be revealed on a “need to know” basis pursuant to State and Federal law.

## **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)**

The schools governed by the Mississippi State Board of Education will protect the confidentiality of all previous or currently enrolled students regarding information contained in its records as prescribed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s educational records. These rights are:

The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days after the day [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the Executive Director (or their designee) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Executive Director will arrange for access and notify the parent or the eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the school to amend a record should write the Superintendent/Executive Director (or their designee), clearly [identify](#) the part of the record they want changed and [specify](#) why it should be changed.

If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent of eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing. If, as a result of the hearing, the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to insert a statement in the record setting forth his or her views.

The right to provide written consent before the school [disclosures of discloses](#) personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school and/or the Mississippi Department of Education as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); [or](#) a person serving on the Mississippi Board of Education. A school official may also include a volunteer or a person, company, consultant or other party or contractor with whom the school and/or Mississippi Department of Education has outsourced to perform an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of personally identifiable information from education records (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district or college in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student’s enrollment or transfer.

Any disciplinary actions affecting attendance ~~is-are~~ included in the student's permanent record and cumulative folder. The school will forward education records, including disciplinary records, to other schools or colleges in which the student seeks or intends to enroll upon request.

The school may disclose ~~your~~ directory information about students without consent. Directory information means information contained in an education record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes, but is not limited to, the student's name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, grade level, enrollment status, dates of attendance, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height or members of athletic teams, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended.

The school may disclose personally identifiable information from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student under certain conditions set forth in the FERPA regulations. Personally identifiable information includes, but is not limited to, the student's name; the name of the student's parent or other family members; the address of the student or student's family; a personal identifier, such as the student's social security number, student number, or biometric record; other indirect identifiers, such as the student's date of birth, place of birth, and mother's maiden name; other information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific student that would allow a reasonable person in the school community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student with reasonable certainty; or information requested by a person who the educational agency or institution reasonably believes knows the identity of the student to whom the education record relates.

The parent or eligible student has the right to refuse to let the school designate any or all types of information about the student as directory information. The parent or eligible student must notify the Executive Director (or his/her designee) in writing within 14 days of receipt of this notice that he or she does not want any or all ~~of~~ those types of information about the student designated as directory information or disclosed to military recruiters.

The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:  
Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

### **Confidentiality and Disclosure Policy**

Schools governed by the Mississippi State Board of Education respect the privacy rights of all ~~its-their~~ constituents. This policy does not apply when disclosure is required to prevent clear and imminent danger to an individual or the school community, or when legal requirements demand confidential information be revealed, or when it becomes clear to the faculty or staff that an individual is making self-destructive choices. This includes, but is not limited to, threats of suicide, child abuse, pregnancy, communicable or fatal diseases, eating disorders, substance abuse, self-mutilation, ~~or~~ etc. Only information related to the reason for disclosure will be revealed on a "need to know" basis. Individuals should consult with members of the administrative staff as to the validity of an exception.

### **Armed Forces Recruiter Access**

The Armed Forces Recruiter Access to Students and Student Recruiting Information Forces Act requires that MSA provide student names, addresses, and telephone numbers to military recruiters and institutions of higher education upon request. Parents may choose to prohibit the school from providing any of ~~the-this~~ information by completing the Refusal of Directory Information and Recruiter Access Form and returning it to the MSA school counselor within three weeks of registration each year.

## Withdrawals

### Types of Withdrawal

**Academic Withdrawal**—for students who are required to leave for failure to meet academic expectations or who fail to meet the graduation requirements.

**Financial Withdrawal**—for students who are required to leave for failure to comply with room and board policies established by the State Board of Education. If payments have not been received by the end of the week following the due date, the student can be dismissed.

**Voluntary Withdrawal**—for students who feel their academic and personal needs and interests would be better served in another learning environment.

**Exchange Student Withdrawal** – for students departing the United States to serve as an exchange student and will return to repeat the junior or senior year. Students may or may not be allowed to reenroll pending decision from the administration based upon an application/audition and the standing of the student with regard to grades and discipline while enrolled at MSA.

### Withdrawal Procedures

1. Students planning to withdraw should consult the MSA counselor/Principal who will explain withdrawal procedures. An exit conference with the custodial parent(s) and the student must be held with the counselor/Principal. Students must have a signed parental consent in order to withdraw, regardless of the student's age.
2. When exiting MSA, all students must complete a **Withdrawal Form** that may be obtained from the Executive Director or Principal. This form must be completed in its entirety and signed by the required MSA administrators and staff members. The Withdrawal Form becomes part of a student's permanent record. MSA will release student records to another school when the parent(s) or guardian(s) complete and sign a withdrawal form. The only exceptions to this policy might be cases involving dismissal or expulsion; under such circumstances, the disciplinary documentation will serve as a record of withdrawal.
3. To withdraw, the following stations must be cleared:
  - a. Textbooks (BHS) returned to the Principal whose office is located in [the Johnson Institute](#).
  - b. Textbooks (MSA) returned to individual teachers for each course.
  - c. Library books and equipment returned to the MSA library.
  - d. Technology accounts closed by the Technology Coordinator.
  - e. Medicine picked up from the School Nurse.
  - f. Room inspected and keys (dorm room, wardrobe, and mailbox) returned.
  - g. School supplies, equipment, and uniforms returned to arts discipline teacher(s).
  - h. Parking permit and student ID card returned to the Security Office.
  - i. Food accounts closed with Food Services, [and](#)
  - j. Fees, fines, and damages paid before withdrawal is complete. Payments may be made in the Y-Hut.
4. Once a student has withdrawn from MSA, students may/may not be allowed to reenroll based upon standing of the student regarding grades and discipline, and time elapsed after withdrawal forms are submitted.

Since the working hours of MSA staff members vary, a withdrawing student must make an appointment with the Director of Residential Life or the Director of Maintenance to have the room inspected before the withdrawal is completed. All student belongings must be removed prior to inspection.

**All withdrawals must occur between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Students are required to leave the MSA campus by 7:00 p.m. on the date of withdrawal. Students may not withdraw on a weekend, holiday, or at night when most of the staff is not on**

**duty. MSA reserves the right to prohibit a student who has withdrawn from returning to the campus or attending any school functions.**

# Expectations for Students

MSA is strongly committed to academic excellence and artistic growth for all students. Goals for students include acquiring accomplished artistic knowledge and expertise, becoming divergent thinkers, improving knowledge in arts and non-arts subjects, perfecting written and oral communication skills, displaying a sense of community, and maintaining high standards of behavior. Students must devote a great deal of personal time and effort toward meeting these expectations. To emphasize the importance of student self-discipline and social responsibility, all students and their parents will sign a contract at registration acknowledging that they read and understand expectations set forth in this Handbook and embodied in the Student Code of Conduct.

## Privilege Plans

The [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#) has a system of privilege plans to reward students for work well done and for being good citizens. Rather than limit junior student activities until the end of the first grading period, the school trusts students to be individually responsible for succeeding in their academic courses, following school rules and regulations, and participating in extracurricular activities.

The privilege plan process is based on student and staff suggestions and refinements made to the program over the years. Privilege Plan Levels are denoted by color: **Blue** (clear blue sailing), **Green** (growing and progressing), **Yellow** (caution) and **Red** (STOP, something needs to change!). The following will be considered to determine the various levels of privileges for individual students:

1. Students with all A's (4.0) on their progress report or report card will be placed on blue plan as long as there are no outstanding discipline issues (Campus Work Service, campus work tasks, [or](#) disciplinary probation).
2. Students with A's and B's (3.0-3.9) on their progress report or report card will be placed on the green privilege plan as long as there are no outstanding discipline issues (campus work service, campus work tasks, [or](#) disciplinary probation).
3. Students with A's, B's, and C's (only in traditional academics: science, math, social studies, English, [or](#) etc.) will be placed on green privilege plan as long as there are no outstanding discipline issues (campus work service, campus work tasks, [or](#) disciplinary probation).
4. Students with a 79-65 in arts discipline class(es) or students with a 69-65 in traditional academic courses (math, science, social studies, English, [or](#) etc.) will be placed on yellow plan as long as there are no outstanding discipline issues (campus work service, campus work tasks, [or](#) disciplinary probation).
5. Students with a grade below a 65 or below in any class or a student with multiple grades below a 70 will be placed on red plan.

The juniors' first assigned privilege plan will be green school until grades for MSA have been earned. Seniors begin their senior year on blue unless they have a final grade at the end of junior year of failing in any course. This allowance to return is only if the student is still eligible to graduate based upon the committee invitation to return. Student will be on academic probation and red plan until grades are earned for the term. During any term, if students have an incomplete at the end of the grading period, they are automatically placed on the Red Privilege Plan until the grade is final.

Students who have campus work service or detentions assigned that have [not](#) been completed by the deadline given at the end of each grading cycle will be automatically placed on the Red Privilege Plan until the consequences are met. Graduating seniors must finish all campus work tasks, detentions, and campus work services owed to participate in graduation exercises. Juniors will not receive an invitation to return until all obligations are met. Those students who volunteer to perform campus work service are rewarded with bonus points on his or her Privilege Plans.

At the end of each four-week period, the administrative staff will review grades and look at each student's discipline. Students will be notified regarding the level for which he or she qualifies as soon as possible. Students with incomplete grades at the end of a term will automatically be placed on the Red Plan until the incompletes are removed.

Throughout the school year, students must be aware that any future disciplinary violations will be assigned the corresponding consequences regardless of his or her privilege plan. The consequences for rule violations supersede any earned privilege with which they conflict. For example, a violation that results in dorm restriction would result in the punishment having to be served even if the plan includes off-campus privileges. Once the penalty is served, the privilege plan resumes. Likewise, if the punishment for a disciplinary infraction has not been completed when the four-week period ends, the consequences will continue until fulfilled, even if a new nine weeks has started. It should be noted that unless an extreme circumstance prescribes it, students will not be placed on new privilege plans in the middle of a four-week term. Students with excessive absenteeism and an attendance plan are subject to being assigned a lower privilege plan.

**Parents can request that their children be put on a specific privilege plan level for disciplinary reasons, lower than that earned by the student. If a student is placed on probation or fails to correct behavior at any time during the school year, privilege plan levels may be impacted. The administration welcomes suggestions regarding student privileges and rewards for good citizenship throughout the year. MSA requests that parents do not try to circumvent the privilege plan system by giving permission for students to check out when they are not permitted by their prescribed plan. Parents must sign out students in person at school if they are permitted to be away greater than the allowed times. Privilege plans will not be changed to a better plan by parent request unless there is proof of a grade or discipline dispute that is in favor of the student.**

## Student Dress Code

All students must observe minimal standards of hygiene, sanitation, and personal grooming. The Student Dress Code is based on two precepts—good health and safety and consistency with instructional processes. To prepare for increased restrictions and responsibilities within the adult workplace, students must learn while still in school to observe basic regulations for the whole group. Students must follow dress code guidelines. Violations of this code will result in disciplinary action. In all instances, school administrators and staff will determine the appropriateness of school clothing. Students that attend classes at Brookhaven High School are also required to follow their prescribed dress code as established in their handbook and reviewed with students at the beginning of school. Dress code guidelines include, but are not limited to the following:

- Students must wear clothing as intended to be worn and in a manner that is appropriate for school. Students must be covered appropriately as they select clothing for wearing in all public areas of the campus.
- Shoes, boots, or sandals are always required during school related activities or in public areas on campus except during dance class or rehearsals.
- The length of shorts, skirts, and dresses must be worn no shorter than 6 inches above the knee when sitting (i.e., below the fingertips when standing and long enough for stooping, bending, and sitting modestly) at all times when the student is participating in school related activities or in public areas on campus. The length of the hem should be at fingertip length all the way around (front, back, and sides).
- Straps on dresses, skirts, and tops must be a minimum of two inches wide; underwear must be concealed.
- Personal grooming during class is inappropriate.
- Students should have their under garments concealed. Students should also wear appropriate under garments while outside of their dorm room.
- Clothing, wigs, face paint, and other items of attire that could be classified as “costumes” are not appropriate for general school wear. Such attire must be limited to occasions where appropriate (e.g., dances and costume parties).
- Students should dress in relation to the context and occasion, and in a manner that would uphold the student code of conduct.
- The top layer of clothing must meet dress code (coats do not constitute a layer of clothing).
- Caps shall be worn with the bill in the front.



MSA adopts the CROWN Act, which stands for “Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair,” which prohibits race-based hair discrimination because of hair texture or protective hairstyles including braids, locs, twists, or bantu knots.

### **Inappropriate Apparel**

Inappropriate apparel includes:

- Clothing depicting vulgarity; tobacco, drug, or alcohol advertisements; suggestive (sexual connotations) slogans or pictures; profane language; or messages with double meanings;
- Tops that are revealing (e.g., tank tops, spaghetti straps, cut-off tops, tube tops, halter tops, sports bras, and muscle shirts); shirts that are excessively low in the front, back, or under the arms; or clothing that exposes midriffs;
- Pants, shorts, capris, and etc., that hang below the waist;
- Cutoffs, clothing with holes above the knee, or clothing that tends toward immodesty;
- Sweatbands, plastic shower type caps, curlers, or night regime garments;
- Obtrusive hats or sunglasses in the classroom;
- Pajamas, robes, and bedroom slippers;
- Raincoats or trench coats, except in inclement weather; coats must be removed inside;
- See-through garments;
- Pajamas or clothes that appear to have been slept in; and
- Dance attire outside of the dance class.

**Students must not wear the above listed garments in the common areas of the dorm (e.g., cafeteria, laundry room, patio, second floor lounge, and library), in classrooms, or any other public location on campus.** Failure to comply with dress code regulations will result in disciplinary action. Students will dress casually and comfortably in relation to the specific activity or occasion (e.g., swimming, recreation, or relaxing in the dorm). At all times, students must exercise good judgment when making decisions pertaining to personal grooming and dress. The staff will provide assistance when students have questions about dress codes. Teachers have the right to make additional requirements for dress code in their classroom (i.e. no hats, dance attire, or etc.).

### **Dance/Movement Attire**

When students enroll in a dance or movement course, they will receive a list of clothing appropriate for class. Students are given time to dress out at the beginning of class and to change into regular school attire at the end of class. **Dance attire is not acceptable outside the dance studio or rehearsal space.** Long hair shall be pulled back and pinned securely into a bun away from the student’s face and neck. Hair that is too short for a bun shall be pinned or styled neatly. Hair in the face or loose hanging hair styles are prohibited. Any students with questions regarding a personal hairstyle change should request a conference with the teacher.

### **Representing MSA and Special Occasions**

MSA students are involved in a wide variety of activities in diverse contexts and are expected to dress appropriately and professionally. MSA faculty and staff reserve the right to guide students in making appropriate choices. Depending on the context, when a student is representing the [Mississippi School of the Arts](#) MSA, unconventional hair colors (e.g., blue, green, pink, or purple) may not be allowed. In professional settings (e.g., auditions, performances, and competitions), earrings, studs, or other items of adornment in pierced body parts other than the ears are discouraged and may have to be removed. Some school activities may require more formal dress. MSA faculty and staff will notify students of these activities and dress requirements in advance and enforce compliance with proper dress standards. Learning to wear appropriate attire is important to student social and professional career development and preparation.

Performance attire may be more formal than regular dress standards. The MSA faculty and staff will set the standards for performance including appropriate clothing, jewelry and hairstyles. Dressing appropriately for performance is an important part of learning to perform in a professional manner.

For students performing in recitals that do not require specific attire (i.e., Vocal music recitals where students wear their own clothes), dresses must be in accordance with dress code and seen prior to the event. Students should keep in mind that dresses above the knee are generally discouraged when performing on a stage to prevent wardrobe malfunctions. If students plan to sit down at any time during their performance on stage, dresses above the knee are not allowed. Strapless or low-cut dresses are also not allowed. Straps must be at least two inches wide and in accordance with MSA dress code.

### **Cell Phones and Other Personal Communication Devices**

Students may choose to bring a cell phone or other personal communication devices (PCDs) for use while they are in residence at MSA. The following regulations as specified in the MSA Personal Communication Device Contract will govern the possession and use of cell phones and other personal communication devices (PCDs) on campus at the [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#).

1. Personal communication devices are defined as any mechanism designed to accommodate electronic or wireless communication (e.g., cell phones, laptops, smart watches, tablets, ~~iPeds, MP3 players, iPhones, and~~ Bluetooth devices).
2. Use is defined as making any outgoing or receiving any incoming call, page, text message, post on social media, opening application, or e-mail. This includes incoming communications (ringing, vibrating, or silent) that are not answered.
3. Students must not photograph or video individuals by means of camera phones without the person's permission in advance.
4. Students must refrain from the use of camera phones at school functions unless special permission has been granted in advance by the administration.
5. On weekends or in the evening hours, PCD regulations apply.
6. PCDs may be required to be turned in during state testing, study hours, meetings, assemblies, or performances. If not required to be turned in, all PCDs must be on silent or off. Violation of this policy during state mandated testing may invalidate the students' tests during the test administration.
7. If a student violates PCD policies at Brookhaven High [School](#), parents/guardians must deal directly with the BHS administration. The MSA administration will not act on behalf of parents.
8. **The [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) assumes no responsibility for loss, theft, or damage to personal communication devices.**
9. The [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) assumes no responsibility for unauthorized communications or charges made by means of PCDs.
10. No video of any student or staff [may be taken](#) without their consent.
11. The cell phone policy for possession and use must be followed to avoid disciplinary action.

**Failure to follow the guidelines above may result in additional consequences, including possible confiscation.**

### **Personal Communication Device Policy**

The [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) permits the possession of personal communication/electronic devices (including phones, MP3/iPod, tablets, [and](#) etc.) on the school campus at the Executive Director's discretion. The use of these devices is permitted before and after the official school day. All devices must be out of sight and turned off during the official school day, unless specifically instructed by the academic teacher to use for instructional purposes only. These devices must also be turned off while in special activities, assemblies or events and anytime requested by an MSA staff member. Students who violate this policy and the associated regulations shall be deemed to have created a disruption and are subject to appropriate disciplinary action. No student shall photograph, videotape, record or reproduce, via any audio or video means, another student or staff member while on school premises without the expressed prior permission of the subjects and the administration.

The teacher has discretion on use of electronic devices during class as it relates to instructional purposes only. The teacher may not mandate the use of a personal electronic device. Use of electronic devices during class at any time shall comply with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and the Children’s On-line Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). Compliance includes all social media and any prohibited websites as mandated by the Mississippi Department of Education or the [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#).

Use of personal electronic devices in the residential setting are also subject to the same laws and mandates as it is on the MSA campus. All privileges can be revoked if required to maintain compliance and order.

MSA computers or other equipment must not at any time under any circumstance be connected to a personal hotspot hosted by a personal communication device. MSA does not accept responsibility for any fees associated with the use of electronic devices or data use. In addition, student ~~s are~~ is solely responsible for the security of their personal electronic devices. MSA does not assume responsibility for any unauthorized use of any device. MSA must honor the Brookhaven School District Secondary Parent/Student Handbook for any offenses related to PCDs.

### Portable Listening Devices

1. All MSA employees will take measures to educate students about unhealthy actions that threaten long-term hearing and put the ear at risk.
2. Based upon teacher permissions, music in the classroom is allowed by means of radio as long as the volume is kept low. Students can share appropriate music selections and learn about diverse types of music. Opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning abound when music is used appropriately in classrooms.

### Student Employment

Given the primary purpose of the school and the extended hours of work related to art production and performance as well as increasing graduation requirements, it is not recommended for MSA students to be employed. The completion of advanced programs of study in visual and performing arts discipline within two years demands concentration, focus, and self-discipline including afternoons, nights, and weekends. In the event of dire financial circumstances, the Executive Director will consult with parents and may consider a student working while enrolled at MSA. However, MSA expectations must remain the primary focus of every student. Grades, discipline expectations, and overall student performance will be evaluated prior to and during employment to ensure the student’s success at MSA.

### Brookhaven High School

Students who are enrolled in classes or activities at the Brookhaven High School are subject to the rules and regulations established by the Brookhaven School District Handbook. Enrolled students are provided orientation to these policies at the beginning of the school year. Additionally, a copy can be obtained at the [www.brookhavenschools.org](http://www.brookhavenschools.org).

### Mississippi State Laws

The State Legislature has passed several laws in an attempt to prevent school violence and motivate students to modify or extinguish delinquent behavior. A copy of the entire law may be found in the volumes of Mississippi Code Annotated of 1972, as amended. The following statutes are examples of some of the state laws that pertain to student conduct but are not meant to be an exhaustive list of all statutes applicable to student conduct on or off school property. A complete copy of the Mississippi Code of 1972 may be found at the Mississippi Secretary of State website: [www.sos.ms.gov/communications-publications/mississippi-law-education-and-publications\\_mscode.aspx](http://www.sos.ms.gov/communications-publications/mississippi-law-education-and-publications_mscode.aspx)

Miss. Code Ann. §37-3-51

Notification of the Department of Education of conviction of certified person of certain felonies of sex offense

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Miss. Code Ann. §37-3-81	School Safety Center established by the Mississippi Department of Education
Miss. Code Ann. §37-3-84	Confiscation of illegal firearms; reward
Miss. Code Ann. §37-3-89	School discipline and classroom management courses; requirement; approval
Miss. Code Ann. §37-3-93	School Crisis Management Program; quick response teams; toll-free telephone service for reporting school violence
Miss. Code Ann. §37-7-323	Application and enforcement of general laws of state
Miss. Code Ann. §37-9-14	General duties and powers of superintendent of school district
Miss. Code Ann. §37-9-17	Fingerprinting and criminal background check for applicants
Miss. Code Ann. §37-9-71	Suspension of pupils
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-5	Instruction in fire drills and emergency management
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-18	Automatic expulsion of student possessing controlled substance or weapon or committing violent act on school property
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-18.1	Automatic expulsion of habitually disruptive students aged 13 years or older upon third occurrence of disruptive behavior within school year
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-19	Suspension or expulsion of student damaging school property; liability of parent for damages
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-20	Intimidation, threatening, or coercion of students for purpose of interfering with attendance of classes
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-21	Abuse of superintendent, principal, teacher, or bus driver
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-23	Disturbing public school sessions or meetings
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-29	Reporting of unlawful activity or violent act on educational property
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-35	Penalties for failure to file reports pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-29 and Miss. Code Ann. § 97-5-24
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-37	Public high school fraternity, sorority or secret society, definition
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-39	Public high school fraternity, sorority or secret society, illegality
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-41	Public high school fraternity, sorority or secret society, membership or participation in activities
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-43	Public high school fraternity, sorority or secret society, duties of board of trustees
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-49	Wearing of approved eye protective devices required during participation in certain vocational, industrial arts, and chemical-physical courses of instruction
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-53	Distribution of school district's discipline plan; content of plan; discipline conference; fines and penalties; recovery of damages
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-55	Code of Student Conduct
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-57	Immunity of school personnel from liability for carrying out action in enforcing rules regarding control, discipline, suspension and expulsion of students
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-67	Bullying or harassing behavior prohibited in schools
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-69	Prohibition against bullying or harassing behavior
Miss. Code Ann. §37-44-13-91	Compulsory school attendance requirements, generally, enforcement of law
Miss. Code Ann. §37-15-3	Storage of cumulative folders; access to records; disposition of records upon transfer of student between schools; destruction of records
Miss. Code Ann. §37-15-6	Central reporting system for information concerning expulsions from public schools; access to information
Miss. Code Ann. §37-15-9	Requirements for enrollment of children in public schools
Miss. Code Ann. §41-29-105	Definitions related to possession, transfer, etc. of controlled substances
Miss. Code Ann. §41-29-113-121	Controlled substances, Schedules I-V
Miss. Code Ann. §41-29-313	Drug-Free Workplace of 1988
Miss. Code Ann. §49-29-105	Inhalants, definitions

Miss. Code Ann. §63-11-30	Operation of vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or controlled substances
Miss. Code Ann. §67-1-5	Alcoholic beverages, definitions
Miss. Code Ann. §67-1-81	Underage purchase, receipt, possession, sale of alcohol
Miss. Code Ann. §71-7-1	Drug and Alcohol Testing
Miss. Code Ann. §93-5-26	Right of non-custodial parents
Miss. Code Ann. §97-31-27	Sale, possession of intoxicating beverages prohibited
Miss. Code Ann. §97-31-47	Transportation of intoxicating liquors into or within the state
Miss. Code Ann. §97-32-1	MS Juvenile Tobacco Access Prevention Act
Miss. Code Ann. §97-32-3	Definition of tobacco products
Miss. Code Ann. §97-32-9	Juvenile purchase, possession of tobacco on school property
Miss. Code Ann. §97-32-27	Definition of adult, minor, educational property
Miss. Code Ann. §97-35-13	Disruption of a public place
Miss. Code Ann. §97-32-3	Definitions of tobacco products
Miss. Code Ann. §97-32-13	Juvenile misrepresentation of age for the purchase or possession of tobacco products
Miss. Code Ann. §97-37-1	Deadly weapons; carrying while concealed; use or attempt to use
Miss. Code Ann. §97-37-17	Possession of weapons by a student; aiding or encouraging
Miss. Code Ann. §97-44-1 <i>et. seq.</i>	Mississippi Streetgang Act
Miss. Code Ann. §41-29-313	Precursor chemicals or drugs; presumption; unlawful manufacture of
	controlled substances; offenses; penalties
Miss. Code Ann. §43-21-353	Reporting abuse or neglect
Miss. Code Ann. §43-47-7	Reports of abuse neglect exploitation
Miss. Code Ann. §97-3-54.1	Human trafficking
Miss. Code Ann. §97-5-1 <i>et. seq.</i>	Offenses affecting children
Miss. Code Ann. §97-5-24	Sexual involvement of school employee with student, reporting
Miss. Code Ann. § 97-3-105	Hazing; punishment
Miss. Code Ann. § 97-29-3	Sex between teacher and pupil
Miss. Code Ann. § 97-29-45	Obscene electronic and telecommunications
Miss. Code Ann. §§ 97-32-5	Sale of tobacco to persons under 18 prohibited
23 U.S.C. §158	National minimum drinking age

## Philosophy

At the heart of the vision and mission of MSA is a strong belief in intellectual, academic, and social honesty and integrity. To develop a strong sense of community, the student code of conduct provides a framework within which a sense of closeness, cooperation, sharing, enjoyment, and belonging can emerge. All groups find comfort in establishing standards or rules that help guide the behavior of its members. MSA recognizes the need for such rules, and also understands the value of defining possible consequences in the event those rules are disregarded.

Standards of discipline have been established to provide clear expectations. Both parents and students should spend time familiarizing themselves with these policies. Parents can support the school by holding their children accountable for their actions and not seeking exceptions to policies. Parents are urged to work cooperatively with the academic and residence life staff in maintaining established behavioral standards. MSA will consistently determine consequences for inappropriate behavior.

While sharing responsibility for ensuring a safe living and learning environment, students at MSA must practice self-discipline. MSA staff will assist students in managing their behaviors through education about policies, confronting those in violation, and issuing consequences. MSA encourages and promotes positive behavior and will ensure due process for all students. If students make decisions or choices that do not follow the policies and standards of MSA, they will be held accountable for their actions. The faculty and staff will handle minor violations. However, serious incidents may be referred directly to the administration. A student who is in the presence of a peer breaking MSA policy is “knowingly present” and thus equally responsible for reporting the violation.

The MSA administration, faculty, and staff will determine what constitutes standards of acceptable behavior and address violations of those guidelines utilizing discretion. Unanticipated, unacceptable incidents will arise and require follow-up action. The intent of the school is not to supplant student responsibilities by itemizing every possible violation and defining consequences. Hence, the absence of specifically defined rules or regulations, procedures, or policies should not be viewed as an indication of acceptable behavior. Students should ask for clarification before making assumptions or conducting questionable behavior.

An ongoing goal is to administer discipline with fairness, impartiality, and justness. MSA will judge students as individuals; considerations may include student attitudes and past disciplinary histories. Creating an all-inclusive list of actions resulting in the disciplinary sanctions is impossible.

### **Disciplinary Action Policy**

Students are subject to discipline while they are subject to the jurisdiction of the [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#), while participating in or going to or from any school-related activity, at any place where an activity, contest, or event is taking place, during the course of any field trip, during the course of any trip or activity sponsored or supervised by the school, while under the supervision or direction of any teacher, administrator, or other authority of the school, or when such conduct does or may threaten to interfere with or disrupt the educational or residential environment or poses a threat to the safety of students or others.

Willful or inadvertent disregard for school rules implies a need for learning proper conduct. Learning to correct action, or behavior, is brought about using natural, predetermined consequences. The consequence is intended to reasonably fit the seriousness of the violation and ultimately to change behavior. To this end, three levels of violations and corresponding consequences have been developed. Level I violations are minor infractions that are disruptive to the daily operation of academic and residential life. Level II violations are more serious and indicate a more substantial disregard for school procedures. Level III violations are the infractions indicating disregard for the welfare of self and others and usually include dorm restriction, suspension, dismissal, or expulsion and possible law enforcement involvement.

The Executive Director, Principal, or any school administrator is authorized to contact law enforcement officials and/or to take appropriate disciplinary action, including immediate expulsion within the student's constitutional rights of due process, consideration for suspension, detention, campus work service, dorm restriction, or campus restriction against any student for misconduct, including but not limited to the infractions listed in the Violations and Consequences Charts (Levels I-III) at the end of this section.

### **Student Code of Conduct**

The [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) selects students with various backgrounds, experiences, and educational expectations. In a community of diverse learners, standards of behavior ensure that all students live in a safe environment conducive to learning and free from disruptions that impede the freedom to develop and grow as artists and productive individuals in society. The MSA Student Code of Conduct provides guidelines for students to utilize when interacting with others and making daily life decisions that occur as part of a residential setting.

Since no document provides for all circumstances, students, parents, faculty, and staff must exhibit good judgment, fair play, and discretion always. Students and parents will sign a contract at registration that indicates that they have been given a copy of the Student Code of Conduct and discipline policies in the Student Handbook and understand that all students must comply with school policies and procedures whether on or off campus.

In keeping with the general requirements of the Student Code of Conduct, students will:

1. Act with honor, courtesy, and respect;
2. Respect the rights and properties of others in the school and community;

3. Care for, support, and respect the physical, natural, educational, and social environment of the school, community, and state;
4. Be truthful and honest to peers, administrators, faculty, staff, parents, and community members in all aspects of their lives;
5. Be committed to self-discovery, self-motivation, and continual personal development necessary to achieve artistic, intellectual, social, and personal growth;
6. Be the only source of any work for which they take credit. They will not cheat, plagiarize, appropriate, or copy the work of others;
7. Participate fully in learning activities required by the teachers and/or the school;
8. Exhibit behaviors that promote personal wellness;
9. Uphold the values of academic integrity;
10. Understand that it is a privilege to attend MSA, and students are accountable for their own actions; and
11. Follow all school, local, federal, and state guidelines, regulations, and laws throughout their tenure at MSA.

### **Violations of Academic Integrity**

MSA expects all students, faculty, and staff members to uphold the Values of Academic Integrity. Decisions regarding infractions fall to the teacher and other supervisory personnel including residential life staff members. To ensure due process, supervisors (faculty and other staff members) will report suspicion or other indications of dishonesty to the Principal as soon as the infractions occur. Violations occur in both academic and residential contexts and may fall into various categories as listed below. This listing of infractions is not intended to be exhaustive but represents basic behaviors that are not acceptable on the [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#) campus. Any acts of dishonesty may result in disciplinary action.

### **Definitions of Violations of Academic Integrity<sup>5</sup>**

#### **1. Cheating:**

- Receiving unauthorized help from or giving help to another student during an in-class or take-home exam;
- Using unauthorized notes, study aids, calculators, or information on an examination;
- Altering a graded work after it has been returned, then submitting the work for re-grading;
- Looking at another student's test, answer sheet, or other materials;
- Talking during a test. The teacher cannot be expected to determine the content of a private conversation between students, therefore, all talking during tests is considered cheating;
- Programming a calculator or PCD for use in accessing answers;
- Failing to follow prescribed security protocols for completing an exam for a virtual course (e.g., MVPS, Connections Education, other MDE approved vendor) or an Independent Study (correspondence) course;
- Obtaining course assignment or examination answers in a manner or from sources not authorized by the instructor (includes but is not limited to inappropriate use of the Internet);
- Allowing another person to do one's work and submitting that work under one's own name;
- Acting contrary to the teacher's instructions regarding collaboration; or
- Using the internet to search for answers for tests or homework assignments in an online class without direct instruction to do so;
- Submitting identical or similar papers for credit in more than one course without prior permission from the course instructors.

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<sup>5</sup>The following are excerpts quoted or adapted from: The University of Southern Mississippi College of Business Handbook, The Northwestern University Undergraduate Academic Conduct Committee Violations Definitions, and The Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy Handbook.

2. **Plagiarism:**
  - Using a commercially prepared paper or research project;
  - Submitting material that in part or whole is not entirely one's own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source;
  - Making it appear in one's writing as if another's writing, including text, stories or narratives, thoughts, or discovered facts are one's own;
  - Representing the artistic creation, graphic, or tabular presentation of others as one's own;
  - Copying words, concepts, ideas, or images from any source and submitting the material as one's own without acknowledging the source by the use of footnotes, quotation marks, or both; or
  - Citation of sources not actually used in preparation of an assignment.
3. **Fabrication:**
  - Falsifying or inventing any information, data or citation;
  - Presenting data or information that was not gathered in accordance with guidelines given by the instructor;
  - Failing to include an accurate account of the method by which the data were gathered or collected;
4. **Obtaining an Unfair Advantage:**
  - Stealing, reproducing, circulating or otherwise gaining access to examination materials prior to the time authorized by the instructor;
  - Obtaining a copy of tests or scoring devices.
  - Knowingly giving false information to a member of the faculty to request an alternative date or time for an examination or assignment;
  - Reading [or accessing the help] of other sources in place of assigned work (e.g., English version of German poem, using on-line translators);
  - Stealing, destroying, defacing or concealing library materials with the purpose of depriving others of their use;
  - Unauthorized collaboration on an academic assignment;
  - Retaining, possessing, using or circulating previously given examination materials, where those materials clearly indicate that they are to be returned to the instructor at the conclusion of the examination;
  - Intentionally obstructing or interfering with another student's academic work,
  - Appropriating or copying an artistic image or sound and submitting it for credit as one's own original designs; or
  - Otherwise undertaking activity with the purpose of creating or obtaining an unfair academic advantage over other students' academic work.
5. **Aiding and Abetting Academic Dishonesty:**
  - Failure to report violations of academic integrity;
  - Revealing information to another student about an examination or assignment that has not been returned to students by the instructor or has not been authorized by the instructor;
  - Providing material, information, or other assistance to another person with knowledge that such aid could be used in any of the violations stated above;
  - Providing false information in connection with any inquiry regarding academic integrity; or
  - Falsifying evidence or intimidating or influencing someone in connection with an honor violation investigation.
6. **Falsification of Records and Official Documents:**
  - Altering documents affecting academic or residential life records;
  - Forging signatures of authorization or falsifying information on an official document, grade report, letter of permission, petition, drop/add form, ID card, or any other official school document;
  - Knowingly giving false information to another academic institution or a prospective



employer about academic performance.

## Public Display of Affection (PDA)

Public displays of affection beyond a brief friendly hug, a quick kiss on the cheek, arm loosely around shoulder or waist, or holding hands, are considered a breach of MSA expectations and are subject to disciplinary procedures. Listing every behavior that constitutes PDA is impossible. Students must use common sense in relation to appropriate behavior. PDA restrictions apply to students regardless of their relationship status or gender.

Students must be ever vigilant and avoid crossing the boundary line of behaviors that are not tolerated in public settings. Displays of affection such as kissing on the lips, touching, fondling, pecking, cuddling, canoodling, petting, caressing, extended hugging, holding, groping, rubbing, necking, massaging, licking, sitting on another's lap, laying on one another, and any other behavior deemed inappropriate in a public environment will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action.

All MSA staff, not just Residence Life Staff, have the responsibility to use their judgment in asking students to cease any behavior they determine to be PDA. Failure to respond to such a request in a timely manner will escalate the situation to a more serious disciplinary matter. The disciplinary procedure will correspond to the gravity of the PDA situation and current disciplinary record.

## Gang Activity and Secret Societies

It is unlawful in the State of Mississippi to organize fraternities, sororities, or secret societies in the public high schools. It is also unlawful for a public school student to be a member of, belong to, or participate in such organizations, and to solicit student membership in such organizations. Students in violation of this policy are subject to suspension or expulsion.

Schools governed by the Mississippi State Board of Education are committed to maintaining a safe school environment for their students and staff. Students are expected to adhere to the school standards of conduct that promote well-being and supports the learning process. Gang activity will not be tolerated in any form. Gang-related activities in the school, on school property or vehicles, or at school-related activities are prohibited. Where gang activity is suspected or confirmed a complaint will be filed in accordance with the "Mississippi Street Gang Act" pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 97-44-1 et seq.

Gang activity, which initiates, promotes, or advocates activities that threaten the safety or wellbeing of persons or property on school grounds or which disrupts the school environment are harmful to the educational process. The use of hand signals, graffiti, or the presence of apparel, jewelry, accessory, or manner of grooming which, by virtue of color, arrangement, trademark, symbol, or any other attribute which implies membership or affiliation with such a group, presents a clear and present danger and is to be discouraged by school officials. Students displaying interest, involvement, or affiliation with a gang shall be subject to disciplinary action and will be encouraged to seek involvement in authorized school organizations to enhance self-esteem and promote activity that can have a positive impact on the student.

## Bullying

### Prohibition

No student or school employee shall be subjected to bullying or harassing behavior by school employees or students. The [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) prohibits bullying or harassing behavior of students or school employees. The [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) will make every reasonable effort to ensure that no person or school employee is subjected to bullying or harassing behavior by other students or other school employees.

(1) Bullying or harassing behavior is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic\*, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, or any act reasonably

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perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, that, takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus, and that:

- a) places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or
- b) creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits. For the purposes of this section, a "hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

Conduct described in subsection (1) is considered bullying if that conduct interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of a school.

\* Bullying or harassing behavior includes cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is bullying or harassing behavior that occurs electronically. Bullying or harassing behavior will not be condoned or tolerated when it takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or when it takes place off school property when such conduct materially disrupts classwork or involves substantial disorder or invasion of the rights of others.

No person shall engage in any act of retaliation or reprisal against any person, including a victim, a witness, or another person with reliable information about an act of bullying or harassing behavior and/or who in good faith provides information concerning an incident of bullying.

#### **Procedures for Reporting, Investigating, and Addressing Bullying or Harassing Behavior**

A student who feels he/she has been a victim of bullying or harassing behavior and/or a student or volunteer who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student, school employee, or volunteer has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior should report the incident to a school employee, who shall immediately report the incident in writing to the Principal and/or Executive Director. Students should report bullying or harassing behavior to a school employee promptly, but no later than five (5) working days after the alleged incident(s) occurred.

Reports should include: the name of the reporting person\*, the specific nature and date of the misconduct, the name(s) of the victim(s) of the misconduct, the name(s) of any witness(es), the name(s) of the alleged bully, and any other information that would assist in the investigation of the report. \*If a student chooses to anonymously report bullying or harassing behavior, the school's ability to take action based solely on an anonymous report may be limited.

A school employee who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student or school employee has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior shall immediately report the incident in writing to the Principal and/or Executive Director. Reports against the Principal shall immediately be made in writing to the Executive Director, and reports against the Executive Director shall immediately be made in writing to the Chief Academic Officer.

The school administration will investigate reported incidents of bullying within five (5) working days of receiving the report.

The school administration will speak with the alleged victim and alleged bully separately. Students may submit evidence for the school administration to review and a list of witnesses for the school administration to [speak with interview](#). Students should preserve evidence of bullying/cyberbullying and/or harassing behavior.

All teachers, employees, volunteers, and students shall fully cooperate with the [investigating investigation](#) and answer truthfully all inquiries relative thereto.

Upon completion of the investigation, the school administration will immediately notify the alleged victim and alleged bully regarding the outcome of the investigation and/or what discipline actions and/or other appropriate actions will be taken, if warranted.

The school administration will provide notice by phone, email, and/or written letter of an incident of bullying and the outcome of the investigation and/or what discipline actions and/or other appropriate actions will be taken, if warranted, within a reasonable amount of time to a parent or guardian of the victim and a parent or guardian of the bully not to exceed five (5) working days after the completion of the investigation, incident

The Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA recognizes the fundamental right of every student to take “reasonable actions” as may be necessary to defend himself or herself from an attack by another student who has evidenced menacing or threatening behavior through bullying or harassing. “Reasonable action” includes, but is not limited to, promptly reporting the bullying or harassing behavior to a school employee and student’s use of reasonable self-defense.

If, after an investigation, a student is found to be a victim of bullying, such student shall not face disciplinary action on the basis of that student’s use of reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying.

Discipline for bullying of a student with disabilities shall comply with the applicable requirements under federal law including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq.*).

Available counseling options for a student who is a victim of bullying or a witness to bullying or a student who engages in bullying include: School Guidance Counseling • Conflict Resolution Training • Anger Management Training • Problem Solving Skills Training (proactive, constructive, relationship-building) and • Social Skills Training].

Support and intervention in response to bullying may be provided by the Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA through the assistance of the any of the following agencies: Mississippi Department of Education • Community/Family Public or private community-based mental health services • Faith-based services • Law enforcement agencies and • guidance counselor’s office at MSA.

The procedure for reporting bullying will also be posted on the school’s website. False accusations or reports of bullying are prohibited and may warrant discipline action. Any perceived criminal conduct will be immediately reported to law enforcement. Source: *Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-11-67 and 37-11-69 (Amended 7/Rev. 2017)*

## Harassment

The Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA is committed to sustaining a safe and supportive school environment free from harassment. In keeping with this commitment, the school will not tolerate harassment of employees or students by anyone, including administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents, volunteers, or any others on campus.

MSA prohibits all types of harassment based on, but not limited to, color, race, religion, creed, national origin, gender, age, or disability. MSA will promptly investigate all complaints of harassment—formal or informal, written or verbal—and take appropriate actions against any member of the school community found in violation of this policy.

Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment must be handled in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Mississippi Department of Education Board Policy Part 3, Chapter 99, Rule 99.1.

## Definitions

**School Community** includes, but is not limited to, all students, parents, school and state employees, contractors, volunteers, committee members, and other visitors.

**Commented [KK14]:** Section 37-11-69 states that the school must “establish a procedure for providing notice of an incident of bullying to a parent or guardian of the victim and a parent or guardian of the bully within a reasonable amount of time after the incident.” This section of the handbook does not explain the procedure for notifying the parents/guardians. Will it be via telephone, via letter, etc.? Also, this section states notice will be given after the completion of the investigation, but the statute says notice should be given after the incident.

**School Employee** includes, but is not limited to, all administrators, teachers, staff, bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers, and agents of the school.

**Harassment** means verbal or physical conduct based on an individual's actual or perceived race, religion, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability that affects or interferes with a student's educational performance or creates a hostile, offensive, or intimidating environment.

Harassment may include any form of unwelcome verbal, physical, or written conduct that offends, degrades, or belittles an individual. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, unsolicited derogatory remarks, jokes, demeaning comments, offensive behavior, slurs, mimicking, name calling, graffiti, innuendo, gestures, physical contact, stalking, threatening, bullying, extorting, or the display or circulation of written materials or pictures [or videos](#). These stipulations apply whether the harassment is between people of the same, or of a different gender.

**Sexual Harassment** includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; unwelcome sexual advances; threats; bodily contact; sexually oriented verbal teasing; abuse; pressure for sexual activity; repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications; unwelcome touching such as pinching, patting, or constant brushing against another's body; suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, employment status, or similarly personal concerns; filing a false complaint of sexual harassment; or other deliberate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature made by any school employee or volunteer to a student or to another school employee or volunteer; a student to another student; or a student to a staff member when:

1. Submission to such contact is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of an individual's privileges, access to campus resources and activities, grades, or educational development;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for education decisions affecting such individual; [or](#)
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment.

Students believing, they have been sexually harassed should immediately report the incident(s) to the administration or school employee. The administration shall investigate and take appropriate corrective action.

**Peer Harassment** includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome attention from peers or other individuals and includes such actions as name calling, threatening gestures, unwanted physical contact, vandalism of personal property, and filing a false complaint.

**Racial and Color Harassment** includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct directed at the characteristics of an individual's race or color. Nicknames, emphasizing stereotypes, racial slurs, comments on one's manner of speaking, and negative references to racial customs are examples of racial or color harassment.

**Religious Creed Harassment** includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct directed at an individual's religion or creed such as derogatory comments regarding surnames, religious clothing, religious slurs, or graffiti.

**National Origin Harassment** includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct directed at the characteristics of an individual's national origin such as negative comments regarding surnames, manner of speaking, customs, language, or ethnic slurs.

**Disability Harassment** includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct directed at a person's disabling mental or physical condition such as manner of speech or movement or interference with an individual's equipment.

**Commented [KK15]:** Just a suggestion - With the prevalence of services like Tik Tok, it seems like a good idea to include videos as a vehicle for possible harassment.

## Reporting Harassment

Students who believe they are a victim of any form of harassment should immediately report the incident(s) to the administration or a school employee. Any school employee or student, who observes, overhears, or otherwise witnesses harassment is encouraged to take appropriate action to report the incident immediately. In the event the school employee or student is unable to personally take prompt action, they are encouraged to report the incident or complaint in writing to the Director of Residential Life, Principal, and/or the Executive Director. Any complaint of harassment filed by a student or staff member will be reported immediately to the Director of Residential Life, Principal, and/or the Executive Director. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment must be handled in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Mississippi Department of Education Board Policy Part 3, Chapter 99, Rule 99.1.

Filing of a complaint or reporting harassment in any manner will not affect an individual's status, work assignments, or grades.

Under certain circumstances, sexual harassment behaviors may constitute physical or sexual abuse. Therefore, when educators become aware of suspected abuse, they must report the incident to the Mississippi Department of Human Services. Such acts constitute violations of Mississippi criminal law resulting in law enforcement investigations and possible criminal charges.

## Retaliation to Harassment

Members of the school community may not retaliate against any person who reports alleged harassment or any person who testifies, assists, or participates in the investigation, proceedings, or hearing related to such harassment. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment and may be redressed through the same process for reporting, investigating, and enforcing procedures for harassment. Any person who knowingly files a false claim or report may be subject to the same actions that MSA might take against any other individual violating this harassment policy.

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and the accused, will be respected consistent with the legal obligation of the school and the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and to take corrective actions when such conduct occurs.

## Consequences to Violation of Harassment Policies

Any school employee or student found to have violated this policy may be subject to action including, but not limited to, warning, remedial training, education or counseling, suspension, expulsion, termination, or discharge from duties.

## Title IX Grievance Policy

### 1. RIGHT TO EXPRESS CONCERNS, COMPLAINTS OR GRIEVANCES

It is the policy of the SBE and the MDE to maintain a safe and supportive learning and educational environment that is free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination.

MDE is a conduit for federal money to the local school districts and ensures the local school districts' compliance with federal financial grants. As such, MDE requires each local school district and each state school to have a grievance policy in place to address any complaints alleging discrimination under the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title II of the American Disability Act, Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Complaints alleging discrimination by the local school district, its staff, or students should be first directed to the local school level and handled pursuant to local policy.

As specifically related to Title IX, this policy sets out the minimum steps that MSA shall take in response to a notice of alleged discrimination based on sex, including discrimination in the form of sexual harassment, which encompasses sexual violence, such as dating violence, domestic violence, and cyberstalking. The SBE and MSA forbids unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual

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favors and other verbal or physical ~~contact~~ of a sexual nature amounting to or constituting harassment and/or discrimination against any student under its purview.

Commented [KK16]: The State Board policy posted on its website actually uses the word "contract," but it would seem that the word "contact" would make more sense in the context of the sentence.

Commented [WC17R16]: Yes, should read contact

## 2. DEFINITIONS

### A. Sex Discrimination

The practice of treating a person differently, or less favorably, than other people or groups based on sex.

### B. Allegation

An assertion that someone has engaged in discrimination based on sex.

### C. Sexual Harassment

Unwanted conduct based on sex. Examples of such behavior include:

- Direct or indirect threats or bribes for unwanted sexual activity
- Sexual innuendos and comments
- Asking or commenting about a person's sexual activities
- Humor or jokes about sex or females/males in general
- Making sexually suggestive remarks, gestures, or jokes, or remarks of a sexual nature about a person's appearance
- Repeated unsuccessful attempts at gaining dates or sexual behavior
- Sexual touching, pinching, brushing, or patting
- Displaying offensive sexual illustrations in the school/work place
- Insulting and belittling a person-sexual ridicule
- Letters, notes, telephone calls, or materials of a sexual nature
- Stalking a person either inside or outside the institution
- Attempt or actual sexual assault

### D. Complainant

The person who has experienced the alleged discrimination based on sex. This person is considered a complainant regardless of whether they choose to file a formal complaint under Title IX.

### E. Respondent

The person accused of the alleged discrimination. This person may be a student or a school employee. If the person is an employee, the school shall adhere to the process found in Miss. Code Ann. § 37-9-59.

### F. Title IX Coordinator

The individual responsible for overseeing the school's efforts to comply with its obligations under Title IX and Title IX regulations, including, but not limited to, coordinating any investigations of complaints of sex discrimination, implementation of supportive measures, and remedies where appropriate.

## 3. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS

MSA shall have a grievance policy adopted by the governing board and accessible in both the student handbook and employee handbook. The grievance policy shall include the following:

### A. Receiving and Responding to Reports

Employees who believe or have been made aware that a student has been subject to Title IX Discrimination, shall report it to the Title IX Coordinator. Failure to make such a report may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

MSA shall respond whenever any school employee has been put on actual notice of improper behavior as defined in the school's policy. Such notice may be from an oral report of sexual harassment by a complainant or anyone else, a written report, through personal observation, through an anonymous report, or through various other means. When a complaint or report is made under the policy, the Title IX Coordinator shall: (1) confidentially contact the complainant to offer supportive measures, consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures, and inform them

of the availability of supportive measures with or without filing a formal complaint; (2) explain the process for how to file a formal complaint; (3) inform the complainant that any report made in good faith will not result in discipline; and (4) respect the complainant's wishes with respect to whether to investigate unless the designated staff member determines it is necessary to pursue the complaint in light of a health or safety concern for the community.

#### B. Confidentiality

MSA must keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of any form of prohibited sex discrimination, including any reporter, complainant, respondent, or witness, except:

1. As may be permitted by FERPA;
2. Or as required by law; or
3. To carry out the Title IX regulations, including the conduct of any investigation, hearing, or judicial proceeding arising thereunder.

The confidentiality of the reporting party will be observed providing it does not interfere with the school's ability to investigate or take corrective action. If the complainant reports rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, or other behaviors which constitute criminal activity, school officials shall contact appropriate law enforcement agencies and the superintendent/executive director.

#### C. Supportive Measures

Supportive measures are short-term measures that are designed to restore or preserve access to the school's education program or activity. Supportive measures are available regardless of whether the complainant chooses to pursue any action under the school's policy, including before and after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. They are meant to restore access to education, protect student and employee safety, and/or deter future acts.

Supportive measures are available to the complainant, respondent, and as appropriate, witnesses or other impacted individuals, and these measures should be provided based on an individualized assessment of the needs of the individual. These supports are non-disciplinary and non-punitive individualized services designed to offer support without being unreasonable burdensome.

Examples of supportive measures may include, but are not limited to, counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, campus escort services, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, changes in work or housing locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus, and other similar measures.

#### D. Formal Complaint

A "Formal complaint" means a document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging discrimination or sexual harassment against a respondent and request that the school investigate the allegation(s). A formal complaint may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, or by electronic mail, by using the contact information provided by the school district. The complaint document, whether physical or electronic, shall contain the complainant's physical or digital signature. Where the Title IX Coordinator signs a formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinator is not "the complainant" or otherwise considered a party but shall comply with applicable procedures.

#### E. Investigations

Once a formal complaint is filed, an investigator will be assigned and the parties will be treated equitably, including in the provision of supportive measures and remedies. Each party will receive notice of the specifics of the allegations as known, and as any arise during the investigation. The investigator will attempt to collect all relevant information and evidence. While the investigator will have the burden of gathering evidence, it is crucial that the parties present evidence and identify witnesses to the investigator so that they may be considered during the investigation.

The principal of the school, so long as the principal is neither the Title IX Coordinator, the investigator, or any other individual who may have a conflict of interest, shall serve as the decision-maker, and will

facilitate a written question and answer period between the parties. Each party may submit written questions for the other party and witnesses to the decision-maker for review. The questions must be relevant to the case, and the decision-maker will determine if the questions submitted are relevant and will then forward the relevant questions to the other party or witnesses for a response. The decision-maker can then review all the responses, determine what is relevant or not relevant, and issue a decision as to whether the respondent is responsible for the alleged act.

#### F. Presumptions about Complainants, Respondents, and Witnesses

The school presumes that reports of prohibited conduct are made in good faith. A finding that the alleged behavior does not constitute a violation of this school's policy or that there is insufficient evidence to establish that the alleged conduct occurred as reported does not mean that the report was made in bad faith.

The respondent is presumed to be not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made by the decision-maker.

#### G. Determination Regarding Responsibility

The decision-maker shall review the evidence provided by all parties and will make a final determination of responsibility after the investigation based on a preponderance of the evidence. "Preponderance of the evidence" means evidence that is of greater weight or more convincing than as asserted fact or facts occurred than evidence in opposition to such facts. It is evidence which as a whole shows that an assertion to be proven is more likely than not.

The decision-maker shall provide a final determination to the parties at the same time, with appeal rights provided. It will explain if any policies were violated, the steps and methods taken to investigate, the findings of the investigation, conclusions about the findings, the ultimate determination and the reasons for it, any disciplinary sanctions that will be imposed on the respondent, and any remedies available to the complainant to restore or preserve equal access.

#### H. Sanctions and Remedies

MSA will take reasonable steps to address any violations of the policy and to restore or preserve equal access to the school's education programs or activities. Sanctions for finding of responsibility depend upon the nature and gravity of the misconduct, any record of prior discipline for similar violations, or both.

When a respondent is found responsible for the prohibited behavior as alleged, remedies shall be provided to the complainant. Remedies are designed to maintain the complainant's equal access to education and may include supportive measures or remedies that are punitive or would pose a burden to the respondent.

Whatever the outcome of the investigation or appeal, the complainant and respondent may request ongoing or additional supportive measures. Ongoing supportive measures that do not unreasonably burden a party may be considered and provided even if the respondent is found not responsible.

#### I. Informal Resolution

Informal resolution is available only after a formal complaint has been filed involving parties of the same status (e.g., student-student or employee-employee), prior to a determination of responsibility, and if the complainant and respondent voluntarily consent to the process in writing. Informal resolution is not available in cases which an employee is alleged to have sexually harassed a student.

#### J. Parent and Guardian Rights

Consistent with the applicable laws of the State of Mississippi and absent a court order or other legal requirement to the contrary, a student's parent or guardian shall be permitted to exercise the rights granted to their child under the school's policy, whether such rights involve requesting supportive measures, filing a formal complaint, or participating in a grievance process. A student's parent or



guardian shall also be permitted to accompany the student to meetings, interviews, and hearings, if applicable, during a grievance process to exercise rights on behalf of the student. The student may have an advisor of choice who is a different person from the parent or guardian.

#### 4. APPEALS

Appeals are available after a complaint dismissal or after a final determination is made. Appeals may be made due to procedural irregularities in the investigation affecting the outcome, new evidence becoming available, or due to bias or a conflict of interest by the personnel that may have affected the outcome. The school should set a reasonable time frame to submit an appeal, but not less than 10 days nor more than 30 days. Or, if there is no administrative response to the student/parent/guardian grievance by the school, the grievance should be made to the superintendent of the school or the superintendent's designee.

Parties shall be given an opportunity to submit a written statement in support of or in opposition to the final determination. A new decision-maker shall issue a final decision at the same time to each party. The following procedures shall be followed when submitted student/parent/guardian grievances regarding administrative decisions:

Level 1: An aggrieved party should express his or her concern to the school level administration for resolution or file a formal grievance with the executive director. The executive director shall investigate allegations as soon as circumstances allow, but not later than five (5) business days from submission of the original written grievance. The administrator shall provide a written response to the aggrieved party no later than ten (10) business days after receipt of the original written grievance. If there is no administrative response to the aggrieved party within the ten (10) business days, or if the response is unsatisfactory, the aggrieved party may elevate to Level 2.

Level 2: If any party deems the resolution unsatisfactory, the party may appeal the decision by submitting a copy of the grievance and decision to the Mississippi Department of Education's Associate Superintendent responsible for oversight of the state school, along with a written statement detailing the reasons for the dissatisfaction. The Associate Superintendent shall investigate and review the matter. After review, the Associate Superintendent shall provide a written response to the parties postmarked no later than ten (10) business days following receipt of the appeal. If there is no response by the Associate Superintendent to the appealing party within the ten (10) business days, or if the response is unsatisfactory to either party, the aggrieved party may advance the grievance to Level 3.

Level 3: The aggrieved party, after review of the written response from the Associate Superintendent, may appeal that response to the State Superintendent or the State's Superintendent's designee no later than ten (10) business days after receipt of the written communication at Level 2. The State Superintendent or his/her designee shall review the grievance and shall provide the parties a written response postmarked within ten (10) business days following the receipt of the appeal.

Level 4: The aggrieved party may appeal the response from the State Superintendent to the State Board of Education by submitting a written request for appeal to the State Board of Education along with all documentation from Levels 1-3 no later than ten (10) business days after receipt of the State Superintendent's written response at Level 3. The State Board of Education shall review the grievance and shall provide the parties an opportunity to appear at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting to present his or her grievance and response in accordance with the Family Education Right and Privacy Act (FERPA) 20 U.S.C. 1232g, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) 20 U.S.C. 1400 *et. seq.* implementing regulations, and other federal and state laws that govern the protection of student information. If the party or parties elect not to appear personally, the parties may request the Board's review of the written documentation only. The decision of the State Board of Education shall be final.

Source: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; 34 C.F.R. § 106; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-1-3

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## Prohibited Items

In addition to tobacco, alcohol, and drugs, MSA prohibits the items listed below from campus. Alternative nicotine products as defined by Miss Code Ann. § 97-32-51, vapor cigarettes, electronic cigarettes/cigars/pipes, and accessories (e.g., pipes, holders, rolling papers, lighters, [and](#) matches) are not allowed. Any natural herbs, seeds, or plants that are used for the purpose of altering state of mind in students are strictly prohibited. Items that are used outside of their intended purpose to alter the state of mind in students are considered prohibited items. Students will be subject to disciplinary action accordingly. If the action by students with prohibited items does not meet the pre-requisites of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs, the student will receive the following consequences:

1. An automatic five (5) day suspension,
2. Report to the school principal or designee for further activity, [and/or](#)
3. The student will be dismissed or expelled from school on a second offense.

Commented [KK18]: I was unsure whether there should be an "and" or an "or" here.

## Substance Abuse Policies

Through educational services and other supportive services, MSA is an alcohol, drug, and smoke-free campus at all times. All federal, state, and local laws drive the policies and procedures of MSA in regard to violations of substance abuse.

### Tobacco and Tobacco Products

Pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 97-32-9, it is illegal for juveniles to purchase tobacco and no student shall possess tobacco on any educational property. Miss. Code Ann. § 97-32-29 prohibits tobacco use on school property; thus, the campus of MSA is a tobacco-free environment. Cigarettes, cigars, and other tobacco products (e.g., snuff, chewing tobacco, [and](#) pipe tobacco) are not allowed. Smoking, possession, or use of tobacco products are prohibited by students and adults on campus and at school related activities. While under the patronage of MSA, the same drug-free policies exist for all MSA administration, faculty, staff, and students. Students need not be observed smoking to be in violation; possession of tobacco or related paraphernalia constitutes a violation and will be referred to administration as a Level III violation. A student's first offense will result in result in the following consequences:

1. An automatic five (5) day suspension,
2. Report to the school principal or designee for further activity and assignment of an tobacco education program, [and/or](#)
3. The student will be dismissed or expelled from school on a second offense.

Commented [KK19]: I was unsure whether there should be an "and" or an "or" here.

### Alcohol

The following sections of the Mississippi Code [Annotated](#) govern the purchase and use of alcohol by minors; [\\_](#) offenses that are not only against the law, but also have the potential to be life threatening.

Miss. Code Ann. § 63-11-30	Operation of vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or controlled substance
Miss. Code Ann. § 67-1-5	Alcoholic beverages
Miss. Code Ann. § 67-1-81	Underage purchase, receipt, possession, sale of alcohol
Miss. Code Ann. § 97-31-27	Sale, possession of intoxicating beverages prohibited

Because the purchase and use of alcohol by minors is against the law, MSA considers this a very serious matter and will make every effort to educate and encourage its students to refrain from the use of harmful substances.

When the findings of an administrative investigation strongly support the claim that the student used, purchased, possessed, distributed, or is under the influence of alcohol, the MSA administration will notify parents and a test may be required (at parental expense) to verify allegations. If a test is completed, the administrator will communicate results to the parents and schedule a comprehensive conference to discuss disciplinary actions. The student will remain under the supervision of the campus official until parents arrive to pick them up. Offense(s) related to the possession, purchase, distribution, or use of alcohol will result in the following consequences:

1. An automatic ten (10) day suspension,
2. Report to the school principal or designee for further activity and assignment of an alcohol education program,
3. Return home for the first two weekends for weekend home restriction,
4. Complete two weeks campus restriction after completing the weekend home restriction, and,
5. The student will be dismissed or expelled from school on a second offense.

## Illegal Drugs

The administration, faculty, staff, and student body are responsible for ensuring a drug-free campus for the support of a strong academic and residential learning environment. Illegal drugs present a threat to the health and safety of all MSA members and cause serious problems for teens in social, emotional, medical and educational contexts. MSA provides programs, services, and publications that promote the prevention of substance abuse.

The **Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988** requires all agencies receiving federal grants to certify that they will enforce drug-free policies. This policy provides for the implementation of statutory requirements in providing a drug-free workplace. Students are responsible for complying with Mississippi law that makes it illegal to possess, sell, deliver, or manufacture any controlled substance. Violation of the law may result in prosecution and punishment by the civil authorities as well as disciplinary proceedings by MSA.

When the findings of an administrative investigation strongly support the claim that the student used, purchased, possessed, distributed, or is under the influence of illegal drugs, the MSA administration will notify parents that a drug test may be required (at parental expense) to verify allegations. If a test is completed, the administrator will communicate results to the parents and schedule a comprehensive conference to discuss disciplinary actions. The student will remain under the supervision of the security officer until parents arrive to pick them up. Offense(s) related to the possession, purchase, distribution, use or being under the influence of drugs will result in a suspension pending investigation which may result in dismissal or expulsion for a specified period of time dependent on the nature of the offense. Expulsion shall take place subject to the constitutional rights of due process described in the section of this Handbook.

## Students Suspected of Substance Abuse

If any MSA staff member receives a report or observes student behavior that indicates a possibility of prohibited items or illegal substance use, the appropriate administrator(s) must be notified, and an investigation conducted immediately. The behaviors listed below include signs and symptoms that are generally agreed upon by experts that substance abuse may be occurring. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive:

- Glazed eyes, dilated pupils, difficulty focusing, or rapid eye movement;
- Slurred speech, extreme talkativeness, changing subject rapidly, or not making sense;
- Changed behaviors that are unusual (e.g., passivity, irritability, aggression, combativeness, argumentativeness, anxiety, or depression);
- Difficulty sitting still, limp appearance, or "blankness" or absence of facial expression;
- Decline in personal hygiene and dress;
- Unusual medical complaints (e.g., nausea, vomiting, dizziness, chills or sweating, or bruises or accidents);
- Odor on clothing, breath, bad breath, dry lips and mouth, frequent lip licking; and/or
- Decline in schoolwork, withdrawal from or change in friends and or activities, or change in family relationships.

When a student is suspected of using, purchasing, possessing, or distributing, or being under the influence of prohibited items or illegal substances, an administrator will conduct an investigation immediately including the following:

- Conference with the student(s) accused;
- Interview with witness(es) or person(s) reporting the infraction;
- Upon reasonable suspicion, a search of the dorm room(s), personal possessions, vehicle(s), or other appropriate space(s) on campus that are utilized by the student;
- If there is reason to believe student(s) have consumed illegal substances, MSA officials may ask them to be drug tested. If the student provides a written confession that verifies guilt, the test will not be conducted. If the student refuses to take the test, the administration will consider the refusal as an admission of guilt and the appropriate disciplinary action will be initiated. All drug testing will be conducted at the expense of the parents; [and](#)
- Parents/guardians will be immediately contacted and disciplinary consequences invoked.

Violations of any drug or alcoholic beverage control laws may result in criminal penalties and are subject to possible civil liability. A negative result to any test does not exonerate a student because possession, delivery, and selling illegal substances are separate issues.

If the student's behavior creates an urgent medical concern, the student may be transported to the emergency room at the cost of the parents.

## Search and Seizure

### General Searches

School officials may, without a search warrant, search a student and/or their personal possessions based upon reasonable suspicion. The school retains the right to search school property without a search warrant, such as desks, at will. Reasonable suspicion means that a school official has grounds to believe that the search will result in evidence of a violation of school district policy, rules, and/or law. If school officials (e.g., administration, faculty, residence life staff, counselors, [or](#) nurse) have [a](#) reasonable suspicion to suspect a student may be in possession of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, weapons, or other contraband while on campus, the school will:

1. Search pockets, purses, book bags, cell phones, technical equipment, and other properties of the student;
2. Conduct a same sex pat down of the student;
3. Search the student's vehicle if applicable; and,
4. Search the student's dormitory room and personal belongings.

If the items in question are located, they will be confiscated and described in a list sent to the appropriate MSA administrators. ALL illegal contraband will be confiscated. MSA will notify appropriate law enforcement officials of any unlawful activity that may have occurred on educational property or during a school related activity based upon reasonable suspicion that such activity has occurred.

The school will monitor student Internet activity and will [conduct a search](#) on reasonable suspicion, of the commission of a criminal act or the commission of an act in violation of school policy, a student's history of Internet activity and any files saved to a server(s), on a personal computer, or on storage disks.

### Room Searches

Authorized MSA staff will use a passkey to enter student rooms in non-emergency situations such as maintenance, building code inspections, and/or to ensure the safety of room occupants or students in surrounding areas. Staff may enter rooms unannounced when there is a reasonable suspicion of violation of residence hall rules. Where there is [a](#) reasonable, articulable suspicion that violations of school policy or criminal law are occurring, a comprehensive room search may be authorized by a school official. Room searches will be conducted as discreetly as possible. Students assume responsibility for activities occurring in their rooms. To ensure building safety during school vacations, staff will enter rooms to see that windows are closed, lights out, and radios unplugged.

The following factors are examples of considerations when determining whether to conduct a search:

- Observed infraction/offense in progress,
- Observed item believed to be stolen,
- Observed weapon or portion thereof,
- Observed contraband,
- Smell of burning tobacco or marijuana,
- Student appears to be under influence of alcohol/drugs,
- Student admits violation,
- Student appears to be lying,
- Student fits description of suspect of recently reported offense,
- Student(s) flee from vicinity of recent offense,
- Student(s) flee upon approach of school official,
- Information provided by others,
- Threatening words or behavior,
- Incriminating evidence was found during a lawful consent search,
- Incriminating evidence was discovered by a teacher/administrator,
- Incriminating evidence was turned over by another student, and/or,
- Other suspicious conduct.

#### **Other Relevant Circumstantial Factors**

- Reputation and/or affiliations of student to be searched,
- Student to be searched has history of previous similar violations,
- Student was previously disciplined for a similar offense/infraction,
- Student was already subject of investigation for similar offense/infraction,
- Report of stolen item,
- Student seen leaving area where infractions are often committed (e.g., location where students congregate to smoke),
- Student became nervous or excited when approached,
- Student refused to make eye contact,
- Student made a suspicious or “furtive” movement (must describe the exact conduct and why it was suspicious),
  - Did the student deny making the suspicious movement you observed?
- Student is part of a group known to have committed similar offenses/infractions.

#### **Law Enforcement and Parental Notification**

When presented with a duly authorized search warrant, the Principal/Director will notify the Executive Director and grant permission to search a student’s room. An MSA official shall escort the officer(s) during the search. An MSA representative, normally, the Principal, will notify the student’s guardian whenever any MSA official makes a report to any law enforcement agency concerning student misconduct, is requested by law enforcement personnel other than MSA security acting in the normal course and scope of his/her assigned duties to allow access to a student, or learns that a student has been taken into custody by law enforcement personnel during the school day or while under school supervision.

#### **Narcotics Detection Canine Searches**

The use of law enforcement scent canines is a dramatic tactic designed to dramatically illustrate that neither school authorities nor law enforcement agencies will tolerate illicit drugs or other scent-detectable contraband on campus. Scent detection canine searches may include the common areas of the Student Life Center, academic building(s), and the parking lot including the external surfaces of automobiles. When the narcotic detection canine alerts, further search and seizure with regards to that

property or individual will be authorized by the appropriate law enforcement agency in accordance with their policies and procedures. Local law enforcement officers, with the assistance of MSA personnel, will conduct all scent detection canine searches. At all times when canines are present on the school grounds, students will be restricted to their classrooms or to locations that will not be swept to ensure that narcotics detection canines will not come into direct contact with students.

## **Detention, Restriction, Campus Work Service**

**Detention** (evening, morning, or any other specified time that may be dependent on staff availability) is a consequence for students who have repeated unexcused tardies, absences, and disciplinary infractions. Detention must be served at the time assigned even if it means that a student may miss rehearsals or other planned activities. No faculty member or other adult (without written authorization of the Principal or Executive Director) has the authority to permit students to miss detention.

During detention, students must complete work assigned by MSA staff. Such assignments may include character education materials, extra campus work service, or other appropriate activities. They may not listen to music, sing, play instruments, play computer games, surf the Internet, talk on cell phones, or interact with other students at any time. Sleeping is not allowed. Detention must be served on the dates assigned unless the administration approves a change.

**Restrictions** may be placed on students who are habitual offenders in relation to academic or residential guidelines to the campus or to the dorm at the discretion of the Executive Director.

**Campus Restriction** means that students may not leave the campus at any time except to go home.

**Dorm Restriction** means that students may not leave their assigned dorm floor except to attend classes or other required academic activity. Students have one hour per evening on weekdays and two hours per day on weekend days to go elsewhere in the student life center. On weekends, students may not leave the student life center except for [a](#) required academic activity or to go home.

**Both campus restriction and dorm restriction require that students sign in every hour at the main Student Life Center desk to facilitate staff monitoring their activities.** Visitation may be limited dependent upon circumstances.

**Campus Work Service Hours** (two-hour sessions) is assigned for more serious disciplinary infractions. Campus Work Service will meet at a designated location on weekends when students are scheduled to be on campus. Students that miss Campus Work Service without prior approval from administration will be given three (3) day of out-of-school suspension.

1. During Campus Work Service, students must complete work assigned by MSA staff. Such assignments may include character education materials, campus work, or other appropriate educational work. Failure to complete assignments or poor quality of work may result in assignments in addition to work required during Campus Work Service sessions.
2. During Campus Work Service, students must remain silent and are not allowed to talk except during discussions. Students are not permitted to listen to music, sing, play instruments, play computer games, surf the Internet, talk on cell phones, or interact with other students at any time. Sleeping is not allowed. *Food and/or drinks are not allowed.*
3. Students must dress according to MSA dress code requirements.
4. Campus Work Service must be served on the day assigned unless the Executive Director or a designee approves the change. Students must report on time or they will not be admitted. Tardies or failure to report to Campus Work Service will result in time being doubled and/or additional punishment.

## **Disciplinary Probation Policies and Procedures**

**Probation** is a period of time set by an administrator during which a student is given a chance to improve behavior exhibited in prior violations of school policy. The Executive Director or Principal will

notify students, parents, and teachers in writing of students placed on probation. This notification may include a contract including future plans and expectations of the student and the manner in which the student must meet the prescribed requirements. The parents, student, faculty, Executive Director or Principal, and the counselor will receive copies of the signed contract. Students who fail to correct behavioral problems during the probationary term will be evaluated for dismissal. Students placed on probation twice, even though not back-to-back, will retain probationary status until graduation or dismissal from the school.

### **Disciplinary Management Policy**

Occasionally a student's conduct, speech, behavior, or attitude is unacceptable and disruptive to the educational and/or residential environment. When reasonable and prudent efforts to improve misconduct have proven ineffective, more drastic action shall be taken. The Mississippi State Board of Education delegates the authority to suspend, dismiss, or expel students for violation of school policies to the Executive Director, principal, or a designee—subject to the procedural limitations listed in school policy.

### **Suspension for Good Cause**

#### **General Suspension for Ten (10) Days or Less**

**Suspension** is the administrative removal of a student from class attendance at the [Mississippi School of the Arts/MSA](#) for a specified period of time due to violations of school policy. All suspensions at MSA are out-of-school; the student must remain at home for the number of days assigned. The Executive Director or Principal may suspend a student from MSA for a period of ten (10) school days or less when it is determined that a student's behavior is detrimental to the good order of the school, and that suspension is an appropriate disciplinary action for a serious violation, or frequent violations, of school rules. The procedure for suspending a student is as follows:

1. MSA officials will provide the student with notice of the charge(s) orally or in writing. If the student denies the charges, he/she shall be given an explanation of the evidence against him/her and shall be given an opportunity to refute the charges. No time delay is necessary between the time a student is notified of the charge(s) and the time of the informal hearing before MSA officials. This will be the only hearing conducted.
2. If the facts indicate the student's guilt, the Executive Director or Principal will determine the appropriate term of suspension in accordance with school policy.
3. Upon notification of the suspension, the student is placed on room restriction or with MSA Security until leaving the school to begin the suspension. The suspension may begin immediately. MSA will inform the parent(s) of the suspension in person or by phone prior to the student leaving campus.
4. Within five (5) working days of the informal hearing with the student, MSA officials will send written notification to the student and parents specifying the reasons for the suspension.
5. Suspended students may not attend school-sponsored functions on or off campus during the suspension, including weekends. Such exclusions include field trips, competitions, social events, [and](#) etc. Suspended students may not come on campus for visitation or to pick up another student to provide transportation.
6. Suspended students will have school technological resources (i.e., DormNet, MSANet, and identification badge entry badge) disabled until they return to campus in good standing.
7. Students suspended from school are considered unexcused and may not make up work missed while they are absent, except major grades. Teachers are not obligated to repeat classroom lectures or provide private tutoring for material missed in class.
8. Upon completion of suspension, a student returning to school must make an appointment with the school official who handled the suspension to discuss returning to school and any additional restrictions that may apply. Also, parents may be requested to consult with the MSA official.

### **Emergency Suspension**

**Emergency Suspension** occurs when the Executive Director or Principal summarily suspends a student for not more than three (3) school days prior to completing an investigation for serious student

misconduct under circumstances where immediate removal of the student is necessary to restore order, protect persons on the school grounds, protect the student, or protect school property. The school official will meet with the student to briefly explain the purpose of the suspension, charges/violations, and evidence against them. The student may respond to the disciplinary charges. Parents will be immediately notified of the suspension, and the student will be immediately placed in the care of MSA Security and may not attend any classes. The student must leave school as soon as possible.

During the student's absence, a school official will complete the investigation. In such cases, the administration will complete an investigation following the emergency suspension. The administration will communicate findings to the student by phone and allow the student to respond.

Further disciplinary action will be recommended or taken as needed. If additional suspension is necessary, the Executive Director or Principal may extend the suspension for a period not to exceed a maximum of ten (10) school days. A written notification of the reasons for the suspension will be sent to the student and parents within three (3) school days.

If no further suspension or dismissal is imposed, the student must initiate contact with the school official upon his return as indicated under Suspension.

### **Offenses Leading to Suspension**

While enrolled at the [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#), attending class is critically important to meet educational expectations. However, when student misconduct, speech, or acts of insubordination reach more serious levels of gravity, out-of-school suspension may be necessary. The following list—that is not intended to be exhaustive—includes offenses that warrant suspension, but are not limited to:

1. First offense for violating policies related to tobacco;
2. First offense for violation of alcohol policies;
3. Repeated violations of school policies and procedures despite corrective interventions; and/or,
4. Other serious or habitual circumstances that warrant suspension out of school for a specified period of time.

### **Invitation to Return after Junior Year**

A student's attendance at MSA is a privilege, not a right; with this privilege comes responsibilities. During the school year, students not demonstrating appropriate academic or behavioral expectations can be placed on probation or returned to their home school to continue their education provided that applicable due process protections are afforded the student.

Admission to MSA is for one academic school year during which time a student must remain in good standing (in academics, attendance, and behavior). Students deemed unwilling to accept the responsibility and commitment necessary to be successful at MSA will be dismissed. Upon completion of a student's junior year at MSA, he or she must be extended an invitation by the administration in order to return for his or her senior year.

In keeping with the MSA philosophy of high academic expectations and criteria for admissions, student success is anticipated. A student must maintain an overall 2.5 GPA. Students with one failing grade at the end of the first semester of any school year, the second semester of the junior year, and/or grades less than a B in arts discipline major courses, will be evaluated for continuance at MSA. All students whose grades fall below a 70 in any non-arts subject or below an 80 (B) on an arts discipline course must attend mandatory study hours. Students with excessive absenteeism (with less than 95% attendance rate, as it relates to unexcused absences) and an attendance plan will be reviewed for continuance in the senior year. At the end of each semester, the Academic Behavioral Review Committee will examine all student records to determine attendance status for the upcoming semester and/or school year. Students may be invited to return, placed on academic and/or behavioral probation, or returned to their home school district. Prior to the first of July, juniors will be invited to return for their



senior year or notified of the Committee's decision. Those students who are not invited to return will be notified by certified mail.

Students or parents who wish to appeal this decision must submit a formal written appeal to the Principal or Executive Director within ten (10) working days of receipt of notification. The appeal shall include a written statement by the student explaining the reasons for appeal. Upon receipt of the appeal, the Principal or Executive Director will review the student's entire record while at MSA. The Principal or Executive Director may request a conference with the student. Within five (5) working days of receipt of the appeal, the Executive Director shall render a written decision to be forwarded to the student and/or parents by certified mail. The Executive Director's decision is final.

Any students with an IDEA ruling will be held to the standards created through federal law.

### Dismissal

**Dismissal** is an administrative removal of a student from enrollment at the [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) due to violations of school policy or probation to enroll in another school of choice. Dismissal to the home school district (or another school of choice) may be considered when students fail to make required minimum academic progress, to improve attendance, to correct behavioral problems during probation, or violate school policies including, but not limited to nonpayment of room and board by scheduled due dates.

When the Executive Director or Principal determines that a student should be considered for dismissal, the parent or guardian will be called to meet immediately with the Executive Director or Principal. This meeting may be held by phone in extenuating circumstances. At the conference, the Executive Director or Principal will notify the student and parents/guardians of the intent to dismiss based on violations of school policy or probation and give the student a chance to respond. During this conference the student and parents/guardians will be advised of their option to request an informal meeting with the State Superintendent of Education or his/her designee as outlined below. Immediately following the conference, written notification of the intent to dismiss and the informal meeting option will be provided.

Based on the conference between the Executive Director or Principal and the student and parent/guardian, the student may be removed from campus or suspended for a period of ten (10) school days or less until a final decision on dismissal is made. A request for the informal meeting with the State Superintendent or his/her designee must be made within two (2) school days following the conference. Such request must be in writing and include the following information:

1. An explanation for the student's performance, attendance, or behavior deficiencies;
2. A possible remediation plan; and
3. Reasons the student should remain at MSA.

A failure to request the informal meeting within the two-day period will result in the decision to dismiss by the Executive Director or designee being final.

The date for the informal meeting and rendering of final decision shall not exceed ten (10) school days from the date of the imposition of the suspension unless mutually agreed upon in writing by all parties or extenuating circumstances prevent the student from returning to school. Following consideration and evaluation of information provided in the student or parent's response and at the meeting, the State Superintendent or designee will make a final decision regarding dismissal of the student to the home school district (or another school of choice). Because attendance at the [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) is a privilege, not a right, the decision of the State Superintendent or designee is final. The State Superintendent or designee will notify the parents and the [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) in writing of the decision.

If the decision of the State Superintendent or designee is to dismiss the student from MSA, the student's belongings must be removed from the campus within five (5) working days of the final decision of dismissal. A student who has been dismissed from MSA may not apply for enrollment at a later date

and is prohibited from campus and may not participate in school-related functions or activities on or off campus unless permitted by the Executive Director in advance.

### Offenses Leading to Dismissal

At the [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#), students must realize that certain serious actions and offenses result in grave consequences. Punishment for offenses listed below results in immediate dismissal and forfeiture of all privileges to attend the [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) at any time in the future. Enrollment in the home school district or another school of choice is left to the discretion of the student and parents. Offenses in this category include, but are not limited to:

1. Second offense involving violation of policies related to tobacco;
2. Third offense involving academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, stealing or appropriating the work of another);
3. Second offense related to the purchase, possession, use of, sale or distribution of, or being under the influence of alcohol;
4. Multiple non-criminal Level III violations; Purchase, possession, use of, sale or distribution of, or being under the influence of prescription drugs—not turned in to the nurse according to policy—that are classified as scheduled controlled substances (Schedules I-V). Such circumstances include prescriptions drugs written to the student or possession of those written for another individual; and /or
5. Other circumstances that warrant dismissal and forfeiture of privileges to attend a special state school.

### Expulsion

Expulsion is administrative removal of a student from enrollment at the [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) due to violations of law and/or policy (i.e., felonious acts or habitually disruptive behavior). Expulsion from the [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) may result in denial of admission to another school.

Such expulsion shall take place subject to the constitutional rights of due process described below and required by Miss. Code Ann. 37-9-71, which shall include the student's right to a due process hearing. When the Executive Director or Principal determines that a student should be recommended for expulsion, the parent or guardian will be called to meet immediately with the administrator. If there are extenuating circumstances, a conference can be held by phone.

During the conference, the Executive Director or Principal will notify the student and parents/guardians orally or in writing of the intent to suspend pending a recommendation based on violations of school policy and/or law or probation and give the student an opportunity to respond. Based on that meeting, the student may be suspended for up to ten (10) school days pending an expulsion. In that case, the parent must immediately remove the student from campus (if not already off campus) and the Executive Director or Principal will submit a recommendation for expulsion to the State Superintendent.

The student and parents/guardians will be advised of [the](#) right to a due process hearing and provided information on how to request said hearing. If [a](#) hearing is not requested within two (2) school days, the recommendation for expulsion will stand. If [a](#) hearing is requested, the State Superintendent or designee shall set the time, date, and place for a hearing.

The State Superintendent or designee will appoint a hearing officer within three (3) working days of receipt of [a](#) request [for](#) a hearing. **The date for the hearing shall not exceed fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of the imposition of the suspension unless mutually agreed upon in writing by all parties.** In the notice, State Superintendent or designee shall advise the student and the parents/guardians in writing of the following rights to:

1. Be informed of the charges against him/her,
2. Present evidence,
3. Cross-examine witnesses represented by the school,
4. Call witnesses in his/her own behalf, and,

5. Be represented by legal counsel at his/her own expense.

The ~~Mississippi School of the Arts~~MSA will have legal representation throughout expulsion proceedings. Failure of the student or parent to appear at the hearing will result in the forfeiture of all procedural rights to contest the expulsion. A court stenographer will transcribe the hearing. The State Superintendent or designee will prepare his findings, conclusions, and a final decision in writing and hand deliver or mail them to the Executive Director or Principal of MSA and the student's parents within ten (10) calendar days of the hearing. The student or parents may request a copy of the transcription of the hearing at their own expense.

Following expulsion, ~~from the Mississippi School of the Arts, the~~ MSA will notify the student's school of residence that the student is no longer enrolled. Upon request, educational records will be provided to the school where the student enrolls. A student who has been expelled from MSA may not apply for enrollment at a later date, is prohibited from campus, and may not participate in school-related functions or activities on or off campus unless permitted by the Executive Director in advance. Even though the duration of an imposed expulsion may be less than a year, students who have been expelled from the ~~Mississippi School of the Arts~~MSA have forfeited ~~their/his or her~~ privileges to attend the school and must seek enrollment in their home school districts or another school of choice.

### Appeal to the State Board of Education

Upon receipt of a final decision from the State Superintendent or designee, the student's parents have five (5) working days to request in writing to the State Board of Education an appeal regarding an expulsion. The appeal must include a written statement by the student explaining the reasons for appeal. If no such request is received within five (5) working days of notification, the right to an appeal is waived and the discipline may be imposed forthwith by the Executive Director or Principal.

Only the Mississippi State Board of Education can decide an appeal regarding expulsion. The hearing officer will certify the complete record to the Mississippi State Board of Education. The Mississippi State Board of Education will consider the matter at a special called meeting or its regularly scheduled meeting at the discretion of the Board Chair. The Mississippi State Board of Education will review the final decision and the record of the hearing and will consider oral arguments only from the Executive Director or Principal or legal counsel and from the student, his or her parent/guardian, or legal counsel. No new evidence or presentation of witness testimony will be considered. The Mississippi State Board of Education will render a written decision within a reasonable amount of time. The decision of the Mississippi State Board of Education is final.

**Note:** Students with disabilities against whom the actions described in this section are contemplated will also be granted the protections afforded to them under applicable federal laws and regulations.

### Offenses Leading to Expulsion

The Mississippi School of the Arts wants students to understand the consequences of certain serious actions and offenses. Punishment for offenses listed below results in immediate expulsion for up to one calendar year and forfeiture of all privileges to attend the ~~Mississippi School of the Arts~~MSA at any time in the future. Enrollment in the home school district or another school of choice is left to the discretion of the administration of that entity. Offenses in this category include:

1. Purchase, possession, and/or use of a weapon (including martial arts), explosives, ammunition, fireworks, handgun, knife, or firearm(s), instrument considered to be dangerous and capable of causing bodily harm;
2. Extreme violence toward any person, including verbal or written threats to life or safety, wielding a weapon, wielding a knife, or threatening conduct with any type of weapon or knife or committing a violent act on educational property;
3. Purchase, possession, use of, sale or distribution of, or being under the influence of any controlled substance in violation of the Uniform Controlled Substances Law (Miss. Code Ann. § 41-29-101, *et. seq.*); and
4. Other felonious conduct.

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5. Expulsions will be reported to youth court and local law enforcement personnel in accordance with state law.

This is not to be considered an exhaustive list of offenses that may lead to expulsion.

## **Disciplinary Procedures and Due Process**

### **Notification to Student of Level I or Level II Violations**

MSA officials will notify students when Level I violations or Level II violations occur with a copy of the report generated by the student administrative data management system (SAM Spectra).

Except where circumstances dictate otherwise (e.g., further investigation needed, availability of students, referral to an administrator), notification will occur within twenty-four (24) hours of the staff becoming aware of the violation. Consequences, as defined in the Violations and Consequences Chart, will be applied depending on the level of the violation and the frequency of the offense. A warning will be noted and need not be discussed unless requested by the student. However, in all other instances, the staff issuing the disciplinary referral to the student must discuss the situation with the student(s) within twenty-four (24) hours unless extenuating circumstances intervene. Upon completion of the conference, the student will sign the disciplinary report and the staff will give a copy of it to the student, mail a copy to the parents, and retain a file copy.

If a student intends to ask for a review of the disciplinary action, a written request must be made to the Executive Director or Principal. The student must appeal or request any review of a write-up within 24 hours of notification in writing to have a write up reversed. The appeal for residence life write ups is to the Director of Residence Life and then the Executive Director. The appeal for academic write ups is to the Principal and then the Executive Director. Students must fulfill consequences after appeal, even if they choose not to sign the notification. The consequence remains in the system for year of attendance.

### **Determination of Consequences**

Staff may use discretion in relation to assigning one or more consequences regarding an incident. When an incident occurs involving multiple violations on the same level, staff may count each violation separately or consider the incident as one violation for the purpose of determining the consequence(s). However, when an incident involves multiple violations on different levels, the most severe consequence of the higher level will apply. The administration reserves the right to add additional consequences for infractions as deemed necessary.

### **Accumulation of Violations and End of Year Violations**

**All violations accumulate throughout the entire year.** At the discretion of the administration, a senior who commits a serious violation (Level II or III) during the final weeks prior to the end of the school year may be dismissed or may not be permitted to participate in the graduation ceremonies. Likewise, a junior may not be invited to return for the senior year.

### **Failure to Abide by Disciplinary Action**

If a student fails to fulfill consequences assigned for a Level I or Level II violation, he or she must complete the restitution, and MSA officials will invoke disrespect charges one level above the current violations. Students who commit major violations of restriction guidelines or fail to abide by the consequences of incidents involving multiple Level II violations will be referred to administration and assigned a Level III violation.

### **Notification to Student of Level III Violations**

Level III violations (one or more, depending on the severity of the infraction) may result in a student's suspension, dismissal, or expulsion. The student and parents will be notified by MSA in writing of the alleged incident and the consequences by hand-hand-delivered letter, certified mail, or overnight delivery. Such notification will advise the student and parents that they may have a right to request a hearing, depending on the level of disciplinary action.

### Students Banned from Campus

Occasionally, friends, relatives, or visitors of MSA students or school alumni may be banned from campus for a specified period of time based on actions inappropriate or unsafe for a school campus. In addition, students who have been dismissed or expelled from MSA are banned from campus and may not come on campus for visitation, transport students in a vehicle, or participate in school-related functions or activities on or off campus until permitted by the Executive Director, after a formal request is made by the banned person and approved by the administration. Students who are banned, dismissed, or expelled from the school forfeit all access and visitation privileges in relation to friends, girlfriends or boyfriends, relatives, former classmates, teachers, staff members, or any other person(s) related to MSA operations.

### Consequences for Tardies

Tardies are considered separate from violations as defined in the discipline ladder. Students who are tardy for class, mandatory study hours, or other mandatory student activities will receive an immediate assignment for detention to be served in the next detention session offered. Non-compliance in the detention will result in a write up as defined in the following charts.

### Level I Violations and Consequences

The following list of violations is not meant to be all-inclusive. Administration will assign activities not listed to the appropriate level. When a student has received three (3) Level I violations, all subsequent offenses beginning with the fourth violation will be administered at Level II. When an incident occurs involving multiple violations on the same level, staff may count each violation separately or consider the incident as one violation at a higher level for the purpose of determining the consequence(s).

Level One Violations – Residence Life	Level One Consequences
<p><b>RL1.1 Attendance Violations—Not at assigned location:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Breaking Curfew (&lt; 30 minutes)</li> <li>b. Failing to attend mandatory meetings, study hours</li> <li>c. Failing to be at assigned location on time—room check, etc.</li> <li>d. Forgetting to sign in for a.m. roll call</li> </ul> <p><b>RL1.2 Behavior Lacking Consideration of others:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Breaking line in the cafeteria</li> <li>b. Disturbing others</li> <li>c. Creating excessive noise or music, horseplay, running</li> <li>d. Having lights on after designated times</li> <li>e. Kissing other than allowed by PDA/Dating Guidelines</li> <li>f. Talking on the phone after lights out</li> <li>g. Leaving personal belongings in common areas</li> <li>h. Profanity</li> </ul> <p><b>RL1.3 Damage to Property, Accidental:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Damaging individual, school, public property</li> <li>b. Misusing and/or unauthorized use or abuse</li> </ul> <p><b>RL1.4 Failure to Follow Written Protocol:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Carrying food or beverages on BHS bus</li> <li>b. Failing to meet dress code</li> <li>c. Eating or drinking in the library</li> <li>d. Failing room inspection standards</li> <li>e. Failing to display parking permit</li> <li>f. Failing to turn in car keys</li> <li>g. Leaving clothes in laundry room, washers/dryers</li> <li>h. Parking illegally</li> </ul> <p><b>RL1.5 Technology Offenses (Computer, Network, Phone):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Eating or drinking at school computers</li> <li>b. Violating DormNet regulations</li> <li>c. Committing Personal Communication Device offenses</li> <li>d. Committing Listening Device offenses</li> <li>e. Committing land line phone violations</li> <li>f. Technology acceptable use violations</li> <li>g. Mass email for non-school purposes</li> <li>h. Monopolizing computers/equipment</li> <li>i. Wasteful use of equipment/printers/paper/supplies</li> <li>j. Use of personal hotspot on MSA equipment</li> </ul>	<p>Campus Work Task = CWT</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Written Warning</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: One (1) detention session Parent(s) notified</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: One (1) CWT 1 detention session Parent(s) notified</p> <p>4<sup>th</sup> Offense: See Level II.</p> <p>Level One Offenses will be carried over until the end of the year. After repeated offenses, student may be placed on probation.</p> <p>Habitual offenses (more than three) of the same violation may merit up to a two (2) day suspension.</p>

<b>RL1.6 Safety or Legal Issues:</b> a. Failure to return temporary ID badge b. Failure to wear ID badge c. Deface the ID badge	
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Level One Violations – Academics	Level One Consequences
<b>AL1.1 Attendance Violations—Not at assigned location:</b> a. Failing to attend mandatory meetings, study hours b. Missing the Bus to BHS—no written warning c. Forgetting to sign in for a.m. roll call d. Violating study hour guidelines  <b>AL1.2 Behavior Lacking Consideration of others:</b> a. Breaking line in the cafeteria b. Disturbing others c. Kissing other than allowed by PDA/Dating Guidelines d. Profanity  <b>AL1.3 Damage to Property, Accidental:</b> a. Damaging individual, school, public property b. Misusing and/or unauthorized use or abuse  <b>AL1.4 Failure to Follow Written Protocol:</b> a. Carrying food or beverages on bus b. Failing to meet dress code c. Eating or drinking in the library  <b>AL1.5 Technology Offenses (Computer, Network, Phone):</b> a. Eating or drinking at school computers b. Violating MSANet regulations c. Committing Personal Communication Device offenses d. Committing Listening Device offenses e. Committing land line phone violations f. Technology acceptable use violations g. Mass email for non-school purposes h. Monopolizing computers/equipment i. Wasteful use of equipment/printers/paper/supplies j. Use of personal hotspot on MSA equipment  <b>AL1.6 Safety or Legal Issues:</b> a. Failure to return temporary ID badge b. Failure to report lost ID badge c. Deface the ID badge  <b>AL1.7 Morning Protocol Violations</b>	Campus Work Task = CWT 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: Written Warning 2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: One (1) detention session Parent(s) notified 3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense: One (1) CWT 1 detention session Parent(s) notified 4 <sup>th</sup> Offense: See Level II.  Level One Offenses will be carried over until the end of the year. After repeated offenses student may be placed on probation (Refer to page 106 of handbook).  Habitual offenses (more than three) of the same violation may merit up to a two (2) day suspension.

Level One offenses for academics and residence life will be independent of each other. Each category stands alone giving a student three offenses in academics and three offenses in residence life before going to the level two violations. Students can be given a level two or three violation without accumulating level one offenses if the offense is egregious and a violation of the higher level.

## Level II Violations and Consequences

The following list of violations is not meant to be all-inclusive. Administration will assign activities not listed to the appropriate level. When a student has received three (3) Level II violations, all subsequent offenses will be administered at Level III. When an incident occurs involving multiple violations on the same level, staff may count each violation separately or consider the incident as one violation at a higher level for the purpose of determining the consequence(s).

Level Two Violations-Residence Life	Level Two Consequences
<p><b>RL2.1 Attendance Violations—Not at assigned location:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allowing other students in room after curfew</li> <li>Committing curfew violations (&gt;30 minutes)</li> <li>Failing to attend mandatory assemblies, study hours, meetings</li> <li>Being off assigned floor after hours</li> <li>Entering or exiting campus buildings without authorization</li> <li>Being in an off limits area of the campus</li> </ol> <p><b>RL2.2 Behavior Lacking Consideration of others:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disrespecting or defying school personnel</li> <li>Harassing another individual</li> <li>Behaving inappropriately in a romantic relationship</li> <li>Exposing oneself indecently</li> <li>Making lewd gestures (profane or obscene behavior, etc.)</li> <li>Using profanity, verbal or written against others</li> </ol> <p><b>RL2.3 Damage to Property, Deliberate:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Committing acts of minor vandalism</li> <li>Defacing school property</li> <li>Misusing or unauthorized use of property</li> </ol> <p><b>RL2.4 Dishonesty</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conveying false information</li> <li>Lying to staff</li> <li>Violating Privilege Plan</li> </ol> <p><b>RL2.5 Failure to Follow Written Protocol:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure to clean up after oneself in cafeteria and/or common areas</li> <li>Taking utensils, food, drinks, and flatware from cafeteria</li> <li>Materials encouraging the use of illegal substances</li> <li>Exhibiting materials in windows visible from the outside</li> <li>Failure to register vehicle</li> <li>Failure to sign in the dorm</li> <li>Violating the Student Code of Conduct</li> </ol> <p><b>RL2.6 Multiple Level I Violations</b></p> <p><b>RL2.7 Safety or Legal Issues:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compromising hall security</li> <li>Failing to follow evacuation and emergency procedures</li> <li>Failure to wear ID badge</li> <li>Inviting or admitting students banned from campus</li> <li>Exceeding limits of MSA walking guide</li> <li>Possessing pornographic, lewd, or obscene materials</li> </ol> <p><b>RL2.8 Technology Offenses (Computer, Network, Phone):</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Committing DormNet violations</li> <li>Violating Personal Communication Device offenses (Cell Phone)</li> <li>Committing Listening Device offenses</li> <li>Making landline phone violations</li> <li>Technology acceptable use violations</li> <li>Failure to logoff of school computers</li> <li>Use of emails for fraudulent, financial gain, or other inappropriate purposes</li> <li>Streaming/large downloads/games that degrade performance</li> <li>Misuse of printers or equipment</li> </ol>	<p>Campus Work Task = CWT Campus Work Service = CWS</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> Offense 1 CWT 2 hours CWS Parent(s) notified</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> Offense 2 CWT 1 detention session 2 hours CWS Parent(s) notified</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> Offense 4 hours CWS 1 week of dorm restriction Parent(s) notified</p> <p>4<sup>th</sup> Offense Referred to the Principal or the Executive Director as a Level Three violation</p> <p>Level Two violations will be carried over into the next semester. After repeated offenses the student may be placed on probation.</p> <p>Habitual offenses (more than three) of the same violation may merit up to a two (2) day suspension.</p> <p>The administration reserves the right to increase consequences as deemed necessary.</p>

Level Two Violations - Academics	Level Two Consequences
<p><b>AL2.1 Attendance Violations—Not at assigned location:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Cutting class (includes absences due to missing the bus)</li> <li>b. Failing to attend mandatory assemblies, meetings, educational programs, and field trips</li> <li>c. Leaving class without permission or campus pass</li> <li>d. Entering or exiting campus buildings without authorization</li> </ul> <p><b>AL2.2 Behavior Lacking Consideration of others:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Disrespecting or defying school personnel</li> <li>b. Harassing another individual</li> <li>c. Behaving inappropriately in a romantic relationship</li> <li>d. Exposing oneself indecently</li> <li>e. Making lewd gestures (profane or obscene behavior, etc.)</li> <li>f. Using profanity, verbal or written against others</li> </ul> <p><b>AL2.3 Damage to Property, Deliberate:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Committing acts of minor vandalism</li> <li>b. Defacing school property</li> <li>c. Misusing or unauthorized use of property</li> </ul> <p><b>AL2.4 Dishonesty</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Cheating or other academic dishonesty (first offense)</li> <li>b. Conveying false information</li> <li>c. Lying to staff, faculty or administration</li> <li>d. Signing out more times than authorized during the day</li> </ul> <p><b>AL2.5 Failure to Follow Written Protocol:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Failure to clean up after oneself in cafeteria</li> <li>b. Taking utensils, food, drinks, and flatware from cafeteria</li> <li>c. Materials encouraging the use of illegal substances</li> <li>d. Exhibiting materials in windows visible from the outside</li> <li>e. Failure to sign in or out of campus</li> <li>f. Leaving dorm room when sick or absent from class</li> <li>g. Using inappropriate content in student work</li> <li>h. Violating the Student Code of Conduct and Honor Code</li> </ul> <p><b>AL2.6 Multiple Level I Violations</b></p> <p><b>AL2.7 Safety or Legal Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Failing to follow evacuation and emergency procedures</li> <li>b. Failure to report lost ID badge</li> <li>c. Possessing pornographic, lewd, or obscene materials</li> </ul> <p><b>L2.8 Technology Offenses (Computer, Network, Phone):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Committing MSANet violations</li> <li>b. Violating Personal Communication Device offenses (Cell Phone)</li> <li>c. Committing Listening Device offenses</li> <li>d. Making landline phone violations</li> <li>e. Technology acceptable use violations</li> <li>f. Failure to logoff of school computers</li> <li>g. Use of email for fraudulent, financial gain, or other inappropriate purposes</li> <li>h. Streaming/large downloads/games that degrade performance</li> <li>i. Misuse of printers and equipment</li> </ul>	<p>Campus Work Task - CWT Campus Work Service = CWS Academic Dishonesty (First Offense): Grade of "0" on class assignment, 2 weeks campus restriction, 10 hours campus works service, parents notified.</p> <p>Other Offenses:</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> Offense 1 CWT 2 hours CWS Parent(s) notified</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> Offense 2 CWT 1 detention session 2 hours CWS Parent(s) notified</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> Offense 4 hours CWS 1 week of dorm restriction Parent(s) notified</p> <p>4<sup>th</sup> Offense Referred to the Principal or the Executive Director as a Level Three violation</p> <p>Level Two violations will be carried over into the next semester. After repeated offenses the student may be placed on probation (refer to page 106 of handbook).</p> <p>Habitual offenses (more than three) of the same violation may merit up to a two (2) day suspension. The administration reserves the right to increase consequences as deemed necessary.</p>

Level Two offenses for academics and residence life will be independent of each other. Each category stands alone giving a student three offenses in academics and three offenses in residence life before going to the level three violations. Students can be given a level three violation without accumulating level one or two offenses if the offense is egregious and a violation of the higher level.



## Level III Violations and Consequences

The following list of violations is not meant to be all-inclusive. Other than habitual minor offenses, level III violations will result in probable dorm restriction, suspension, dismissal or expulsion. Administration will assign activities not listed to the appropriate level.

Level Three Violations	Level Three Violations
<p><b>L3.1 Attendance Violations—Not at Assigned Location:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Being on the hall or in the room of the opposite sex</li> <li>b. Exiting SLC after curfew</li> <li>c. Violating visitation guidelines regarding students in a romantic relationship</li> </ul> <p><b>L3.2 Behavior Lacking Consideration of Others:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Behavior impeding school and dorm operations</li> <li>b. Gross violations of PDA guidelines</li> <li>c. Causing a false emergency alarm</li> <li>d. Direct disobedience or insubordination</li> <li>e. Indecent behavior or exposure</li> <li>f. Misconduct during school-sponsored events</li> <li>g. Profanity, gross or obscene language or actions</li> </ul> <p><b>L3.3 Dishonesty:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Academic Dishonesty (second offense)</li> <li>b. Being knowingly present when policy violations are occurring and not notifying school personnel</li> <li>c. Documenting false information</li> <li>d. Lying to the administration</li> <li>e. Signing out/in under false name</li> <li>f. Signing out to one place and going elsewhere</li> <li>g. Failure to sign out/leaving campus without authorization</li> </ul> <p><b>L3.4 Safety or Legal Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Actions unsafe for self and/or others</li> <li>b. Assault</li> <li>c. Being picked up by the police</li> <li>d. Breaking and entering</li> <li>e. Compromising campus security and life safety</li> <li>f. Conspiring to violate school policy</li> <li>g. Contributing to the delinquency of a minor student</li> <li>h. Creation, distribution, possession of fake I.D.s</li> <li>i. Extortion</li> <li>j. Facilitating unauthorized persons on campus including banned former students</li> <li>k. Fighting, including battery</li> <li>l. Forgery, fraud, submission of false information</li> <li>m. Gambling or gaming</li> <li>n. Harassment</li> <li>o. Molestation</li> <li>p. Multiple and/or simultaneous Level II violations</li> <li>q. Possession and/or use of banned materials</li> <li>r. Purchase, possession, use, distribution of tobacco products</li> <li>s. Purchase possession, abuse of prescription or over the counter (OTC) drugs/inhalants</li> </ul>	<p><b>L3.4 Safety or Legal Issues (continued):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>t. Purchase/possession/use of a dangerous weapon (including martial arts), explosives/ammunition/fireworks/firearms</li> <li>u. Purchase, possession, use of, distribution of, or being under the influence of alcohol</li> <li>v. Purchase, possession, use of, distribution of, or being under the influence of illegal drugs</li> <li>w. Riding in a vehicle without proper permission by parents</li> <li>x. Signing out walking and getting in a vehicle for transportation without proper authorization</li> <li>y. Theft, shoplifting, or receiving stolen property</li> <li>z. Threatening bodily harm</li> <li>aa. Transporting a student in a vehicle without proper authorization</li> <li>bb. Unauthorized absence from campus, including running away</li> <li>cc. Unauthorized use of public property</li> <li>dd. Using inappropriate content in student work</li> <li>ee. Vandalism, destruction, or other severe misuse of property</li> <li>ff. Violating municipal, state, or federal law</li> </ul> <p><b>L3.5 Technology Offenses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. MSANet or DormNet violations</li> <li>b. Personal Communication Device offenses</li> <li>c. Listening Device infractions</li> <li>d. Telephone violations</li> <li>e. Hacking, unauthorized access or use</li> <li>f. Cyberbullying/harassment/Obscene use</li> <li>g. Attempt to degrade, crash or modify network/equipment</li> <li>h. Relocate equipment without permission</li> <li>i. Housing website on MSANet</li> </ul> <p><b>L3.6 Multiple Level II Violations</b></p> <p><b>L3.7 Habitual Minor Infractions</b></p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Level Three Consequences</b></p> <p>Academic Dishonesty (Second Offense): A failing grade will be recorded for the class, the parents will be notified, and the student will lose honor status.</p> <p>Students who have disciplinary infractions reaching the point of all Level III violations will be placed on disciplinary probation.</p> <p>All Level III Violations are referred to the Executive Director or designee for action and dependent upon the severity of the infraction may include dorm restriction, suspension, dismissal, and/or expulsion and possible law enforcement involvement.</p>

# Health and Safety

## MSA Safety/Crisis Management Plan and MSA Safety Manual

The Director of Maintenance, Transportation, and School Safety as well as the Executive Director are responsible for creating and updating the MSA Safety and Crisis Management Plan and Manual, which are distributed to all administration, faculty, and staff. The purpose of these manuals is to assure that adequate programs are provided for the protection of health and safety of students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community and for compliance with appropriate codes and regulations. Procedures for emergency/safety plans will be printed and posted so all MSA students, faculty, staff, and administration will be knowledgeable of safety procedures. Drills will be held throughout the year to assist students and staff in proper procedures for various situations.

The manuals identify health and safety problems; establish standards; evaluate and report on the status of compliance with health and safety standards, codes, and regulations; provide technical services; recommend and implement accident experiences; and develop and manage training resources.

In emergency situations and when required to do so by codes, regulations, or licensure agreement, any trained employees are authorized to take preventative, investigative, and remedial actions.

## Emergency Situations

During times of emergencies on campus and/or situations caused by inclement weather or other conditions across the state, the [Mississippi School of the Arts](#) MSA authorities will not allow a student to leave school premises until it has been determined that conditions are safe for travel to a given destination.

To determine when students should return to campus following an emergency or when hazardous weather or road conditions impact our state, please call one of the numbers below for updates. When it is safe to return to campus, specific information will be provided in relation to the re-opening of school. When electricity is available and e-mail systems are operable, the latest update information will also be e-mailed to all students and staff members. MSA also has an instant messaging program that will call or text all phones in the school database for students and staff. Social media updates will also be made.

**MSA Primary Number: 601-823-1300**  
**MSA Security Office: 601-823-1350**

**SLC Main Desk: 601-823-1356**  
**Health Center: 601-823-1347**

## HEALTH SERVICES

### Nursing Care

Preventive health services are ideal. The school has formulated policies designed to enhance the health and well-being of all students. Included in these policies are room inspections, nutritious, wholesome meals, lights-out regulations, activity programs, physical fitness activities, residential life curriculum, and required medical information from each student.

A registered nurse is on duty from 7:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and on call at other times and can be reached by the Director of Residential Life if deemed necessary. The school nurse will examine students and coordinate appointments with a local doctor or determine if the student should return home due to the seriousness of the illness. While the nurse can administer allergy shots, provide basic first aid services, and perform health care counseling, the nurse is not a personal physician.

Students should report to the nurse in the event they become ill during the school day. If a student becomes ill during the evenings or on the weekend when the nurse is off campus, the Residence Counselor will help determine student needs initially and contact the Director of Residential Life or the

Assistant Dorm Supervisor. The Director of Residential Life or a designee will make every effort to contact a parent/guardian prior to medical treatment. In emergency situations an ambulance service may be called and the service of the emergency room of a local hospital utilized. Parents/guardians **MUST** sign an **MSA Health Information/Medical Treatment Form** allowing a student to receive hospital care in the case of an emergency. MSA will notify parents/guardians immediately in the event of an emergency.

A physician may direct the school nurse to restrict a student's activities if deemed necessary for a speedy and complete recovery and for the general welfare of the school community. Failure to comply with confinement will result in unexcused absences for the days missed from class.

### **Medical Expenses, Insurance, and Scheduling Treatment**

Parents are responsible for all medical costs and will assume all financial obligations incurred by their child in health-related situations. Visits to the doctor's office will be billed to the parents. MSA assumes no responsibility for student medical expenses. Parents are encouraged to provide medical insurance for their child. Information and applications for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), a joint federal/state program that provides health insurance coverage to low-income uninsured children, is available upon request in the school nurse.

Parents should schedule routine medical and/or dental visits and surgical procedures when students are home for breaks or holidays to prevent disruption of academic courses. MSA will not be responsible for providing transportation for medical services outside of the Brookhaven area. Parents are asked to refrain from knowingly sending a sick student to campus without taking them to the doctor. **Doctor visits for general checkups and non-emergency visits related to a previously diagnosed illness are the responsibility of the parents/guardians. MSA will not be responsible for providing transportation services for non-emergent care visits for medical and/or dental visits.**

Please note that transportation to doctor's appointments is for emergent care only. Emergencies qualify as the following, which include but are not limited to: bone breaks, head injuries, extreme cases of stomach illness, injuries related to falls, or illness requiring immediate medical care that cannot wait for travelling home as determined by the nurse in collaboration with the MSA administration.

**Students who are sick requiring more than 24 hours out of school are required to return home until they have recovered. Parents must be prepared to pick up their children if called due to the severity of illness regardless of the distance of travel or inconvenience to the parents. Students should not return to school ill and expect to stay in their rooms for 24 hours. For the wellness of the campus, students should seek medical attention and remain at home if the illness prevents them from attending class or school functions.**

### **Required Medical Information**

All medical information is confidential. Parents must complete fully and accurately all medical forms required for admission to MSA. All students must have a physical and a completed Medical Examination Form before checking into the residence hall. A copy of the immunization form 121 must also be included with the cumulative school records or be delivered with all medical release forms. All students are encouraged to take a flu shot prior to or while attending MSA.

Admittance to MSA is contingent upon providing the following medical information no later than July 1 of the upcoming school year:

1. **Record of Immunization.** Students may obtain a copy of this form at their local school or pediatrician. Ordinarily schools include this information with the school cumulative records. Immunizations must be current according to state code on the Form 121.
2. **MSA Health Information/Medical Treatment Form.** This form is very important because it authorizes a doctor or hospital to provide treatment for both non-emergency and emergency situations.

3. **Medical Examination Form.** All students must have a physical and a form completed by a physician.
4. **Residence Hall General Medication Use Permission Form.** This form authorizes MSA to administer over-the-counter medications with parental permission.
5. **Administering Prescription Medication to Students Form/Signed Doctor's Orders.** This form must be completed [each](#) year and must be modified whenever a medication is prescribed or changed.
6. **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).** This notice describes how medical information about your child may be used and disclosed and how you may gain access to your child's health information. The form attached to the notice must be completed at the beginning of each school year so that MSA staff may seek medical assistance for your child and provide medical information to caregivers.
7. **Mental Health Evaluation Form.** All students with diagnosed mental illness must have a form completed by the current treating mental health professional.

**Parents must notify the Executive Director, Director of Residential Life, and the school nurse immediately regarding changes in medications, guardianship, insurance, address, and employment.** Photocopies of prescription and insurance cards should be attached to medical forms if applicable.

### **Mental Health Evaluation**

Students diagnosed with mood or anxiety disorders (or other mental health problems) within the last two years must submit the **MSA Mental Health Evaluation form** from their licensed professional counselor, psychologist, or psychiatrist stating that, in his or her professional opinion, the student can handle the academic and residential pressures of the MSA environment, and outlining any treatment protocol that should be continued during the student's enrollment at MSA. **Preventative measures or triggers for anxiety/panic attacks must be disclosed to the administration to maintain the safety and order of the school and residential environment.**

It is expected that parents provide information to MSA regarding previous and current mental health issues prior to the start of the year including recommendations and symptoms for the necessary staff to be aware to guarantee a healthy environment for all students. If a parent does not disclose fully in advance a student's mental health diagnosis or prior issues concerning mental health that lead to significant health risks for the student or the school, the student may be dismissed until the issues are fully disclosed and follow recommendations of a mental health professional. Re-admittance will be at the discretion of the administration.

In the event a student exhibits destructive behaviors, MSA shall have the right to require that the parent/guardian pick up the student immediately. If the student plans to return to MSA, he/she must submit a formal mental health evaluation by their treating licensed professional counselor, psychologist, or psychiatrist – not a regular physician, to be conducted at the expense of the parent. The student will not be allowed to return to the MSA campus until the evaluation is completed and the licensed mental health professional has submitted the Mental Health Evaluation form or a detailed letter, stating in writing that: (1) the student is not a danger to self or others and (2) the student can handle the academic and residential pressures of the MSA environment, and (3) the student is complying with the recommendations of the mental health professional.

If the situation does not carry a disciplinary sanction of suspension, the student's absences will be excused as medical absences. Prior to returning to the MSA campus, the student and his or her parent/guardian must meet with school officials and arrangements made for the student to comply strictly with the recommendations of the mental health professional and to meet regularly with the school counselor, Executive Director, and/or an outside mental health professional to assess consistent stability.

**If a parent does not fully disclose problems in advance that lead to significant health risks for the student or the school, the student may be dismissed until the issues are fully disclosed and**

the recommendations of a mental health professional are being followed. Re-admittance will be at the discretion of the administration.

## **OTC, Prescription Medication, and General Administration Guidelines**

Parents/Guardians must notify the school if a student is on any medication and/or under a doctor's care for a medical condition. This information must be provided in written detail from the doctor and the parents/guardians before enrollment in MSA. **MSA assumes no responsibility for any adverse or negative reactions due to lack of medication as a result of faulty records from parents/guardians and reserves all rights including the possibility of third-party action.**

MSA students must file all prescription drug and over-the-counter cold medicine needs and use with the school nurse who will inform the Director of Residence Life. Prescriptions must be written for the student and recently dated. Students must act responsibly while handling all medications. Abuse of prescription drugs or failure to abide by MSA medication regulations may result in a Level III violation as defined in this handbook. Any change in medication administration should be discussed between the student and doctor. Self-diagnosis and removal of medication from a student's regimen that results in erratic or destructive behaviors may require a mental health evaluation at the expense of the parent/guardian before continuation at MSA is allowed.

Students must not transfer or share prescription or over-the-counter medications. Improper use of any type of medications will be treated as a disciplinary procedure Level III violation under the school alcohol and drug policy and may result in suspension, dismissal, or expulsion. Caffeine pills are not permitted for student consumption. The nurse or a designee must administer all prescription or schedule medications. **Any over-the-counter cold or cough medications containing dextromethorphan (e.g., Coricidin or Robitussin) are forbidden on campus and may be taken only with doctor's orders to be administered by the nurse or designated MSA staff member.** All medications must be kept in the proper, original, container with clear directions and a label in evidence for proper storage.

**Furthermore, all prescription and over-the-counter cold medications must be registered with the nurse with permission given by the parent and a list of all items that the student will maintain ownership of while on campus. No new medications can be added without updating the file and informing the nurse. MSA requires that the school nurse or MSA designee administer any controlled substance prescription medications. No narcotic pain medications will be stored on campus. Students may store OTC medications except for cold medicines, including birth control medications in their dorm rooms. Failure to follow policies could result in a Level III disciplinary infraction that may include suspension, dismissal, or expulsion. When a doctor prescribes medication for a student illness, the nurse must be notified immediately, and all forms completed and turned in to MSA. The nurse will follow up or oversee the administration of any controlled substance (scheduled drugs 1-5), non-psychotic or other prohibited medications. **Failure to comply with the doctor or nurse's directions will result in a disciplinary procedure as a Level III violation.** MSA will not permit medical cannabis to be administered, stored, or used on campus.**

Students will report to the nurse or designated representative at the predetermined time for administration of medications. All prescription medications must be accompanied by a completed MSA Prescription Medication form which will be kept on file in the nurse's station. Regardless of parent or physician statements, no prescription medications may be taken to a student's room and/or self-administered unless approved by the Executive Director or school nurse. It is also the student's responsibility to take medication daily or as prescribed.

All prescription medications must be in an appropriate container labeled with the drug name, dosage, frequency of administration, date of issue, and prescribing physician. Medications classified as controlled substances (scheduled drugs 1-5), non-controlled anti-psychotic medication, and any other

medication as prohibited by MSA **WILL NOT** be permitted in the student rooms, even if both the parent/guardian and prescribing provider give consent.

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MSA and its employees and agents assume no liability because of any injury sustained by a student from the self-administration of asthma inhalers or other prescription medication as approved by the parent and physician.

### **Self-Administration of Medication**

All medications must be registered with the nurse except students who meet the requirements to possess and self-administer prescription asthma or anaphylaxis medication pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-71. A School Asthma Plan (SAP) for students diagnosed with asthma, Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-71 requires each student with asthma have a current school asthma plan on file for use by the school nurse, teachers and staff. The parents of the child are required to annually have the child's health care provider develop and sign the SAP. The SAP must include: (1) child's name, (2) date, (3) school, (4) age, (5) physician's signature, (6) instructions to the school if coughing or wheezing and indicate dosage and delivery method details, and (7) whether the student administers his or her own medication or school personnel may administer medication. The plan must also indicate whether pre-medication is required and shall indicate dosage and delivery method details.

A student may self-administer prescription anaphylaxis medication if MSA is provided a written (1) parental authorization, (2) parental release of liability, and (3) the required doctor's statement pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-71. A student with asthma may self-administer prescription asthma medication if MSA is provided a written (1) parental authorization, (2) parental release of liability, (3) school asthma plan completed by the prescribing physician authorizing self-administration, and (4) the required doctor's statement pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-71.

Upon fulfilling the requirements of these regulations for self-administration, a student with asthma may possess and use asthma medications when at school, at a school-sponsored activity, under the supervision of school personnel while on or off school properties including residence in the dormitory.

### **Excused Absence from Class for Health Reasons**

A student who is ill must inform the nurse as soon as possible. Students who do not check in with the nurse will not receive an excuse for illness and will receive a disciplinary action for skipping class. Parents cannot give permission to a student to stay in their rooms without consultation with the school nurse.

1. Going to the nurse does not automatically excuse a student from class. The nurse and/or a doctor must substantiate the seriousness of the illness. A minor illness (e.g., cramps, headache, and minor cold) does not justify an excused absence.
2. At any time during the school day an excused absence will be granted providing the student has gone to the nurse or other designated adult and has a substantiated illness.
3. Students excused from two or more classes because of illness shall not attend school functions that day and are expected to remain in the residence hall room except for meals unless written permission from a physician or the school nurse is provided. When a student is not returning to school from a holiday and/or weekend at home because of illness, the parents must contact the school immediately. The absence will be recorded as excused upon return of the student to MSA with a doctor's excuse.
4. Students with unsubstantiated illnesses who refuse to go to class will result in the absences being recorded as unexcused. Excessive unexcused absences will result in notification of the School Attendance Officer.
5. Violation of the above policies may result in an unexcused absence and disciplinary action.
6. Parents are requested to carefully consider allowing students to miss class due to minor illnesses as these absences disrupt their academic progress.

## Communicable Diseases

MSA will comply with all federal and state laws pertaining to the management of communicable diseases. The school will also follow the directives of an attending physician to determine risk factors on a case-by-case basis. Every reasonable precaution will be taken to minimize risks to other students and school personnel. Faculty and staff will not discriminate against students with health conditions and will promote sensitivity, confidentiality, and fair and reasonable accommodations.

If current medical knowledge indicates a student's health condition does not pose a risk to others, the student will continue at MSA as normally as possible. If the student is having academic problems because of the health condition, the Principal will be notified immediately. Modifications, if any, may be provided in the work and academic environment. Each situation will be considered individually. If a communicable disease or medical condition is deemed detrimental to the immediate health or welfare of the student or general school population, the student will be sent home immediately upon diagnosis from a physician or recommendation of the school nurse. Such illnesses and/or symptoms include, but are not limited to high fever, measles, chicken pox, mumps, and influenza. All temporary leaves from school for illness are for the improved health of the student.

Before returning to MSA, students who have recovered from a communicable disease must acquire a medical release excuse from the attending physician in the student's hometown. The excuse must be presented to the nurse immediately when the student returns to the campus.

MSA policy mandates confidentiality of student health history in compliance with medical, legal, and ethical standards of the school and state.

## Wellness

The [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#) Wellness Policy emphasizes a commitment to nutrition, physical activity, comprehensive health education, marketing, and implementation. It is designed to effectively utilize school and community resources to serve the needs of students and staff, taking into consideration cultural differences. While enrolled at the [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#), all students must participate in a mandatory wellness program designed to promote lifelong habits and skills for healthful living and general wellness to improve the overall quality of life and productivity. The school nurse will monitor wellness programs and conduct periodic assessments while students are enrolled at MSA. Exemption from wellness policies requires written documentation from a physician.

## Visitation

The [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#) encourages visitors to the school campus; however, for the protection of the students and the integrity of the academic and residential life of the campus, policies and procedures have been created.

### Access to the School Campus During the School Day Visitation by General Public

Visitors are welcome to designated public areas of the MSA campus. These spaces include school offices, performance spaces, the classrooms, the cafeteria, the library, and the commons areas. MSA welcomes visitors to performances and organized campus tours when appointments are scheduled in advance. Between 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Fridays, all visitors must report to the Security Office in the Student Life Center, present and leave a valid picture identification card, sign in, and receive a visitor's pass. The Security Office will notify the appropriate persons that the visitor has arrived on campus. Before a visitor can go to a classroom during the instructional day, Security will call the Principal or Executive Director for clearance. After 5:00 p.m. on weekdays and on weekends, visitors may report to the Security Office, follow procedures described above, and then go to the reception desk in the Student Life Center for notification of person being visited.

MSA does not permit unauthorized persons in school buildings or on school grounds. Faculty, staff, and administration are authorized to take appropriate action to prevent such persons from entering buildings or from loitering on campus grounds. Such persons can be prosecuted to the full extent of the

law. Alumni are not permitted to check students out of the school unless they are family with permission. Persons wishing to visit the school without prior arrangements must report to the Security Office in the Student Life Center, present and leave a valid picture identification card. The Security Office will notify the school administration office where arrangements for the visit will be finalized. Solicitations of teachers or pupils by agents or salespersons will not be allowed.

No one will be allowed to travel the school campus during the academic day without a Visitor's Pass procured after completing the sign-in process. MSA reserves the right to refuse admittance to any person wishing to visit the school. Personal messages or gifts (e.g., balloons, flowers, and food) will not be forwarded to students during class except in the event of an emergency.

### **Guest Speakers, Artists-In-Residence, and Academic Visitors**

Any visitor to the academic school must inform the teacher who will notify the Principal and the scheduling secretary as to the day and time of the visit to avoid conflicts with school schedules. All academic campus visitors will report immediately to the Security Office in the Student Life Center, present and leave a valid picture identification card, sign in and receive a visitor's pass. The Security Office will notify the appropriate persons that the visitor has arrived on campus. At the end of the visit, the visitor must sign-out in the security office and leave the campus immediately.

### **Visitors to the Student Life Center**

Parents, family members, and friends of students are welcome to visit, but they must follow visitation guidelines. **Siblings, extended family members, and friends of students, must visit during nonacademic hours,** and should call ahead to be sure they are listed on the **Visitor Permission Form. Visitors to the Student Life Center are not allowed before 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.** Visitation is not allowed during study time or after curfew. **All visitors** must use the main north entrance of the Student Life Center from Monticello Street and check in at Security in the Student Life Center, present and leave a valid picture identification card, sign in and receive a visitor's pass. They must also check in with on-duty residence hall staff upon arrival. Visits are restricted to the common areas (i.e., cafeteria, patio, second floor lounge, and library (for tutoring purposes only) on the first and second floors unless granted special permission by the SLC staff. **All visitors must wear a Visitor's Pass while present on the MSA campus. Passes are procured after completing the check-in process and should be returned to Security when visitors sign out. Visitors need to leave campus by the time students report to their floors for the evening.**

### **Visitor Permission Forms**

Only those persons listed by parents on the **Visitor Permission Form** are authorized to visit students. Those listed must check in with the on-duty staff in the residence hall office upon arrival in the building. Visitors must furnish photo identification for verification. Any person not listed by parents will not be allowed to visit. At any time during the school year, parents may modify listings on the Visitor Permission Form by sending changes to the Director of Residential Life. Modifications may be made in writing via US mail, e-mail, or facsimile. Parents can make requests by phone with passcode and in person. Student hosts must ensure that visitors register and remain in their company at all times.

MSA reserves the right to deny access to its campus, activities, events, etc. Exclusion may include anyone not deemed suitable or appropriate, including students who have withdrawn or been dismissed. Exclusion may also apply to individuals listed on student **Visitor Permission Forms**.

### **Overnight Visitation**

For students to leave campus and spend the night with a friend or relative, the person(s) who will be transporting the student must be included on the Off Campus Overnight Permission Form that is signed by the parent or amended using appropriate procedures. Overnight off campus visitation is discouraged during the week when school is in session. In extenuating circumstances, the Director of Residential Life or a designee may grant permission on a weekday. To promote safety and to encourage students to be accountable for their whereabouts, parents should carefully consider permissions granted to their children for overnight off campus visitation. Written documentation is required when a student signs off



campus for overnight, even to go home on the weekend unless the student is picked up and signed out by a parent or guardian.

Due to limited space resulting from increased enrollment, overnight visitation is not allowed in the dorm. In the event of dire circumstances (e.g., single parent must leave the state), the Director of Residential Life may grant exceptions to this policy.

Parents, siblings, and grandparents may visit in student rooms. However, to ensure the privacy of other students in the suite and on the hall, visitors and their hosts must abide by the following guidelines:

- Permission of the roommate,
- Permission of the staff member on duty and make an announcement on the hall; and
- Limit visits to 30 minutes or less before 12 p.m. (noon) and after 7 p.m., so that students may resume their day-to-day schedules. **Visits to student rooms will not be allowed after curfew.**

**Please direct all communications regarding student permissions to the Student Life Center, not the Y-Hut** since the administrative office is only open Monday—Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Do not send e-mail to individual accounts. Use the general residential life e-mail that can be accessed by all staff members.

**SLC Fax Number:** 601-823-1546  
**SLC E-Mail:** [msaresidential@msabrookhaven.org](mailto:msaresidential@msabrookhaven.org)

### **Alumni Visitation Policy**

MSA alumni who are in good standing (graduates or voluntarily withdrawn) are welcome to visit the school. Campus visits should be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance. Alumni must follow the check in procedures required of all other visitors. To prevent interruptions during instructional class periods, graduates must make appointments in order to visit with faculty and staff in their classrooms during regular school hours. Alumni can only visit the first and second floor of the Student Life Center. Alumni can attend public events as well. Meals may be purchased for a nominal cost, but overnight visits are prohibited. Decisions about whether specific alumni may visit are left to the professional discretion of the administration. Alumni are not allowed to check students out of school/dormitory unless they are family members with proper permissions.

### **Safety and Security**

Safety and security are universal responsibilities. The MSA Security Office is located on the first floor of the Student Life Center and officers and/or security staff members are on duty twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven days a week when students are on campus. Video camera surveillance is used to assist in monitoring activities throughout the campus. MSA security officers are certified police/security/deputized officers with full legal authority on campus. MSA students must show respect and cooperate with officials at all times.

### **Student Life Center (SLC)**

To help ensure student safety and to protect personal property in and around the SLC, students should:

1. Keep dormitory suite doors locked at all times;
2. Refrain from leaving large sums of money in their rooms or having on campus and do not leave loose change or paper money lying on desks or bureau surfaces;
3. Identify personal belongings, including clothing;
4. Protect room keys and do not lend them to anyone;
5. Wear Identification Badge visibly above the waist;
6. Lock valuable items in a locked suitcase or other secure storage;
7. Unplug and store electrical appliances properly after use (e.g., hair dryers, curling irons, [and irons](#));
8. Memorize emergency evacuation routes and participate in practice drills;
9. Help secure the Student Life Center by keeping doors closed and locked;
10. Store bicycles in designated areas and secure them with chains and locks;

11. Lock vehicles left in the parking lot and make certain all valuables are out of sight in the trunk;
12. Never allow someone else to use [their your](#) badge to access the building; and,
13. Never open the door for someone they don't know.

### On Campus

To ensure safety while on campus, students should:

1. Restrict themselves to common areas of the campus identified during orientation;
2. Refrain from loitering around nonfunctional buildings;
3. Seek guidance from MSA staff regarding access to appropriate areas;
4. Wear identification badges visible above the waist at all times and have them available to facilitate building entry;
5. Stay out of areas where there is no adult supervision;
6. Keep purses, backpacks, or other personal items in their possession, do not leave them unattended;
7. Exhibit good sportsmanship when participating in outdoor activities;
8. Walk with another MSA student at night;
9. Walk on sidewalks and stay in well-lit areas;
10. Be aware of surrounding activities when [theyyou](#) are outdoors;
11. Report suspicious persons on campus to the staff or campus police;
12. Wear appropriate safety gear when rollerblading, skateboarding, and riding a bicycle or scooter (i.e., helmets, knee and elbow pads, [and](#) gloves);
13. Refrain from rollerblading, skateboarding, or riding bicycles on sidewalks when pedestrians are present; and,
14. Refrain from rollerblading, skateboarding, or riding bicycles inside buildings.

### Off Campus

To ensure safety while off campus, students should:

1. Be aware of all surroundings when using ATM's;
2. Stay in designated walkways illustrated in the MSA Walking Guide;
3. Restrict walking to daylight hours;
4. Walk in groups of two or more;
5. Restrict destinations and activities to those stated when signing out of the dorm;
6. Ensure that no students ride in a vehicle if the owner and their parents have not given permission to ride with the driver;
7. Refrain from getting in any vehicle if they signed out "walking";
8. Stay out of alleys, dumpsters, and areas behind public buildings;
9. Remember that they represent MSA within the community; [and](#)
10. Maintain control of the ID badge unless turned in to Residence Life staff.

### Identification Badges

The security procedures require that **all persons on campus must wear in plain sight an official identification card or visitor's badge issued by the school at all times**. This policy applies to all staff and students—full-time and part-time—as well as visitors to the campus.

Access to the Student Life Center, the Y-Hut, Enochs Hall, and Johnson Institute will be restricted at all times during the day and night. The MSA identification card is electronic and functions similar to a card swipe system. To enter a building during regular hours, all persons must use their electronic identification cards to open an exterior door. Outside of regular school hours, employees must use their keys in addition to the ID badge. Old MSA identification cards will not work with this system.

As a person enters the building, the system records entry by individual card number. Knowing that a system is only as effective as its users, the following actions by all students and staff will help prevent intrusions by unauthorized persons.

1. Make sure the door closes after entering a building. Some MSA buildings are old and the doors do not always close completely without pulling them shut. Be especially careful with the North double doors of Johnson Institute located near the bell tower.
2. NEVER prop a door open; this serves as an invitation to intruders.
3. Do not stand and hold the door open for straggling students. They have their own cards and are responsible for themselves. Do not open the door for a student who does not have a card. To do so is a policy violation.
4. Maintain control of the card by wearing it on your person visible and above the waist; do not loan it to another person. Keep in mind that students are responsible for what happens to their individual cards, and the system records identity each time someone uses the card.
5. NEVER allow a stranger to enter a building. For safety reasons, even visitors (including parents) must acquire an electronic badge from the Security Office before they can enter buildings across campus.
6. Notify security immediately upon loss of an ID badge. This includes leaving one at home.
7. Student policy violations may result in Level III consequences due to possible breach of security.

All staff and students will receive an electronic identification card and a MSA lanyard. If the ID or lanyard is lost, students will have to pay a replacement cost. Keep in mind that the ID functions as a "key to home." Therefore, it is critical that all members of the MSA family cooperate to help maintain a safe environment and be proactive in avoiding situations that could be detrimental to the well-being of everyone on campus. Students and staff are responsible for reporting lost or stolen badges. Students are not permitted to deface the identification badge in any way (stickers, covering the face, [and](#) etc.).

## Transportation

### Student Transportation To and From MSA

Students may be transported to and from campus by themselves, parent/guardians, or other authorized individual(s). Authorized individuals are defined as individuals having parental permission to transport the student on file with the administration or individuals with verbal authorization by a parent/guardian to school administration for transport of the student on a specific occasion.

On weekends and holidays, students should arrange to leave campus in advance of the day of departure. Specific times will be set for students to depart from campus. All students must go home during the weekends and holidays designated in the MSA calendar.

### Vehicles on Campus

When a student brings a vehicle to campus, all policies and procedures related to the use of private vehicles must be followed. Students must understand that bringing a vehicle to campus is a serious responsibility and a privilege, not a right. The [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#) recognizes that there may be occasions when all students need transportation. To manage these activities, MSA uses the **Vehicle Permission Form**. This form shall be completed for all students regardless of whether they anticipate bringing a car to campus. The Vehicle Permission Form enables parents to determine their child's limits in relation to transportation. The school reserves the final authority to restrict or deny use of student vehicles. Motorbikes are prohibited.

### Vehicle Registration

Students shall immediately register any vehicle brought to campus in the Campus Security Office. Registration includes providing photocopies of the following:

- Valid driver's license
- Proof of liability insurance
- Proof of ownership (If the vehicle belongs to anyone other than a parent or legal guardian, students must provide a notarized statement that they have permission to use the car.)

In addition to the above documentation, MSA staff shall verify current license plate. A MSA parking permit shall be issued at the time of registration and must be displayed on the rearview mirror of the

vehicle. If a student brings a different car to campus at any time during the school year, all registration requirements must be followed. All students who register vehicles must pay a registration fee. Students must park their vehicles at their own risk in designated areas. **Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of MSA students assume full legal and financial responsibility in matters related to their vehicles. Risks involved are those of the owner and operator, MSA assumes no liability in relation to student vehicles.**

### **Vehicle Use during the School Week**

During the school week—Sunday 7:30 p.m. through Friday 4:30 p.m.—student use of vehicles will be significantly restricted in relation to privilege plan levels. In special situations with prior approval by a designated school official, students may receive permission to use their vehicles. However, failure to plan adequately may result in requests being denied. Use of personal vehicles on weekdays may be granted for destinations such as—but not limited to—medical appointments, community service, team practices, vocal lessons, or other educational activities. Transportation destinations should be specific and times for travel accurate. Loitering, unauthorized stops, transporting passengers, [or](#) allowing another driver to operate a vehicle may result in loss of vehicle privileges. Curfew and sign in/out regulations are always in effect.

### **Vehicle Use during the Weekend**

During the weekend—Friday after-school through Sunday 7:30 p.m.—parental permissions recorded on the **Vehicle Permission Form** govern the use of student vehicles. Students may not travel beyond the 25-mile radius of MSA without parental permission for each occasion unless they are signing out to go home, a medically related appointment, or some other destination on the student's **Overnight Visitor's List**.

### **Restrictions for Vehicle Use**

Due to limited parking, MSA students shall not drive their vehicles to Brookhaven High School except for extracurricular activities that have been approved in advance. All students shall ride the buses provided by MSA to Brookhaven High School except in extremely extenuating circumstances. Missing the bus and being late for class are not acceptable reasons for requesting that a private vehicle be used for transportation.

Vehicle use may be limited to those students who have clear discipline records and acceptable grades. These guidelines may be determined by the MSA administration. Student use of vehicles may be further restricted upon written requests from parents. Parents may restrict, or modify, vehicle permissions at any time during the school year by notifying the MSA Residence Life or Safety staff in writing.

A school official possessing reasonable suspicion that a student may be in violation of MSA policies and/or Mississippi law may search any vehicle owned or operated by a student.

Students who fail to maintain a high level of regard for vehicle rules and safety may be required to return their vehicles home, either for a designated period of time, or for the remainder of the school year. Vehicle privileges may be withdrawn if:

- The school considers a student's operation of the vehicle to be a danger to self, or *others*;
- The vehicle is improperly registered;
- The vehicle is determined to have unauthorized drivers or passengers;
- The student persistently violates MSA policies related to vehicles or state laws;
- The student has committed serious infractions and vehicle restrictions are imposed as part of disciplinary consequences; [or](#)
- The student allows unauthorized passengers to ride in the car.

After students have had sufficient time to unload and check into the Student Life Center, they must not return to a parked vehicle for any reason without special permission. Students are not permitted to sit for more than 10 minutes in cars on campus. Students should check in immediately upon returning to campus and depart immediately upon checking out with the staff. Students, or their guests, may not

drive a vehicle belonging to someone else. When students check into the Student Life Center, they must turn in their car keys. Any extra keys must be filed with the Security Office staff for safekeeping.

## **Commuter Students**

Upon arrival at MSA, commuter students are required to park at the Student Life Center, lock their vehicles, sign in and deposit their keys in the Security Office until they sign out at the end of the day. Commuter students must not return to their vehicles during the school day, nor allow access by any other student. Student vehicles must be registered and the MSA parking permit clearly displayed. Vehicle registration requires the same documentation that residential students must provide.

All commuter students will ride the school bus to and from Brookhaven High School (BHS) and must report to the bus in a timely manner. Commuter students must not be tardy for their first block class. A commuter student missing the bus will have an unexcused absence for all classes missed at BHS. Commuter students are not allowed to transport themselves or fellow students to BHS except for extracurricular activities when prior approval has been granted. Violation of this policy will lead to disciplinary action.

On campus at MSA, commuters will continue with classes and evening rehearsals, use the library, or attend evening performances or exhibitions. A commuter student may stay on campus, with teacher and parent permission, for required practices, rehearsals, class assignments, or other educational purposes. Commuter students must leave campus by 9:00 p.m. unless properly authorized as an overnight visitor.

The commuter student must follow all rules and regulations of the residential facility, including the use of transportation and check-in/check-out policies and procedures. They may not return to their cars until they have signed out for the day, upon which time they must leave and return home immediately.

Students may only be considered for commuting if they reside within 25 miles of the MSA campus and have permission from their parent/guardian. Due to enrollment numbers and room availability, MSA reserves the right to require students to commute to campus until residence facilities become available.

## **Transportation to Brookhaven High School**

MSA transports students to Brookhaven High School for non-arts courses via Brookhaven School District buses. Students are responsible for meeting bus schedules when departing from MSA or BHS. Students who miss the bus to Brookhaven High School must see the Principal immediately for transportation to be arranged. Students who are late to BHS classes will serve detention.

Students who need to go to BHS to make up a test, see a teacher for additional help, or serve detention before school must sign up at the SLC front desk or with the Principal the day before transportation is needed.

## **Transportation Safety Procedures**

To ensure safety during transportation, students shall:

1. Report to the assigned bus pick-up on time.
2. Use extreme caution when loading and unloading from the bus.
3. Wait until the bus has come to a complete stop and the bus driver indicates it is safe to board or depart from the bus.
4. Talk in normal conversational tones.
5. Keep head, arms, legs, body, and personal possessions out of the aisle of the bus and inside the windows.
6. Always be courteous and respectful.
7. Follow the instructions of the driver.
8. Refrain from carrying food and beverages on the bus.

## **Student Conduct on Buses**

Recognizing that student misconduct can jeopardize the safety of others, the following procedures have been adopted for student discipline related to school bus transportation:

1. All bus drivers shall report student misconduct promptly to the Director of Residence Life.
2. A prompt due process investigation will ensue and based upon information, disciplinary actions deemed appropriate will be administered. Parents will be notified.
3. Students must not carry food and beverages on the bus except with prior arrangements during long extended trips out of town or food runs.
4. Students are subject to disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from the school if the student constitutes a threat to the safety of the other students on the bus, causes damage or destruction of property, distracts the bus driver, or in other ways interferes with the normal or safe operation of the bus.
5. All Brookhaven School District policies will be upheld when using their buses and are included in the BHS Handbook on their website.

### **AHERA Assurances**

The 1998 Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) requirements pertaining to asbestos have been reviewed, the results of which show compliance with federal regulations, and are on file in the Office of Maintenance, Transportation, and School Safety at the [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#).

# Services

## Residential Life

The residential life staff is comprised of caring people who are selected for their knowledge, experience, skills, and abilities. Each one is committed to providing guidance and support for MSA students. The staff oversees all areas of residential life including extracurricular activities and recreation when students are not in class. Residential staff members are always on duty during the week and on weekends when students are on campus. The staff includes the Director of Residential Life, Assistant Dorm Supervisor, and Residence Life Counselors.

The residential program at MSA provides a safe and secure homelike environment where students experience nurturing support. Therefore, the staff designs and maintains a living environment that will enable students to meet high expectations set by themselves, the staff, the school, and the state.

## Philosophy

Having an opportunity to reside on campus enhances the educational experiences students receive at MSA. The residential life program reflects the school goals. MSA encourages individual expression, but students must understand that they must maintain self-discipline, responsibility, and effective decision-making skills. The enhancement of student character is a key component in achieving a positive residential environment. Residential guidelines are based on the premise that living on campus is a privilege that carries with it an expected level of individual responsibility.

## Terminology

**Residence Hall Meetings**—Mandatory monthly meetings held on each floor at a designated date and time. All residents must be present and on time. These meetings will provide opportunities for students to receive new information and updates regarding activities, voice concerns, and discuss life in the dorm. Residential Life Counselors will coordinate these meetings.

**Study Hours**—A predetermined period of time when designated students are accounted for and required to be focused only on schoolwork. Hours are Monday through Thursday 8:00 until 9:00 p.m. Individual privilege plans and grades affect study hours. Rehearsals (individual and group) and studio work are viable educational experiences during study hours, but students must not disturb others who may be studying quietly in the dorm. Prior written approval from MSA administration must be given in order to be excused from study hours at any time.

**Curfew**—A specific time when all students are accounted for and are required to be inside their rooms. At this time, hallway exit door alarms are activated and students should not leave that floor for the remainder of the night. They may go to another floor after 6:30 a.m. weekdays. All students must be on their assigned floors by 10:00 p.m. on Sunday through Thursday nights. Students must be in their rooms by 10:30 p.m. for room checks Sunday through Thursday nights. On Friday and Saturday nights, students must be on their assigned floors by 12:00 a.m. Students are not allowed to leave their rooms after curfew unless it is an emergency. Students on the blue privilege plan are allowed to watch TV in the lounge on their floor until lights out for the night.

**Lights Out**—A specific time when students are required to turn out the lights and go to bed. Lights out on Sunday through Thursday is 11:00 p.m. On Friday and Saturday, lights out is 1:00 a.m. "Lights Out" applies to the use of desk lights, computers, computer and handheld games, DVD players, etc., not merely turning off dorm room and bathroom lights.

**Floor Duty**—All students will be required to do specific tasks to help maintain the common areas on the floors where they live. The Resident Counselor on each floor shall schedule, assign, and monitor work needed. Campus Work Service hours shall not be awarded for these duties that are required in return for special opportunities provided on a state residential high school campus.

## Residential Life Schedules

### School Week Schedule—Sunday through Thursday Evenings

8:00 until 9:00 p.m.	Study Hours (Monday—Thursday)
10:00 p.m.	Curfew, students must be on their floor
10:30 p.m.	Room Check
10:00 p.m.—11:00 p.m.	Halls quiet
11:00 p.m.	Lights out

### Weekend Schedule—Friday and Saturday Evenings

12:00 a.m.	Curfew, Room Check
10:30 p.m.—12:00 a.m.	Halls quiet
1:00 a.m.	Lights out

## Residence Hall Living

Living in a residence hall is an exciting opportunity that requires self-discipline, independence, a high degree of responsibility, compatibility with students from diverse backgrounds, and the ability to follow rules and established guidelines. Students who demonstrate these characteristics should adapt successfully to living in a residence hall with minimal adjustments. While students are making transitions from living at home to those of residential life, the residence hall staff is constantly available for assistance and support. They help students adjust to the residential setting, and provide guidance as needed. Such a support system enhances the likelihood that all students will have successful and meaningful educational experiences. An important part of this adjustment is student understanding of the hall rules and standards of conduct. An orderly, clean, comfortable living area supports and enhances the learning atmosphere and, therefore, benefits the entire school community. **When students cannot fulfill the requirements of living in the dormitory, MSA reserves the right to require a student to become a commuter.**

Since learning and study styles differ among students, mutual respect must be the cornerstone of a harmonious community. Students must channel their behaviors to create an orderly, responsible atmosphere. Student self-monitoring builds and sustains positive relationships with peers and with residential staff members.

## Roommates

Students are restricted to specific floors in the dorms. Violation of this policy is a severe offense. If students are found to be on the wrong floor at any time or for any reason without prior permission, they will be subject to disciplinary action.

The residential life staff makes room assignments in accordance with student requests and honors them when possible. Students who are involved in a romantic relationship are not permitted to be roommates or suitemates and are subject to all room visitation guidelines among couples. Likewise, students who are involved in a romantic relationship may not live on the same dorm floor, when possible.

The Executive Director reserves the right to change room assignments to promote or preserve the public peace, order or tranquility of the school, or the health, morals, or education of the students, where the student's presence would serve to adversely affect, or hinder, the academic development of other students and for safety, repairs, disciplinary actions, and irreconcilable incompatibility of roommates. (Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-3) Staff may also consolidate vacancies by requiring a resident to move from a single occupancy to double accommodations.



Sharing a room with someone who has similar interests and characteristics is important. To facilitate this process, students will receive a Student Profile Form during the registration process. Residential life staff will analyze data provided on the form to help identify compatible roommates.

Students may request a roommate change if deemed necessary. However, no request for change will be honored until students have demonstrated a good faith effort to resolve their differences. No roommate changes will be considered until after the first three weeks of each school year. A student wishing to change roommates must discuss the situation with the Director of Residential Life. Students will not be permitted a requested room change more than one time per semester. School officials may move a student temporarily or permanently due to documented medical conditions, or if it is deemed helpful to the student, roommate, and/or suitemates.

The Director of Residential Life will make all final decisions regarding room assignments. At the end of the spring semester, juniors who will return for their senior year may select the room and roommate for the following year. The Director of Residential Life will design the process for roommate selection.

## Residential Suites

The Student Life Center features five suites with two rooms per floor with a shared bath (Floors 3-8). The bath area features a private shower and toilet with a separate mirrored dressing area with double sinks, storage shelves, and drawers. Each floor has one suite that is handicapped accessible.

MSA provides basic furniture for each room including two bunk beds and a single loft bed with an attached desk, two additional desks, chairs, wardrobes (a built-in unit with drawers and hanging space, one lockable section, mirrors, and shelves). Room furnishings include blinds. Students may be given permission to rearrange their furniture under warranted circumstances, but all MSA furniture must remain in the room. Upon move out, furniture must be returned to its original location. For safety reasons, bed must not be debunked without paying a fine for reassembly. Students may not move furniture from other areas of the residence hall into suites. Due to increased enrollment and limited space, students may not bring additional furniture for their rooms. Students must not place objects on the windows that are visible from the outside.

Students may decorate their rooms according to their own good judgment providing that they do not make structural alterations, damage facilities in any way, and follow current fire and safety guidelines.

Students **are required** to provide the following items for their own use: towels, washcloths, and bathmats; sheets, pillowcases, blankets, mattress covers, and pillows; hangers; an alarm clock; separate from a cell phone; laundry products; cleaning products; personal care items (including toilet paper); shower curtain; garbage can; a surge protector and school supplies.

The following items are optional: bed spread or comforter; under-the-bed storage boxes; umbrella; clothes iron with automatic shut-off; ironing board; laundry bag or basket; desk lamp; posters or pictures for the wall; radio/CD/tape player; personal one-cup coffee makers without a hotplate; personal computer; and printer.

To ensure the safety of students, the [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#) reserves the right to prohibit specific items. The following list is not intended to be exhaustive. Students may not possess the following in residential suites or anywhere on campus:

1. Cast-off furniture and other items, materials, and/or clothing retrieved from the trash, off the street, or in public dumpsters. For health and safety reasons, dumpster diving is forbidden.
2. Motorized scooters;
3. Cooking appliances including, but not limited to: microwave oven, popcorn popper, hot plate, toaster, toaster oven, coffeemakers with a hot plate, [or](#) heating coils;
4. Dangerous scientific equipment;
5. Spray paint, fixatives, or other harmful aerosols;
6. Solvents or other flammable liquids (e.g., turpentine, mineral spirits, [or](#) denatured alcohol), lighter fluid;

7. Toxic glues, cements, or other adhesives;
8. Darts, dartboards, and dart guns;
9. Shot glasses, empty alcohol containers used as decorations, alcoholic drink mixers and/or bottles;
10. Exercise weights such as dumbbells;
11. Halogen lights;
12. Ice chests or coolers;
13. Incense, incense burners or open flame items such as matches, cigarette lighters, fireworks, candles, or candle warmers;
14. Extension cords without surge protection;
15. String lights;
16. Martial arts equipment, boxing bags, toy guns, and toy knives;
17. Pets of any kind;
18. Public signs including, but not limited to, highway, traffic, business, or parking; and
19. Weapons including knives with serrated or sharpened edges, razor blades, straight edge razors, box cutters, X-acto knives, multipurpose tools, tattoo equipment, piercing equipment, and novelty advertising tools/items with sharp blades.

Since visual and performing arts students may have projects that require the use of tool items listed above, special permission may be granted when properly used under the supervision of an adult. **However, if items such as those detailed in the last section of the list above will be treated as weapons when they are found in a student's room or in their possession.**

## Personal Property

The [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#) assumes no responsibility for any personal property brought to the school campus by students. Extremely valuable items, family keepsakes, or substantial amounts of cash should not be brought to campus. Lost, damaged, or stolen property may result from failure to secure items properly in a locked space, lock bathroom and hallway doors to the dorm room, or leaving personal items in common areas, in classrooms, or on the campus grounds. Students must assume responsibility for caring for their own property. See "Lost and Found" section below.

## Posters, Pictures, and Advertisements

Advertisements for alcoholic beverages or tobacco products are prohibited, including images that entice one to use them. No poster, picture, advertisement, or other image shall encourage illegal drug use, profanity, or pornography. Images may not depict nude or partially nude individuals. All persons in images must be clothed in nontransparent material. Images and/or wording must not contain double entendres. Decorations are allowed. However, since lounges, and hallways are common areas, decorative items must not express personal opinions that are political, religious, or controversial. Decorations in rooms must not belittle, offend, or denigrate any individual or group as outlined in the section on harassment. Life-size displays are prohibited. The residential life staff shall determine whether an item will remain on display. Students must hang posters or other decorations with a product approved by MSA. Tape or adhesives that damage walls, floors, or ceilings shall not be used. Staples, masking tape, or glue shall not be used on the door or walls. Ceiling tiles shall not be adjusted or moved to hang posters and other objects from the ceiling. Pictures, objects, or posters shall not be placed on windows for outside display.

## Refrigerators

The following regulations govern the use of refrigerators in the dorm:

- a) Each room may opt to bring a refrigerator. Roommates or suitemates may share a refrigerator and should mutually agree on whether they will financially share the cost of the item or if one person will pay for it and allow others to use it.
- b) The maximum size of the refrigerator must not exceed 3.1 cubic feet. Students must keep refrigerators clean and free of spoiled food; regular inspections will occur during weekly room checks.
- c) MSA staff may examine all items in refrigerators without notice.

## Bed Bugs

Any student concerned about his or her residence having bed bugs should contact the school immediately. **Students should not clean their room or belongings until an inspector can determine if there are any signs of bed bugs. If possible, students should try to retrieve a sample bug with clear tape for the exterminator to examine.**

1. Exterminator should inspect the residence.
  - While not required, students are encouraged to be present during the inspection by the exterminator.
  - Students who report suspected bed bugs on a workday when the exterminator can be dispatched within 24 hours may be asked not to relocate to or visit any other room until their room can be inspected by the exterminator. This is CRUCIAL so that we can prevent the spread of bed bugs if they are found to be in a student's room and belongings.
  - Students may not, at any time, deny the exterminator or staff access to their living spaces (including bedrooms, common area, kitchen, bathroom, [and](#) etc.)
  - Since bedbugs are treatable, the school will not facilitate permanent room changes for these situations.
2. If the exterminator cannot find any evidence of bed bugs, the room will not be chemically treated; a glue board may be installed to monitor activity. The student will be asked to continue monitoring their living space, and to notify staff immediately if there are further concerns.

If the exterminator confirms the presence of bed bugs, the school will contact the parents and will provide the affected student(s) and their family with a detailed list of instructions for the removal and laundering of their personal items. Bed bugs are a serious community issue, and ALL students are expected to comply with instructions given to them within 24 hours once bed bugs have been confirmed within their living space.

## Common Areas

**Common Areas** are defined as shared spaces that may be located within a dorm room, a suite, on a dormitory floor, or in areas on the first and second non-residential floors. Common areas may also include dining areas, hallways, lounges on each floor, fitness center, library, laundry room, classrooms, and other areas of the campus.

**Common Areas in a Suite:** All roommates are responsible for items found or damage done in their individual dorm rooms unless it is clearly substantiated that only one person is liable. In the common bathroom area, all residents of the suite may be held accountable. Fines may be issued during the semester for student damage to MSA facilities. Payment must be made within 30 days of issuance in the Y-Hut.

**Common Areas on a Dorm Floor:** Publicly shared spaces on the dormitory floors are the elevator lobbies, hallways, and lounges on each residential level.

**Common Areas—Passageways and Restrooms:** Stairwells to dorm floors, hallways, and restrooms outside suites are considered commonly shared spaces that may be gender specific. Students must refrain from leaving personal possessions in any of these areas. Students are also not permitted to loiter or sit in hallways and stairwells.

**Common Areas—First and Second Floors of the SLC:** Common areas of the non-residential floors of the dorm are (1) First Floor—Entrance lobby, cafeteria serving and dining areas, lounge (TV and pool table area), laundry room; and (2) Second Floor—the lobby, lounge (TV area), Library, the Fitness Center, and post office box area outside the Technology Office. Visitors are not allowed in the Fitness Center or in the Laundry Room without permission from Residence Life Staff.

**Common Areas—Educational Spaces:** Common areas that are educational in nature include all instructional areas of Johnson Institute, the Library, and Lampton Auditorium. Visitors are allowed in these areas for tours by appointment, exhibits, performances, tutoring, and/or open house events.

**Common Areas—Campus Grounds:** The patio outside the cafeteria, seating areas in front of the SLC and throughout the campus are considered common areas. Students shall remain in lighted areas that are supervised by adults when visitors are on campus. Students shall not remain in vehicles or loiter in parking areas.

### Laundry Room

For the convenience of residents, washers and dryers are provided but students must provide ~~his or her~~ their own laundry products and quarters for use. Students who use the laundry room are responsible for keeping it clean. Items brought to the laundry room should not remain in the laundry room beyond the time it takes to complete the wash and dry cycle. If clothes are left in the machines, the clothes may be taken out, placed in a plastic bag, and taken to the Residential Life Office. If the same student leaves clothes in the laundry room habitually, disciplinary actions will occur. Students should not start laundry within 30 minutes of room check. If so, the machine may continue, but the clothes will have to be retrieved the next morning. The [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) accepts no responsibility for clothing, laundry products, or other personal items left unattended in the laundry room. **Clothing left in the laundry room longer than 24 hours will be moved to lost and found and donated to charity if not claimed in a timely manner. Laundry Room hours are Sunday through Thursday 6:30 a.m. until 9:30 p.m. and Saturday from 6:30 a.m. until 11:30 p.m. The laundry room is not a place where students visit, study, or hang out. The door must remain open and the lights on while the room is in use.**

### Fitness Center

For the convenience of residents, cardiovascular and free weight equipment is available for student use in the fitness center only. Exercise equipment, videos, mats, and other items are available in the fitness center as part of the student wellness plan. Visitors are not allowed in the fitness center. Students must use equipment only for exercise and are not allowed to sit on equipment. Food or drink is not allowed in the fitness center except for water.

### Visual Art Room – SLC

A room has been designated on the second floor of the Student Life Center for students to make art. This room is available to avoid damages to the campus or living areas. Any student who has a need to make artwork can request use of the space. This is not to be used as a congregation area and students must remain on task. Students are required to clean their area prior to departure. The privilege to use the space can be revoked for failure to clean or use the space for which it was intended.

### Lost and Found

The common areas of the campus—including classrooms and studios—must be shared by all persons on campus and therefore must be kept clean and free of debris and clutter. Student possessions (e.g., clothing, books, supplies, projects, music, games, [and](#) CDs/DVDs) left unattended on campus will be placed in Lost and Found—a storage area designated by the Student Life Center staff. **After 30 days, items that are not claimed may be donated to a charity or discarded. Common areas are not storage spaces for student belongings.**

### Televisions and Video Equipment

There is a television and a DVD player in each lounge on floors 3-8 in the Student Life Center. A wide-screen television is also located in the first-floor dining/commons area. All televisions are connected to the local cable network and offer expanded cable channels. Televisions are also located in the library, classroom, and administrative buildings.

Students who bring personal or rented videotapes or DVDs for use in the public areas of the residence hall must obtain approval from the Director of Residential Life, Assistant Dorm Supervisor, or a Resident Counselor **before** viewing. Staff members have the authority to prohibit viewing specific videotapes or DVDs, and television programs or channels if the content is deemed offensive or inappropriate. Students who store personal items such as CDs, DVDs, videotapes, and electronic games and equipment in the dormitory lounges do so at their own risk. Because the primary function of the [Mississippi School of the Arts](#) MSA is educational, television, video, and DVD watching and video games are prohibited on the first and second floors of the Student Life Center between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. including meal times on school days. Exceptions will be made for morning news broadcasts played at a very low volume.

#### **Standard Telephone and Internet Access in Dorm Rooms**

Each suite in the Student Life Center is wired for telephone and Internet access. One (1) phone outlet per room is provided in each room of the suite. Guidelines for phone and Internet usage are as follows:

1. MSA provides one phone for dorm rooms. Landline phones are necessary to facilitate timely communication with faculty, staff, administration, and families. Answering machines are not allowed.
2. MSA provides local access only.
3. **Incoming Phone service will be discontinued after lights out.** At that time, all calls will be forwarded to the Security Office. In case of emergencies after lights out, parents may contact students by calling campus security (601-823-1350). During the school day, call the SLC desk, 601-823-1356 or Main Office, (601) 823-1300.
4. MSA reserves the right to charge students for expenses incurred due to damaged telephone wiring, phone jacks, or misuse of telephone privileges and access. If unauthorized phone charges are made to MSA accounts, a \$25.00 handling charge will be assessed in addition to the amount for billed services.
5. All persons, including parents, should refrain from calling students during academic class time, scheduled activities, and study hours, or after lights out.

#### **Musical Instruments and Speakers**

To accommodate study in the performing arts, clavichords are in the elevator lobby areas of the multiple residential floors for practice. Care must be taken to ensure that the instruments remain in good repair. Students who own instruments must observe guidelines for study hours and quiet times in relation to noise. No instrument may be played after room check unless earphones can be used to prevent noise that can be heard by others. Playing instruments in the common areas on the first and second floors is subject to approval by the residential life staff. Students must not take musical instruments into the library and instructional areas. Only with advance written approval from the instructor will exceptions be made.

Speakers are permitted with computer equipment in the student rooms. Amplifiers for musical instruments and speakers may be used on a case-by-case basis with approval by the staff and the roommates. If noise/music can be heard in the hallway with the door closed, it is too loud. Noise complaints may result in disciplinary action or removal of the speakers from the room.

#### **Moving in and Out of the Student Life Center**

##### **Moving In**

Upon arrival in the Student Life Center, the residential life staff will accompany each student to inspect the assigned room in order to record existing damage on a Room Condition Form. Within the first week, students may inform the Residential Life Office if additional damage should be added to the form. After the first week, damage to the room or furniture will be charged to the room occupant(s). Students must report others who cause damage to the residence hall. At the end of the semester, staff will inspect the room with the student(s) to assess damages that might have occurred. MSA will determine charges and communicate them to students and their parents in writing prior to leaving for the semester break or the end of the year.

Upon arrival, each student receives a room key. Students must keep room doors locked at all times and keep their keys in their possession at all times. To ensure safety, MSA staff may conduct random checks to secure unlocked doors. Students whose doors are found unlocked may receive disciplinary action. If students lose their keys, they must pay to replace the lock cylinder and key immediately. Residence hall keys are MSA property; duplication is prohibited.

### **Moving Out**

Students must remove their belongings and check out of the Student Life Center on the last day of final exams. The room must be clean, the Room Condition Form completed by the Resident Counselor, and the key returned. (There will be a fine for the loss of keys.) During checkout, the Resident Counselor will assess fines for room or furniture damages. If a parent or guardian does not accompany a student who is moving out of the dorm for the summer or withdrawing from enrollment at MSA, written permission must be provided.

### **Housekeeping in Suites and Student Life Center Common Areas**

Students are responsible for cleaning their rooms. A weekly inspection will occur. If deemed necessary, the Resident Counselor may inspect rooms more frequently to maintain a healthy living environment for everyone. **Failure to pass room inspection will result in issuance of a disciplinary referral and early curfew until the room is clean.** Although inspections occur weekly, basic cleanliness is expected at all times. Suitemates must use the **Weekly Restroom Cleaning Checklist** for distribution of duties in shared areas. All rooms will undergo a full inspection after students leave the building for holidays and extended weekends. Room inspections include, but are not limited to:

1. Cleaning and straightening all areas of student rooms. These areas include beds (under the beds), wardrobes (top surfaces and inside drawers and hanging spaces), desks, chairs, refrigerators, vents, windows, blinds, floors, woodwork, and other items a student has brought into the room;
2. Ensuring that there are no unauthorized items in the room or bath and that trash has been removed; unauthorized items will be confiscated and disciplinary action referred to the Principal or Executive Director;
3. Checking to make certain that the shared bathroom areas are clean and free from dirty laundry and trash. Floors, sinks, toilets, showers, and countertops must be clean and orderly. The room should smell fresh and clean;
4. Being ready for random room checks that may be held by any administrator without notice. Disciplinary referrals may be issued when random checks are made and the condition of the room or suite is unacceptable.
5. Cleaning equipment is available on each floor. Students should provide their own cleaning and personal hygiene supplies that may be kept in individual suites for student rooms. MSA will provide supplies for common areas only. MSA does not provide soap, shampoo, or other personal hygiene items. All personal items must be removed from shower stall after each use. All who live in the Student Life Center must assist with general housekeeping by cleaning up after themselves and reporting problems. In order to fulfill all or part of assigned campus work service obligations, students may have to clean the common areas of the residence hall.

### **Energy Conservation and Recycling**

Since students pay no tuition and limited room and board expenses while enrolled at the [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#), they are responsible for being good stewards of school, state, and natural resources. The dormitory and instructional buildings are climate controlled and maintained at a healthy year-round temperature from a central location. Students may assist in conserving energy by making certain that all lights, radios, stereos, computers, and bathroom heaters are turned off when they leave the room each day and on weekends when they go home. **When random room checks occur, students may be charged a fine when equipment is left on after residents have vacated the premises for the day or weekend. All roommates and/or suitemates will be charged for offenses that occur in common areas.**

In a concerted effort to recycle as many resources as possible, all students are encouraged to conserve the following items that are collected for delivery to area vendors who work in partnership with school staff in receiving items for recycling. MSA recycles the following items: plastic drink bottles, soft drink and juice cans, white office paper, ~~and~~ cardboard, and plastic grocery bags. All students and staff members are responsible for helping keep MSA “green.” Students are expected to use the containers provided for depositing these reusable resources.

### **Food Deliveries to the Dorm**

Food deliveries to the dormitory are prohibited after 9:30 p.m. Sunday through Thursday nights and after 11:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights. It is recommended that students should be prepared to tip delivery drivers a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) above the cost of the food.

### **Off Campus—Permission and Sign Out**

Going off campus to shop or participate in community events is permitted and sometimes necessary. Leaving campus entails getting permission and signing out in the residence hall office. When signing out, staff members review with the student the destination and duration of the occasion. Students should allow themselves enough time to complete their business off campus but should not overestimate the duration to the point of excessiveness. Students must have a legitimate purpose and destination when seeking permission to leave campus. To promote student safety, generally off campus trips are limited to less than four hours. MSA staff reserves the right to permit or deny requests to leave campus. **All students must present their student identification cards when they check in and out of the dorm. Students may not sign out of the dorm before 8:00 a.m. without prior written permission, from the Executive Director, Director of Residential Life, or Assistant Dorm Supervisor.**

On weekends when all students must be off campus, they may return to the dorm no earlier than 5:00 p.m. Since the next day after an away weekend is a school day, it is recommended that students return no later than 7:00. **However, students must return to the dorm in time to be on their dorm floors before curfew.** Students who will not return to campus by 9:00 p.m. must have a parent contact the Student Life Center staff to make them aware. Calls will be made to parents if students do not return to campus by 9:00 p.m. Upon returning to campus students must sign in immediately. MSA allows students broad privileges regarding signing out. Basic integrity and honesty of students will determine the extent of off campus privileges.

There are several ways of going off campus —~~including~~ walking with a guest and with staff on school-sponsored trips. For each occasion the student must sign out. Many stores, banks, and restaurants are located within a short walk from the MSA campus. Students may walk off campus anytime during the school week or on weekends during daylight hours by properly signing out but are expected to stay on designated walkways. Due to safety considerations, guidelines have been developed and are to be closely followed. All students walking should be in groups of two or more. The designated walking areas are as illustrated in the **MSA Walking Guide** which students will receive at orientation. Other walking locations may be approved as specific needs arise. Time limits are dictated by the student's privilege plan designation.

Signing out to an authorized destination entails specific responsibilities. If a student who has signed out overnight wishes to change the approved destination, the student must notify the Director of Residential Life for approval.

To ensure student safety and well-being, if a student wishes to leave campus overnight during on-campus weekends—even to travel home—*written parental permission is required in advance.*

**Please direct all communications regarding student permissions to the Student Life Center, not the Y-Hut,** since the administrative office is only open Monday—Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Do not send e-mail to individual accounts. Use the general residential life e-mail that can be accessed by all staff members.

**SLC Fax Number:** 601-823-1546  
**SLC E-Mail:** msaresidential@msabrookhaven.org

To communicate frequently with parents and to help ensure student safety, the Residential Life Staff will mail a copy of student sign out cards at the end of each month. Parents are encouraged to make certain that their child is fulfilling their expectations in relation to leaving campus. Special events, such as Prom, may have different sign in/out procedures.

### **Food Services**

The [Mississippi School of the Arts](#) MSA provides meals at no cost to all students. MSA participates in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, which requires specific guidelines to be followed for meals served. To maximize available resources,, parents/guardians of all students should complete **Free/Reduced Meal Application** for students who may qualify. MSA will then receive reimbursement from USDA based on the student's meal status. It can provide MSA with federal school lunch funds and donated commodities as well as information for other grant opportunities.

Students are encouraged to make healthy food choices at meals that follow USDA guidance. They must present their ID cards at each meal and conduct themselves appropriately in the dining room. Students should be dressed according to MSA dress code when in the Food Service/Cafeteria area. Weekday and weekend mealtimes will be posted. The schedule for cafeteria service may vary in accordance with class schedules and special events.

### **U.S. Postal Services**

The downtown branch of the Brookhaven Post Office is located directly across Cherokee Street from Mary Jane Lampton Auditorium. Regular postal services are available at this site. Mail on the MSA campus is provided for in locked U.S. Postal Service mailboxes on the second floor of the Student Life Center. Mailbox numbers and keys will be distributed at registration. Lost keys or those that are not returned will result in a fine. Packages received may be picked up in the Residential Life office. Outgoing mail should be deposited in the designated location in the Residential Life Office. Mail should be addressed as follows:

(Name of Student)  
MSA Student Life Center  
355 West Monticello Street  
Box (Student's Box Number)  
Brookhaven, MS 39601

### **Religious Services**

MSA recognizes that students may wish to attend religious services. Students may arrange to attend a religious institution of their choice. Many are within walking distance of the campus. Students are allowed, with parental permission, to attend religious activities throughout the week so long as it does not interfere with required MSA activities.

### **Financial Services**

**Students should not carry large sums of cash.** Several banks are within walking distance where students may open a checking or savings account.

Students may wish to bring traveler's checks to establish a local account. Many of the Brookhaven banks have statewide branches and if a student's family is already associated with one, it may be possible to arrange through that bank.

MSA does not assume responsibility for monitoring student financial practices. Students must handle personal finances in accordance with parental wishes and using good judgment. MSA policy stipulates that staff members shall not cosign, manage, or monitor student bank accounts.



Students will need cash for use in coin-operated washers and dryers in the laundry room. **MSA has a change machine for students use in the laundry or vending machines.**

## **Student Activities**

The Office of Residential Life schedules a range of activities. Board and table games, intramurals, dances, parties, movie nights, concerts, shows and plays are examples of activities available to students. Intramural competitions such as pool, ping-pong, basketball, and volleyball occur throughout the year. Trips out of town and/or out of state will be possible for shopping, entertainment, concerts, performances, or museum visits.

Many of the activities offered by MSA are free of charge. When the number of participants is limited, students may be asked to sign up and pay a small fee. The fee may be forfeited if the student fails to go on the trip. Occasionally, students will be asked to pay the price of admission to special events. Any student needing help to pay for a ticket should talk with the Director of Residential Life. Suggestions for activities from students are sought and encouraged through various committees or by simply passing on the suggestion to one of the staff.

All activities that will be held on the MSA campus require approval by the Executive Director before planning and implementation. Persons interested in suggesting an activity must complete an **Activity Proposal Form** that includes a description of what will occur and the signature of an adult who has agreed to sponsor the event. Seeking approval in advance and scheduling activities on the master calendar prevents double booking and conflicts with rehearsals, performances, or other mandatory school experiences. **To ensure and maintain artistic excellence at MSA, a staff member with arts expertise and experience must sponsor all arts-related activities.**

## **Dances and Prom**

Dances are held often at MSA. All dances are scheduled on campus at the Student Life Center or in Lampton Auditorium. As a special privilege, students may invite outside guests unless the event is designated as "MSA Only." An MSA student who is currently enrolled must accompany any outside guest(s). MSA students must make his or her guests aware of the rules and regulations. Violation of school rules may result in the guest's removal and prohibition from campus. Written permission for outside guest(s) must be received from the MSA student's parent/guardian and be on file in the Residential Life Office at least 24 hours prior to the dance.

Prom is a formal event celebrated every spring. Guests must follow the rules for school dances. Because of the unique nature of prom, additional policies may be in effect. No outside guest will be allowed to stay overnight. Alumni are not allowed to attend the prom unless they are the date of a current MSA student. Students must be present at least 63% of the school day prior to or the day of any school function, including prom.

## **Campus Service**

**All MSA students will contribute to the school through required hall cleaning duties on their dorm floors as specified in the section entitled "Floor Duty" of this handbook.** While duties may vary widely depending on human resources needed at MSA and duties appropriate for students—both residential and commuting—juniors and seniors who receive disciplinary referrals must fulfill campus work service hours and tasks assigned. Assignments may include office or studio assistance, cleaning common areas of the campus, gardening, or general yard work, working in the library, [and](#) etc. Those students who volunteer to perform campus work service are rewarded with bonus points on their Privilege Plans.

Each nine-week grading period and interim reporting period, staff will determine the total amount of campus work service performed by the student. Failure to complete campus work service will impact privilege plans.

## Community Service

In addition to campus work service, community service offers opportunities that extend beyond the school campus to build partnerships within the Brookhaven/Lincoln County area. Some club memberships and the MS Scholars Program require a minimum number of community service hours. Community service will occur during nonacademic hours. This service can be important to the overall reputation of the school, and the quality of the work done by the students exemplifies pride in MSA. All students are encouraged to participate in community service activities. However, community service is optional. Duties may range from being a mentor for a local junior high or elementary school student to working with a civic club or organization. Students who commit to community service must fulfill their obligations and are responsible for making alternate arrangements when on a field trip, sick, or on extended weekends by rescheduling commitments. Students must fulfill their obligations personally, punctually, and adequately.

## Counseling Program

*The ~~Mississippi School of the Arts~~ MSA counseling program supports the mission of the Mississippi School of the Arts by providing excellent academic, college admissions, and career counseling.* The MSA professional school counselor works cooperatively with the MSA faculty, administration, and staff to support and enhance the holistic growth of MSA students.

The MSA counseling framework is based on a wellness philosophy, which emphasizes a developmental approach to working with the whole (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, and social) student. Self-responsibility is at the core of wellness, and logical and natural consequences are considered to be strong motivations for behavioral change and maintenance.

Confidentiality is an essential requirement in a counseling relationship. Confidentiality will be maintained except as required under State and Federal law. MSA does not have a licensed mental health professional on campus. Students experiencing mental health concerns that require more than school-based counseling support will need to seek outside mental health professionals for assistance at the parent/guardian(s) expense.

## Location & Hours

The office of the MSA counselor is in the Helen Furlow Scruggs Y-Hut building. The MSA Counseling Center is open from 8 AM to 4:00 PM and at other times by appointment or in the event of an emergency. The MSA counselor is available to students, parents and MSA faculty and staff.

## Adjustment Efforts

Making the transition to the ~~Mississippi School of the Arts~~ MSA involves adjustments. Students face the challenges of living away of home, homesickness, dealing with a more intense and difficult academic schedule, living with a roommate in a residential environment, and forming new relationships. Most of these adjustments are positive but change always brings a degree of stress. Orientation programs at the beginning of the year, group meetings, and individual assistance are provided to help students make a successful transition. The MSA counselor works with the residential life staff, teachers, and administrators to address student concerns in a supportive and solution-focused team approach.

## Academic Counseling

At the beginning of the school year, the MSA counselor offers workshops in time management and study skills development. Individual and group academic counseling is available to help students refine skills. Teachers may refer students, or students may refer themselves. MSA has a network of peer tutors and professional tutors who work individually with students having problems in specific courses. MSA is committed to serving students who have documented special needs. Parents/guardians of students with special needs should request services as soon as possible after admission and notify MSA of any existing Section 504 Plan and/or Individualized Education Program (IEP) for the student.

## College Admissions & Career

All students at the [Mississippi School of the Arts](#) MSA are considered to be college bound. Students attend workshops and individual meetings for college admissions and career guidance and to receive scholarship and financial aid information. ACT prep workshops are offered regularly; some are free, and some require a fee. All juniors are given the opportunity to take the PSAT in October of each year at the student's expense to participate in the National Merit/Achievement Scholarship Programs. All juniors are given the opportunity to take the ACT in spring each year at the expense of the State of Mississippi as long as funding allows. Admissions representatives from many in-state and out-of-state colleges and universities coordinate their visits to campus each year through the MSA counselor.

## Personal & Mental Health Counseling

Creatively gifted students sometimes experience intense feelings and need to talk about them. Moreover, unexpected events happen in life. Students experience loss or other adverse contingencies that may knock them off balance or turn their world upside-down. Students can also seek support individually from the MSA Counselor as needed. If further psychological assessment or services are needed, parents/guardians are expected to seek support for their students from mental health professionals. MSA can provide referrals for local professionals to consult at the parent's expense. MSA has an agreement with Region 8 for crisis counseling as needed.

The safety and wellbeing of students are of the utmost importance to MSA. In addition to physical maladies, MSA recognizes that students may also have mental health concerns. Some of these concerns may be normal, transitional issues to the academic rigors and residential environment. Others may be of a more severe and long-term nature. Regardless of the specific concerns, MSA always attempts to make reasonable and appropriate measures to accommodate students on an individual basis in the least restrictive environment. For example, a junior may be struggling with homesickness during the first nine weeks of the year, so this student might only need a few sessions with his/her school counselor to adjust to being a part of the MSA community. Another student may be involved in a serious automobile accident, and he/she may need a referral to an outside mental health counselor and a physician for medication to cope successfully with the traumatic event.

Under any circumstance, MSA will seek to act in the best interest of the affected student and the general student population. Decisions will not be made in isolation, and parents/guardians, school counselors, and outside mental health professionals may all be consulted along with the student in determining the most reasonable and appropriate action according to the circumstances.

Every effort will be made to maintain the student's enrollment at MSA, but there are situations in which the evidence suggests MSA may not be the best environment for a particular student. These situations are usually related to the student's capacity to perform successfully, to remain safe, and to function independently in both the academic and residential settings of MSA. In summary, MSA values the mental wellbeing of all its students, and its officials will do their best to help students make the most of this "opportunity for excellence."

## Suicide Prevention

~~Students experiencing suicidal ideation are required to seek immediate assistance from staff to ensure safety in a residential environment. All staff are trained on suicide prevention. Additionally, reports should be made to staff if students have information that others are or have been experiencing suicidal ideation. MSA Crisis Manual provides protocols for suicide ideations, attempts, and action to guide the staff in their response to a need. All staff are trained on suicide prevention.~~ For more information about services or if you or a loved one needs help, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), Department of Mental Health Helpline at 1-877-210-8513, or visit [www.dmh.ms.gov/shatter-the-silence/](http://www.dmh.ms.gov/shatter-the-silence/)

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## Technology

### Acceptable Use Policy

The School is pleased to offer to its students, faculty, and staff access to the Internet in accordance with the terms and conditions of this policy. All users of the internet access must comply with the school's Acceptable Use Policy. It is important that all users understand the terms, conditions, and responsibilities associated with the use of the internet access. All users and parents of all users under the age of 18 are required to sign the Handbook Contract stating they carefully read and understand the terms and conditions of the Acceptable Use Policy and will comply with the policy while using the school's computer network resources. The Handbook Contract is a legally binding document and must be signed prior to the User accessing the Internet.

This policy governs the use of all computers, computer-based communication networks and all related information technology equipment administered by MSA. A user is defined as any person employed by MSA, which includes full-time, part-time, temporary, or contract employees—persons who are employed by contractors or subcontractors of MSA—and any other individuals who are authorized to access or use agency information systems including students, parents, prospective students, and project volunteers. The electronic communications and facilities of MSA are the property of the State and by using these facilities the user acknowledges consent to abide by this policy. These facilities and resources are to be used for School business purposes.

MSA has taken available precautions to eliminate controversial material. However, it is impossible for MSA to restrict access to all controversial materials. Parents/Guardians agree not to hold MSA responsible for materials acquired by students on the network. Parents/Guardians accept full responsibility for supervision of each child's Internet access when their use is not in a school setting. Further, Parents/Guardians full responsibility for their child's use of property of MSA. Parents give their permission for MSA to provide computer network and Internet access to each child and consent to the monitoring of each child's computer and Internet activities by MSA. All conditions of the Acceptable Use Policy also apply to the use of the dormitory network, DormNet.

### CIPA

In December 2000, Congress enacted the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). For any school or library that receives discounts for Internet access or for internal connections, CIPA imposes certain requirements. The CIPA requires that schools restrict employee and student access to the Internet. Under the CIPA, covered schools must have an Internet safety program which filters both adult and student access to visual depictions that are obscene or constitute child pornography. The program must also prevent students from accessing materials that are harmful to minors.

The school receives these discounts for Internet Access through the E-Rate program and is therefore in compliance with the CIPA. Key terms for this policy are defined by the Children's Internet Protection Act.

**In compliance with CIPA 2008 updates, all students at the [Mississippi School of the Arts](#) MSA are educated about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites [and](#), in chat rooms, and in cyberbullying awareness and response.**

### COPPA

The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), effective April 21, 2000, applies to online collection of personal information from children under the age of 13, such as full name, home address, email address, telephone number or any other information that would allow someone to identify or contact the child. The Final Rule issued by the Federal Trade Commission spells out what a Web site operator must include in a privacy policy, when and how to seek verifiable consent from a parent, and what responsibilities an operator has to protect children privacy and safety online.

## Education, Supervision and Monitoring

Technology is utilized extensively at MSA. Formal communication to students will be done via e-mail to student MSA e-mail accounts, assigned to each student upon entrance to MSA. Visits from college admissions representatives, scholarship and summer program opportunities, and college entrance test deadlines are announced electronically. Students who do not check their e-mail daily may miss important opportunities. Student and parent resources can be found on the MSA counseling website.

It shall be the responsibility of all members of the [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#) staff to educate, supervise and monitor appropriate usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy, the Children's Internet Protection Act, the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act, and the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act.

Procedures for the disabling or otherwise modifying any technology protection measures shall be the responsibility of The Technology Coordinator or designated representatives. The [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#) or designated representatives will provide age-appropriate training for students who use the [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#) Internet facilities. The training provided will be designed to promote the [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA's](#) commitment to:

- I. The standards and acceptable use of Internet services as set forth in [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA's](#) Acceptable Use Policy;
- II. Student safety regarding:
  - a. the Internet;
  - b. appropriate behavior while on online, on social networking web sites, and in chat rooms; and,
  - c. cyber bullying awareness and response (see also the Anti-Bullying policy regarding expectations of electronic usage); and-
- III. Compliance with the E-rate requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act ("CIPA").

Following receipt of this training, the student will acknowledge that he/she received the training, understood it, and will follow the provisions of the District's acceptable use policies.

## Network and Computer Usage on Campus

The [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#) campus computer network is referred to as MSANet. The optional network service in dorm rooms is referred to as DormNet.

The MSANet usage policies are designed to provide an environment that is consistent with the MSA mission and vision, Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) requirements, and federal/state laws. MSANet refers to devices attached to the entire computer network system at the [Mississippi School of the Arts MSA](#). MSANet includes but is not limited to the Local Area Network (LAN on campus), all MSA file servers, and access to the Internet.

MSANet facilities and network connections are for providing educational computing support to students, faculty, and staff. Under federal statutes and the sections of the Mississippi Code, which govern the use of these resources, all users must use the MSANet resources properly and for the purpose designated by the legislature. Students, faculty, and staff must follow all existing federal and state laws and MSA regulations and policies that apply, including those specific to computers, networks, and websites, and those that may apply generally to personal conduct.

MSA reserves the right to monitor the system for signs of illegal or unauthorized activity. Even though the MSA **Acceptable Use** Policy may not expressly prohibit an activity, such behavior may not be permissible. The Technology Coordinator may delete files deemed necessary. For questions related to appropriate use, contact the Technology Coordinator.

## Inappropriate Network Usage

To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the

[Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#) online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications.

Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: (a) unauthorized access, including so-called 'hacking,' and other unlawful activities; and (b) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

## Student Responsibilities

As MSANet account holders, students should:

1. Be owners of their data and keep account information confidential;
2. Provide a personal USB flash memory device for school use in storing personal files and moving them from one computer to another. Other marketing terms used for these devices are "thumb drive" or "jump drive;"
3. Be responsible for ensuring that their data is adequately backed up and protected against unauthorized access;
4. Notify the Office of Technology to change their personal password when they suspect it has been compromised;
5. Report suspected violations of technology guidelines to the Technology Coordinator.
6. **Remember**, no information stored, produced, or transmitted in any way on devices that contact the MSANet or DormNet networks is to be considered confidential or private in any way. **ALL** information is subject to monitoring and examination for appropriate content at any time. This **INCLUDES** personally owned disks or devices used in conjunction with the MSANet or DormNet networks. Any such item must be surrendered on demand to any school official that requests it for examination. This specifically includes the personal flash drives required by each student.
7. Remain in good standing as a student at the [Mississippi School of the ArtsMSA](#). When students are suspended, or otherwise no longer in regular routine attendance, permission to use school resources may be removed, and access to the school and its systems may be denied until the student returns to school in good standing. Students who are dismissed or expelled automatically forfeit all access to school technological resources.

## Personal Computers and Peripheral Devices

In general, students may not connect their own computers, peripherals, or technological devices to the MSA network. This includes such devices as external drives, iPods, cell phones, smart phones, digitizing tablets, and etc. However, students may connect thumb drives to the system for purposes of storing and retrieving their own personal data.

If a student has a special school project that requires connection of non-MSA equipment or devices to the school network, the **Technology Coordinator** will aid on an individual basis. A student who needs such accommodations should meet with the technology coordinator well in advance of deadlines to seek permission and arrange for connection. The **Technology Coordinator** has the final authority to decide permissions on a case-by-case basis and set specifications and timelines for network access.

Students who choose to have their own computers in a dorm room must:

1. Provide the computer and all necessary accessories to allow it to function and ensure that it is configured by the student and/or parent in compliance with safety protocols;
2. Understand that that the resources of the MSA technology staff are for official school purposes only and cannot install or repair equipment, hardware, or software on student computers;
3. Understand that it is a privilege NOT a right for a student to have a personal computer on the MSA campus;
4. Recognize that violations of MSANet policy may result in personal computers being sent home, loss of some or all computer privileges, and/or other disciplinary actions;
5. Ensure that real time antivirus software is installed, active, and kept up to date on all machines (Level III Violation);

6. Agree that MSA reserves the right to modify the system configuration to insure compatibility with network systems;
7. Agree to keep the operating system of the computer up to date by automatically applying all manufacturer's security updates as they are released (Level II Violation); [and](#)
8. Seek permission from the Technology Coordinator before connecting any computer equipment to any location on either DormNet or MSANet, or before moving anything to a different location (Level I Violation).

### **DormNet—Dorm Room Internet Access**

**MSA provides free Internet access for educational purposes in academic areas throughout the campus, including the library that is in the Student Life Center.** The same rules for student usage and conduct apply to this service as do the MSANet network.

Parents and students must agree to the following stipulations:

1. **MSA strongly advises that parents purchase and install a content filter like NetNanny or CyberSitter to help prevent access to inappropriate content. It is the sole responsibility of parents to ensure that their child does not use a personal computer to access inappropriate content.** Parents and students must comply with school policy, local, state, and federal laws.
2. The owner of the computer will be held liable for all activity that occurs on their device, even if it is by another person.

### **MSANet Policy Enforcement**

To protect the MSANet resources and monitor proper usage of computer resources for educational purposes, the Technology Coordinator shall:

1. Investigate alleged abuses of computer resources;
2. Access the electronic files of its users as part of that investigation if there are indications that computer privileges have been violated;
3. Limit the access of users found to be using any computer systems improperly;
4. Administer disciplinary actions as directed by school administration for violations of MSA policies that may include the loss of some or all computer privileges and/or other disciplinary actions;
5. Act as a technical advisor to school administrators when they hear all cases involving student misuse of computer privileges;
6. Deny student access temporarily pending review when there is [a](#) reasonable suspicion that student use may harm or do damage in the interim; and
7. Administer the technical aspects of all penalties for computer violations assigned by school administration.

### **Hardware**

1. All personal computers (PCs), servers, workstations, printers, network switches, and other associated equipment are the property of the State of Mississippi and should not be used for purposes other than school business. All such equipment is by default considered to be under the authority and supervision of the MSA Office of Technology unless it is specifically excluded in a written agreement between the MSA Office of Technology (MSAOT) and the appropriate substitute designee. No hardware changes, modifications, additions to, deletions from, or removal of any equipment may be done to any such style equipment without notification to the MSAOT in writing, including all units as described above. Additionally, ~~any~~ [no](#) person other than Office of Technology personnel may make ~~no~~ such hardware changes to any unit under its supervision unless an MSAOT representative authorizes such action in writing in advance.
2. No personal devices are to be connected to the MSANet network without special permission for the MSAOT. The only routine exception to this rule is that personal USB Flash Memory devices (jump drives or thumb drives) may be used for storing or moving user data files.
3. The transfer of any information system equipment from one user to another, or to vendor for repair, must be recorded using appropriate MDE Property Office procedures.

4. Except for notebook PCs used daily in offsite work, no information systems equipment should be removed from the MSA premises without the prior permission of both the individual's immediate supervisor and the MSAOT. In the event equipment is to be off premises for some time, the user responsible for the equipment must file a written notification with the Office of Technology.

## Software

1. Software owned or licensed by MSA may not be copied to alternate media, distributed by e-mail, transmitted electronically, or used in its original form on other than MSA computers without express prior written permission from the MSAOT. Users will adhere to all applicable licensing agreements and copyright provisions.
2. Software licensed to MSA is to be used for its intended purpose according to the license agreement. Users are responsible for using software in a manner consistent with the licensing agreements of the manufacturer. License agreements are to be maintained by the MSAOT staff, or the machine's official substitute designee. Copies of all license agreements are to be kept on file in the MSA Technology office regardless of official supervisory authority.
3. Without prior written approval, software, including but not limited to Internet downloads, utilities, add-ons, programs (including shareware, freeware, and Internet access software), patches, or upgrades, shall not be installed on any school owned equipment by anyone other than a representative of the MSAOT.
4. All software obtained for use on MSA equipment must be approved in writing by the MSAOT staff prior to acquisition. Any software obtained for systems that have a substitute supervisory designee must have a copy kept on file in the MSAOT Department along with the proof of the licensing certification.
5. Standard software is to be used for all internal functions. When required, approved non-standard software is to be used only to interface with customer/vendor organizations and other governmental agencies. Any non-standard software needed to perform a specific job function should be approved by the MSAOT.

## Practices

1. System identification codes and passwords are for the use of the specifically assigned user and are to be protected from abuse and/or use by unauthorized individuals. Users are to use their individually assigned system access codes at all times and are not to share codes. Any use of another user's code must be reported immediately to the MSAOT staff.
2. All e-mail attachments and executable e-mail messages are automatically scanned for viruses using the virus detection software installed on all MSA computer workstations. In the event of any configuration changes to the workstation, even with the approval of the MSAOT Staff, it is the responsibility of the user to ensure virus protection is active prior to opening/executing any file, regardless of the method by which it was obtained. In addition, users are expected to exercise good judgment and safe computing practices to protect agency systems against the threat of potential virus exposure.
3. Like all MSA information systems resources, Internet access and e-mail are for work-related use. Access to e-mail and Internet sites visited can be monitored at the specific individual level.
4. All Internet use facilitated by the MSANet system must conform to all regulatory statutes as governed by the Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA).
5. Users may not use MSA information systems resources for soliciting, personal financial gain, partisan political activities, or further disseminating "junk" e-mail such as chain letters, spam, or etc.
6. Information contained on any school system is strictly proprietary to the State of Mississippi and MSA. Copying or disseminating any of this information for any purpose other than state business is strictly prohibited.
7. It is highly recommended that all faculty and staff users store data files (word documents, spreadsheets, databases, etc.) in their various directories on the network file servers. The



MSAOT Department is responsible for backing up data on the network servers. The individual users are responsible for backing up any files not stored in the appropriate areas of the network servers.

## Prohibited Communications

Electronic media cannot at any time be used for transmitting, retrieving, storing or disseminating any communication that is:

1. Discriminatory or harassing;
2. Derogatory to any individual or group;
3. Obscene or sexually explicit;
4. Defamatory or threatening; or
5. Engaged in for any purpose that is illegal, (including but not limited to file sharing of copyrighted materials with unauthorized users); [or](#) |
6. Engaged in for any purpose that is contrary to MSA's policies or interests.

Furthermore, users are prohibited from:

1. Visiting obscene web sites;
2. Participating in any obscene "chat room" communications;
3. Unauthorized monitoring or intercepting the files or electronic communications of other users;
4. Attempting to bypass any Internet filtering, traffic regulating, or such automated systems designed to control the access level and functionality of the MSA network as required by CIPA (Child Internet Protection Act);
5. Hacking or obtaining access to systems or files they are not authorized to use; [or](#) |
6. Using someone else's login or password.

## Mandatory Reporting

~~Mississippi School of the Arts~~MSA is committed to protecting the safety and welfare of its students. Mandatory reporting laws require persons to report to various agencies, including, but not limited to, Child Protection Services and/or law enforcement, when there is reason to suspect abuse, neglect, exploitation, human trafficking, sexual involvement of a student and teacher, sex crimes against a minor, unlawful activity which occurs on educational property or during a school related activity, and/or other violations of state and/or federal law which are required to be reported. Suspected violations shall/will be reported as required by law and in accordance with the applicable reporting procedures.

In addition to the above, ~~Mississippi School of the Arts~~MSA may contact law enforcement regarding other suspected violations of municipal, state, and/or federal law.

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**Appendix**

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**MSA FORMS**

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**Prescription Medicine Form**

**Note: This section must be filled out whenever a new medication is prescribed. All students must report all prescriptions to be stored and administered through self-administration except asthma inhalers.**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

**To Be Completed by Physician (if medicine is prescribed below):**

I request that my patient (named and identified above) receive the following medication while in residence at the Mississippi School of the Arts.

Diagnosis: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Medication: \_\_\_\_\_

Prescribed dosage and means of administration:

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

Time(s) to be administered: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected duration of treatment: \_\_\_\_\_

Possible side effects/adverse

reactions: \_\_\_\_\_

**Physician's Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Technology and Instructional Device Use Policy

SIGNATURE VERIFICATION

Print Parent/Guardian Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Student Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**I have reviewed the Mississippi School of the Arts Technology policies and understand the rules and guidelines for the following:**

\_\_\_\_\_ (initial) Acceptable Use Policy in the 2020-2021 Mississippi School of the Arts Student Handbook. This includes policies related to account use, network monitoring and adherence to the Children's Internet Protection Act.

\_\_\_\_\_ (initial) Damages – I am subject to a \$75.00 charge for the first report of damage. I am subject to the full replacement cost of subsequent damage / first loss / first theft.

*For office use only below this line -----*

State Fixed Asset \_\_\_\_\_ Description \_\_\_\_\_  
Intended Use \_\_\_\_\_  
Property Contact \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Commented [KK20]:** I think the website address for the MSA is different from the one listed in the Handbook contract.



### Parent and Student Handbook Contract

*(This is a legally binding document.)*

*All Mississippi School of the Arts (MSA) students—residential and commuters—and their parents or legal guardians must read and sign this contract. Signature is required at the beginning of each new school year since all MSA handbooks must be updated annually and approved by the State Board of Education.*

As a student (or parent/guardian of a student) who is enrolled at the Mississippi School of the Arts, we hereby acknowledge that we have received and/or have access to a copy of the following documents that contain the official policies and procedures that affect MSA students:

1. MSA Student Handbook (Available on the Internet, print copies distributed on campus.)
2. Prohibited items (MSA Student Handbook)
3. Residential Life definitions, policies, and expectations (MSA Student Handbook)
4. Security Policy governing safety (MSA Student Handbook)
5. Technology Contracts and Policies (MSA Student Handbook) - Cell Phone Policy, Portable Listening Device, and Acceptable Usage
6. Student Code of Conduct (MSA Student Handbook)
7. Attendance Policy (Enclosed in registration packet)
8. Brookhaven High School Handbook and Focus Book (Available on Internet)
9. Bullying Policy (MSA Student Handbook)

We understand that an electronic copy of these policies and publications can be found online at the Mississippi School of the Arts website <http://www.msabrookhaven.org>. MSA students can use school computers to access these resources using their MSA user account identification. If electronic access is not convenient, we acknowledge that we also have received one print copy for our family. We understand that all students are responsible for adhering to the policies and procedures of these documents while at school or on school activities. Because of an interlocal partnership with the Brookhaven School District, all BHS policies apply to MSA students attending classes there.

As a student (or parent/guardian of a student) who is enrolled at the Mississippi School of the Arts, I hereby acknowledge that I am issued a *Student Identification Card and MSA Lanyard/Clip* and will adhere to official policies and procedures that affect MSA safety.

In addition, we understand that the Mississippi School of the Arts is a special state residential public high school. Attendance at the Mississippi School of the Arts is a privilege, not a right. Students have neither constitutional nor statutory rights to public education in a state special school. Student educational rights exist only in the local school district in which the individual resides. While enrolled at MSA since it is a residential school, parental permission and signatures are required regardless of the age of the student.

Furthermore, we recognize that this is a legally binding contract and that violation(s) of the terms, conditions, and/or guidelines of school or state policies may result in disciplinary action, loss of privileges, probation, suspension, dismissal to the student's home school district, or expulsion dependent upon the nature of student actions. We understand that MSA will fully cooperate with local and state officials in any investigation related to student actions while at school.

We understand that the administrative staff of the Mississippi School of the Arts welcomes suggestions that could help improve the educational environment for Mississippi children while in residence on the MSA campus. Following a request for an appointment, the Executive Director will arrange a conference with the appropriate MSA staff to discuss issues and concerns related to students enrolled in the school.

**Student Name** (Please print.): → \_\_\_\_\_  
→ \_\_\_\_\_  
**Student Signature** **Date**

**Parent Name** (Please print.): → \_\_\_\_\_  
→ \_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent Signature** **Date**

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**mississippi**school**of thearts**

*i m a g i n e c r e a t e* **REALIZE**



# Student Handbook 2023-2024

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## **MSA's Mascot**

The Phoenix—MSA's mascot—is a thing of fire and light, the colors of passion and never ending inspiration and creativity. Regardless of cultural interpretation, the phoenix is recognized universally as a thing of excellence and beauty. Each student at the Mississippi School of the Arts holds the same promise. Each individual can be the source of creativity and inspiration. Each administrator, faculty, staff member, and student can share the light...



## **Imagine**

**“If you can imagine it, you can dream it.  
If you dream it, you can become it.”**

**William Arthur Wand**

## **Create**

**“Imagination is the beginning of  
creation.**

**You imagine what you desire, you will what  
you imagine, and at last you create what you  
will.”**

**George Bernard Shaw**

## **Realize**

**“It has never been my object to record my  
dreams—  
just the determination to realize them.”**

**Man Ray**

## **MSA Alma Mater**

Lyrics by Jeanne Lebow, Ph.D.  
Music by S. Patton Rice

### **Verse 1**

From the land of sweet magnolia,  
From the land of longleaf pine,  
From the land of spreading live oaks,  
We bring talents to combine.  
Shadows of the Whitworth campus  
Grace us as we work each day,  
Molding ourselves into artists  
Through song, stage, film, pen and clay.

### **Chorus**

With the ancient firebird glorious,  
We will share a spark divine.  
Like the magic, feathered phoenix,  
Now we rise, we fly, we shine.

### **Repeat**

Like the magic, feathered phoenix,  
Now we rise, we fly, we shine.

### **Verse 2**

From the winding Mississippi,  
Pascagoula, and the Pearl,  
From the Delta to the bayous,  
Rivers of our talents swirl.  
Now in Johnson and in Lampton,  
We create, we work and play.  
Raising candles high, we students  
Light the heart of MSA.

### **Chorus & Repeat**

# Student Handbook

**Mississippi School of the Arts  
P.O. Box 229  
Brookhaven, MS 39602-0229  
Phone: (601) 823-1300  
Toll Free: 1-866-672-7871  
Fax: (601) 823-1555  
Website: <http://www.msabrookhaven.org>**

The Mississippi State Board of Education, the Mississippi Department of Education, the Mississippi School of the Arts, the Mississippi School for the Blind, the Mississippi School for the Deaf, and the Mississippi School for Math and Science do not discriminate based on race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, or disability in the provision of educational programs and services or employment opportunities and benefits. The following office has been designated to handle inquiries and complaints regarding the nondiscrimination policies of the above-mentioned entities:

School Records Officer  
Mississippi School of the Arts  
308 West Cherokee Street  
Brookhaven, MS 39601  
(601) 823-1300

# **State Board of Education**

Mrs. Rosemary G. Aultman, Chair

Mr. Glen East, Vice-Chair

Dr. Wendi Barrett

Mr. Charlie Frugé

Mr. Bill Jacobs

Dr. Ronnie McGehee

Mr. Matt Miller

Mrs. Mary Werner

# **State Superintendent of Education**

Michael D. Kent

## **Chief Academic Officer**

Donna Boone, Ph.D.

## **Executive Director**

Suzanne Hirsch, Ed. D.

# Overview

Welcome to the Mississippi School of the Arts (MSA)! Throughout time all people have expressed themselves through the arts. The accomplishments of Mississippi artists are without question, evidenced throughout our state's long history of artistic excellence. By selecting MSA, you will become an important part of that heritage. You have chosen a school where the educational environment will focus on creative expression, experimentation, and innovation within rigorous disciplines of study. Comprehensive residential and academic curricula prepare high school students for further study or the pursuit of employment.

MSA is located on the historic Whitworth College Campus in Brookhaven, about sixty miles south of Jackson. The campus is designated as a Mississippi Landmark and on the National Register of Historic Places. Construction and renovation of campus facilities are ongoing and dependent upon funding for capital improvements. The Mississippi School of the Arts is a residential school that provides advanced programs of study in dance, literary, media arts, theatre, visual arts and vocal music, for artistically gifted eleventh and twelfth grade students from throughout Mississippi. An instrumental music program will be added as funding and facilities become available.

## Preface

Admission to MSA is for one academic school year during which time a student must remain in good standing, both academically and residentially to retain their enrollment. Students deemed unwilling to accept the responsibility and commitment necessary to be successful at MSA will be dismissed according to policy.

Successful attendance at MSA is dependent upon student willingness and ability to follow the rules and regulations set forth in this handbook and administered by the school. The administration will enforce all rules and regulations in a reasonable manner, evaluating student progress on a regular basis.

To provide guidance, students and their parents/guardians should read the handbook carefully. Prior to the start of the year, parents and students will receive copies of the handbook for reference. At that time, students and parents will sign a contract stating that they have been given notice of the school rules and regulations including disciplinary policies found in this handbook. Please refer questions concerning the handbook to the Principal or the Executive Director.

The Mississippi School of the Arts is a special state residential public high school. **Attendance at the Mississippi School of the Arts is a privilege, not a right.** A student's right to access a free public education exists at the local school district in which the individual resides. Failure to comply with policies and procedures of the Mississippi School of the Arts may result in dismissal.

The policies set forth in this student handbook provide a reasonable guide for acceptable student behavior at MSA. Student, faculty, staff, and parent comments or suggestions are an integral part of the yearly evaluation and revision of the handbook. This handbook as approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) governs all policies applicable to the schools governed by the SBE and is a publication of the MSA.

Student enrollment may be as a resident or a commuter. A student cannot have a dorm room if they are commuting. A change from resident to commuter status requires parental permission regardless of the age of the student. MSA reserves the right to require a student to become a commuter if they are not meeting requirements of living in a residential facility or if housing space is needed. All school

regulations and policies affecting residential students apply equally to commuter students. Commuter students are required to participate in all academic school programs and are entitled to participate in residential life curriculum and activities sponsored by the school. Students must live within 25 miles of MSA to commute to school.

In addition to the policies and procedures outlined in the handbook, all MSA students and employees must abide by all applicable policies and procedures of the Brookhaven School District, state, and federal laws.

The guidelines in this handbook change over time and may be expanded or updated throughout the year. MSA will communicate handbook amendments to students and parents via school announcements, mail, e-mail, or website postings prior to the implementation of any changes.

## **History and Purpose**

The Mississippi School of the Arts (MSA) was created by legislative enactment during the 1999 regular session. Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 37-140-1 to 37-140-15 authorizes the following:

1. The Mississippi School of the Arts shall be a residential school for eleventh and twelfth grade high school students located on the campus of Whitworth College in Brookhaven, Mississippi.
2. The State Board of Education shall govern the school.
3. The purpose of the school shall be to provide a more challenging educational experience for artistically talented and gifted students of the state to develop their full potential, including the teaching of humanities, creative writing, literature, theatre, music, dance, and visual arts.
4. To the extent possible, the State Board of Education shall enter into agreements with the Board of Trustees of the Brookhaven School District for the dual enrollment of students for the purpose of teaching academic subjects to students attending the school, and the local school board shall be fully authorized to offer any such courses to students attending the school.

## **Vision**

At MSA, we envision a challenging, dynamic, supportive community of diverse learners where artists imagine, create, and realize a better world in which to live and work.

## **Mission**

The mission of the MSA is to provide a challenging academic and arts education for artistically gifted and talented Mississippi students in a residential learning environment that promotes honor, integrity, service, and life-long learning.

## **Philosophy**

The MSA recognizes the unique needs for the state of Mississippi in providing a challenging educational experience for artistically talented and gifted students for them to develop to their full potential in the areas of creative writing, dance, the humanities, literature, music, media arts, theatre, and the visual arts. The academic and residential life programs at MSA are designed to challenge each student based on individual needs, talents, capabilities, backgrounds, and interests while meeting requirements necessary for high school graduation, college admission, and employment in a global workplace.

Upon completion of campus facilities, the academic curriculum at MSA will provide students with arts and non-arts courses in six major programs of study: dance, music (vocal and instrumental), theatre, visual arts, media arts, and literary arts. Until additional capital improvement funds are available, MSA will limit major programs to dance, literary arts, media arts, theatre, visual arts, and vocal music. Non-arts curriculum includes courses such as English language arts, social studies, math, science, and

foreign language. Opportunities at MSA will enable students to delve into all aspects of the curriculum to combine their creative abilities with other essential tools needed to succeed in the world of the future.

The faculty at MSA is distinguished by a depth and diversity of experiences and qualifications brought to specific areas of the academic program. MSA teachers must have a minimum of five years' experience and/or a higher collegiate degree with teaching experience; all campus faculty members meet the qualifications for Highly Qualified Teachers. Guiding students to their personal best through challenges and risk-taking in a supportive learning environment will be a primary goal of the school faculty and administration.

## **School Colors and Mascot**

The school colors are red and black. The phoenix is the school mascot.

## **Governance**

The Mississippi Legislature vested the State Board of Education with the authority to govern and supervise the school. The Executive Director, the chief administrative officer of the school shall administer the school in accordance with the policies established by the State Board. The Executive Director shall be responsible for those administrative duties and functions prescribed by the Board, and the Board, in its discretion, may delegate to the Executive Director such powers, as it deems appropriate.

The Executive Director—with the assistance of the Principal; School Finance Officer; the Directors of Advancement, Residential Life, Food Services, and School Safety; School Records Officer, and the Technology Coordinator along with the faculty and staff—is directed and empowered to carry out all mandates of the legislature and the policies of the State Board of Education.

## **Community and State Partnerships**

Working closely with the Mississippi Department of Education; the Mississippi Department of Archives and History; and the Bureau of Buildings, Grounds and Real Property Management; Albert and Associates and Belinda Stewart Architects have designed a campus that will blend the restored historic buildings and contemporary new construction.

During the spring of 2000, the city of Brookhaven transferred the Whitworth College Campus, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, to the state of Mississippi. In addition, the city donated \$3,000,000 in bond proceeds to the MSA and received a \$1,500,000 HUD grant for use in campus improvements. Through an agreement with the Brookhaven School District, students take some non-arts courses at Brookhaven High School located approximately one-half mile from MSA.

The Mississippi School of the Arts Foundation was organized to provide support for the MSA. This supportive organization assists MSA by funding special events, projects, scholarships, and providing benevolent assistance to individual students in need. Matching funds for grants have generated diverse resources for campus improvements.

## **Admissions**

Students apply to the MSA during their sophomore year in high school in order to be admitted as juniors to MSA. The admissions process consists of two phases. In the application phase, students will be assessed through a review of the required forms, coursework, and recommendations. Students who meet the application criteria will be invited to MSA to participate in an on-site audition and interview. After the on-site audition, all applicants will receive notification of their admissions status.

MSA programs of study require two years for completion. Auditions are held in the spring for admission at the beginning of the fall semester. MSA will not conduct mid-year auditions or allow admission after the beginning of the school year. Students may not be admitted as seniors.



MSA will accept residential and commuting students. Available classroom space will determine the number of commuting students admitted. The geographic distance of the student's referring school to MSA will help determine residential status. Students who live outside the local area will receive priority in residential assignments.

Applicants for admission to the MSA must meet the following criteria:

- Be a resident of Mississippi;
- Be a current tenth grader with a minimum of 12 Carnegie units/credits of study upon the completion of the tenth grade;
- Have earned Carnegie units of study in the following courses upon completion of the tenth grade<sup>1</sup>
  - English—2 credits (English I and II),
  - Mathematics—2 credits (Including Algebra I),
  - Physical Education—0.5 credit,
  - Science—2 credits (Biology and Chemistry recommended),
  - Social Studies—2 credits (Including World History, and Mississippi Studies),
  - Health—0.5 credit,
  - Business and Technology—1 credit (in accordance with Appendix A of MS Public School Accountability Standards) and
  - Foreign Language—Students are encouraged to complete at least 1 unit of a foreign language
- Have an overall high school grade point average of 2.5 at the conclusion of tenth grade (Schools must include all arts course grades in calculating overall GPA);<sup>2</sup>
- Submit a completed application packet, **copy of cumulative folder, and discipline record**;
- Demonstrate artistic achievement in the visual, performing, or literary arts through an audition;<sup>3</sup>
- Complete an interview (by invitation);
- Audition and/or present a portfolio for review (by invitation): Visual and Literary Arts require students to submit a portfolio in the arts discipline in which they are applying;
- Students must take the ACT a minimum of one time prior to the start of their junior year (there is no minimum score required).

Acceptance to MSA is contingent on providing all required information and documentation, including but not limited to a complete and accurate application packet, cumulative folder and discipline record. Failure to provide all required information and documentation may result in the revocation of acceptance to attend MSA.

---

<sup>1</sup> Students that do not meet the required coursework may ask for an exception from the Executive Director and/or Principal of MSA. There must be an extenuating circumstance (e.g. relocation due to natural disaster, school course availability, school curriculum dictates, or long term illness) in order to qualify for an exception and documentation will be required. If a student is missing some of the requested courses listed, students must be able to take all the required coursework while enrolled for a timely graduation.

<sup>2</sup> All students who make it through the audition phase of the admissions process must provide a final transcript at the end of their sophomore year.

<sup>3</sup> Six programs of study for students entering the eleventh grade will be offered: dance, literary arts, media arts, theatre, visual arts, and vocal music.

Student success is the primary goal of MSA educational programs. Students must apply as tenth graders and be admitted as juniors. MSA does not admit new students at midterm or those students who would be classified as seniors. However, if a student has recently moved to the state and has studied at an arts school that has programs comparable to those at MSA (e.g., New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts, North Carolina School of the Arts), the Principal and the Executive Director may review the student's transcripts and arts portfolio to determine admission to the school and whether the student could be successful within program requirements. In such circumstances, auditions may be required to verify student accomplishments. The decision of the administration regarding admissions due to special circumstances is final.

## **Respect for Persons, Property and Privacy**

Students are expected to be fully and always respectful of other people, including faculty, staff, other students, and guests on campus. Examples of inappropriate behavior that might violate this expectation include:

1. Use of language not deemed respectful or in good taste.
2. Engaging in inappropriate physical contact or improper demonstrations of affection or attraction.
3. Any form of harassment, hazing, or bullying, whether verbal or nonverbal.
4. Taking any property without the owner's express consent is considered theft. This policy includes accessing the contents of backpacks or bags without specific permission to do so. The cost of willful damage to School property will be charged to a student's personal account.
5. Any form of vandalism or abuse of the School's or another's personal property is unacceptable. Trespassing on property not owned by the School is also a violation of this standard. The cost of willful damage to School property will be charged to a student's personal account.
6. Violating any federal, state, or local laws.
7. Engaging in behavior that jeopardizes the welfare or good nature of the School or any members of the School community.
8. Students should be aware that certain activities outside of School hours or off School property may result in loss of School privileges or other disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Examples of such outside conduct include: violations of laws; underage purchase of alcohol; drug use, sale or possession; or use or misuse of digital content which does, or could compromise the welfare of any member of the School community or the reputation or function of the School.
9. Students are expected to always remain on campus except when leaving campus is scheduled, accompanied by staff, or approved by the School.
10. Girls and boys must respect the absolute privacy of each others' residential campuses.

This is not to be considered an exhaustive list of inappropriate behavior.

# Academics

The focus of the student academic program includes curriculum, instruction, assessment, academic and career counseling, special programs, recruiting, and outreach. Faculty will develop programs of study; design instructional strategies; supervise classroom management, special projects, evening practice and studies; and supervise various other activities deemed necessary for the continuous academic growth of all students. The staff includes the Executive Director, Principal, faculty, counselor, library media specialist, school nurse, and support staff.

The MSA philosophy mandates that every student, teacher, staff member, and administrator be responsible, contributing members of the learning community. The diverse, unique backgrounds of school community members will support the philosophy that everyone is a caretaker of MSA and, therefore, must act with integrity, honesty, and concern for the well-being of all. MSA will encourage and foster the on-going development of a strong value system and a sense of social responsibility.

## Philosophy

The Mississippi School of the Arts was created by the Mississippi Legislature to provide a challenging educational experience for artistically talented and gifted students of the state to develop their full potential. MSA seeks to create a unique educational environment providing superlative classroom instruction, renowned artists-in-residence, lectures from performers who lead in their artistic fields, field trips, mentorship, and student and faculty performances and art exhibitions.

The basic promise of MSA academic life is that students can attain academic and artistic success when all participants, including parents, students, faculty, staff, administration, and the surrounding community, work together to create a support system allowing students to take advantage of the unique opportunities available.

The philosophy of academic life at MSA is that all efforts will be made to ensure student academic success and that students will progress to their utmost in their arts and non-arts academic life. Students should recognize that study at MSA is a privilege and comes with responsibilities that they must uphold to fully capitalize on the unique opportunities offered. Students must meet state graduation requirements and additional MSA requirements to receive a diploma. (See the State and MSA Graduation Requirements in this handbook.)

Courses listed in the **Approved Courses for the Secondary School of Mississippi**, as well as other state-approved courses, will be accepted for credit. In addition to the successful completion of the required Carnegie units, a student must meet testing requirements as set forth by the Mississippi Department of Education to graduate.

## MSA Student Honor Code

Students shall pledge to work diligently to uphold the values of academic integrity.

As a student at the Mississippi School of Arts, I will uphold the values of academic integrity. In keeping with the principles of academic honesty and productive citizenship, I pledge a personal commitment to the fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. *“I will respect others and honor their rights, privileges, and belongings. I will value differences among people, customs, and ideologies, while opposing hatred, bigotry, and bias toward others. Furthermore, I will...”* model and promote ideals of *“...human dignity in my academic, social, and residential settings while working to create a living and learning environment that is safe and secure for all.”*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The MSA Student Honor Code was adapted from The Southern Miss Code of Honor. Quoted sections are italicized and enclosed in quotes.

# Bell Schedule

## MSA Regular Class Schedule (subject to change)

7:35 a.m.	Warning bell for bus loading
7:40 a.m.	Bus leaves for BHS
<b>8:00-9:34 a.m.</b>	<b>Block 1</b>
9:34-9:55 a.m.	Tutorial Sessions or Morning Break
<b>9:55-11:29 a.m.</b>	<b>Block 2</b>
11:29-12:14 p.m.	Lunch
<b>12:14-1:48 p.m.</b>	<b>Block 3</b>
<b>1:52 -3:26 p.m.</b>	<b>Block 4</b>
<b>3:30-5:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Tutorial/Online/Production Block</b>

## Teacher as the Authority in the Classroom

The MSA is governed by the State Board of Education. MSA recognizes the teacher as the authority in the classroom and supports the teacher in any decision that is in compliance with the written discipline code of conduct. Such recognition shall include the right of the teacher to remove from the classroom to the office of the principal any student who, in the professional judgment of the teacher, is disrupting the learning environment.

The principal shall determine the proper placement for the student, who may not be returned to the classroom until a conference of some kind has been held with the parent, guardian, or custodian during which the disrupting behavior is discussed, and agreements are reached that no further disruption will be tolerated. If the principal does not approve of the determination of the teacher to remove the student from the classroom, the student may not be removed from the classroom, and the principal, upon request from the teacher, must provide justification for his or her disapproval.

A student who causes a disruption in the classroom, on school property or vehicles, or at school-related activities may be subject to discipline actions. School officials, the reporting teacher, and the student's parent will develop a behavior modification plan for a student who causes a disruption in the classroom, on school property or vehicles, or at school-related activities for a second time during the school year.

## Classroom Misbehavior

MSA holds each student accountable for his or her behavior while attending class, participating in field trips, attending concerts, or at any period of time that the student is otherwise representing the Mississippi School of the Arts or is under the supervision and is the responsibility of the school. As the ultimate authority in the classroom, the teacher is charged with classroom management. Students may not carry or play musical instruments in classrooms, except with advance written approval by the instructor. Wearing sunglasses in class is not acceptable. Hats are allowed at the teacher's discretion. Classroom misbehavior includes, but is not limited to, disrespect, disruption, failure or refusal to follow directions, failure to complete classroom assignments in a timely manner, or failure to stay awake in class. When an incident occurs that cannot be resolved by the instructor, it is referred to the Principal.

## **Subject Area Testing**

In keeping with **State Board of Education Policy**, students must take academic end-of-course tests to graduate.

Students entering MSA who have not passed the required Subject Area Tests may be tested during the first testing administration scheduled for transfer students and re-testers. MSA faculty and staff will work with students and parents in preparing and successfully completing each test required for graduation. In addition, MSA will work with students who have not passed the Subject Area Tests to accomplish the alternative assessment options through ACT or dual enrollment/dual credit coursework to insure graduation.

## **Graduation Requirements**

In addition to eight mandatory Carnegie Units of arts classes while enrolled, the MSA requires courses outlined by the Mississippi Department of Education for graduation, which can be found at [www.mdek12.org](http://www.mdek12.org).

## **Special Education**

It is the policy of the Mississippi School of the Arts to comply with all provisions of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Carl Perkins Act of 1984, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA). Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving federal financial assistance. No discrimination against any person with a disability will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs and practices of the school. To ensure the school's compliance, as it applies to students with disabilities, the following procedures have been adopted.

1. The 504 Coordinator (MSA Principal) and counselor will seek to detect students with special education needs, by examining the records of current and incoming students.
2. The 504 Committee will consist of the Principal, an academic counselor, an MSA teacher and the Federal Programs Staff of the Brookhaven School District.
3. The Special Education Director of the Brookhaven School District serves as the MSA Special Education liaison and may be reached at (601) 835-1211.
4. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) committee will consist of all required members pursuant to 34 C.F.R. § 300.321; Miss. Admin. Code 7-3:74.19, State Board Policy Chapter 74, Rule 74.19, § 300.321.
5. The Mississippi State Board of Education, the Mississippi Department of Education, and the Mississippi School of the Arts do not discriminate based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or disability in the provision of educational programs and services or employment opportunities and benefits. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment must be handled in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Mississippi Department of Education Board Policy Part 3, Chapter 99, Rule 99.1.

## **Discipline of Students with IDEA and Section 504 Eligibility**

Students with disabilities are responsible for adhering to the same rules of conduct as students without disabilities. The school complies with all provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Mississippi laws, and State Board Policy Chapter 74, Rule 74.19 when implementing discipline procedures for students with disabilities.

## **Mississippi Scholars**

The Mississippi Scholars mission is to encourage and motivate all high school students to complete a defined, rigorous academic course of study that prepares them for successful transition to college or university coursework or vocational and technical training necessary to enter today's competitive job market. The State Scholars Initiative is a national program, operating across the country. It utilizes business leaders to motivate students to complete a more challenging course of study in high school.

Mississippi joined the State Scholars Initiative in 2003. Since then, thousands of Mississippi High School students have graduated with the Mississippi Scholars distinction. The Mississippi Scholars course of study gives students the foundation they need to succeed in a technical school, community college, university, the military, or industry.

Although this community sponsored program is optional for students, MSA encourages students to participate and will help facilitate their course schedules so that they can be successful. Mississippi Scholars are high school students who have completed the Scholars course of Study, a specific sequence of academic courses in math, science, language arts, and social studies. The Mississippi Scholars philosophy is based on the belief that is better to pass an academically challenging course than to get a higher grade in an easier course.

MSA began participating in the Mississippi Scholars Program in 2005. Students who complete the Mississippi Scholars Program will be recognized at Graduation and the Academic Awards Program. These students will also receive a Mississippi Scholars medal and a seal on the transcript and diploma.

Graduating as a Mississippi Scholar means a student:

- Acquires advanced academic skills,
- Develops sound decision making and critical thinking skills,
- Is prepared for college and reduces the likelihood of needing costly remedial courses,
- Is a stronger candidate for certain types of financial aid and scholarships, and
- Has enhanced opportunities for placement and future advancement with local and international employers.

## Mississippi Scholars Course of Study Requirements

Content Area	Credits Required	Courses Required
<b>English Language Arts</b>	4	English I (1), English II (1), two additional English credits above English II and approved for IHL admission
<b>Mathematics</b>	4	Algebra I (1), Geometry (1), Algebra II (1) and any one Carnegie Unit of comparable rigor and content may come from Mathematics courses approved for Mississippi Scholars credit
<b>Science</b>	4	Biology I (1), Chemistry (1) <b>and</b> any two Carnegie Units of comparable rigor and content above Biology I and Chemistry (Physics [1] preferred; 1 may come from CTE course)
<b>Social Studies</b>	4	World Geography (.5), Mississippi Studies (.5), World History Studies (1), U.S. History (1), U.S. Government (.5), and Economics (.5)
<b>Advanced Electives</b>	2	Foreign Language I (1), Foreign Language II (1), or a 5 <sup>th</sup> Math or Science of higher rigor or any 2 Dual Credit classes
<b>Arts</b>	1	1 Credit or two units of the 2-course sequence Computer Graphics Technology I & II
<b>Additional Expectations:</b>		80 Hours of Community Service; 2.5 Cumulative High School GPA; 19 on ACT composite score; 95% School Attendance during MSA enrollment; Three Letters of Recommendation from Principal, Guidance Counselor, and business/community leader if there are more than 4 in-school suspensions; and no out-of-school suspension
<b>Please Note: In addition to the above courses, Mississippi Scholars must complete any remaining state-mandated high school and MSA graduation requirements.</b>		

Advanced Placement, online, Dual Enrollment, and Dual Credit courses may be substituted in Mississippi Scholars Subject Areas, but are not required (e.g., AP U.S. History instead of regular U.S. History).

### **Progress Reports and Report Cards**

Student progress reports and report cards will be mailed to parents near the middle—or at the end—of each nine-week grading period. Student grade reports are meant to ensure that parents are knowledgeable about their child’s academic progress at MSA and BHS. Parents with questions about progress reports or report cards should discuss their concerns with the teacher. Please call 601-823-1300 to arrange a conference, if desired.

### **Academic Records**

The MSA counselor works cooperatively with the MSA registrar in maintaining academic records per the guidelines set by the Mississippi Department of Education and federal law. Current and former students may request transcripts with the Transcript Request Form with all information completed prior to submission to be sent to colleges, scholarship agencies, etc. by contacting either individual.

### **Transcripts and Other Educational Records**

From time to time, students and/or their parents may request official or unofficial transcripts during the eleventh and twelfth grade for college applications, acceptance to special programs, etc. Transcripts requested prior to graduation are provided free of charge. After graduation, each student is provided a free, sealed official transcript. For student use, an unofficial copy is also included with official graduation documents. Thereafter, requests for additional transcripts must be made using the MSA Request for Transcript Form. The cost for each additional transcript for Alumni is \$5.00 to defer costs of postage and handling. The **MSA Request for Transcript** form can be downloaded on the MSA website – [www.msabrookhaven.org](http://www.msabrookhaven.org).

When a student withdraws from the MSA, the school where the student is seeking enrollment must request official education records. Cumulative records will be mailed to the enrolling school’s guidance office upon receipt of an official request providing that parent(s) or guardian(s) have completed the MSA Enrollment Withdrawal Form. Parental request is not sufficient for the release of school records unless the student is documented as enrolled in Home School.

### **Grading Scale**

Reports of student progress will be sent home at the end of the first five weeks of each nine-week period and each semester grading period. Information will be available on a daily basis via Internet access. The parent is responsible for checking the report card carefully and contacting the school with questions. If a student has a failing grade, a conference may be scheduled between the teacher and the parent or guardian.

#### ***MSA Grading Scale—All Courses***

A	90-100	4.0
B	80-89	3.0
C	70-79	2.0
D	65-69	1.0
F	Below 65	Failing

**The lowest passing grade is a 65.**

Online courses and Brookhaven High School may have different grading scales. The grade earned will be recorded on student transcripts as stipulated by those institutions.

### **Grading Policies**

The grading policies for each class are determined by the teacher and are communicated to the student through information distributed at the beginning of each semester. Interim or progress reports, phone

calls, and other methods of communicating with parents will provide any additional reports that evaluate each student on related issues such as attitude, completion of projects, and homework. End-of-the-semester assignments may include performing in a concert or recital, presenting artworks in an exhibit, or group or individual performances and may be part of the final grade.

Due to the expectations of the school, end of year performances, some competitions, exhibits and showcases in courses are not optional and must be completed to receive credit for coursework.

## **Incomplete Grades**

If the work is not completed according to assignment timelines and make-up policies in relation to excused absences, the teacher will assign the student an “F” or a zero (0) for the assignment, depending upon the amount of work submitted. Under special circumstances (e.g., extended hospitalization, documented illness at home) a student may petition the Principal for more time; granting extensions will be left to the discretion of the Principal.

## **Make Up Work**

Students with excused absences—including school-approved absences—may make up tests, class work, exams, lab work, or assignments without penalty if make-up deadlines are met. Students must turn in or make up work that was due on the day the student was absent immediately upon return to class following the absence. The amount of time provided to make up work that was assigned during the absence would be equal to the number of days of the excused absence plus one day. Students who fail to complete and turn in assignments within the stipulated time shall receive a zero for the assignment. Teachers shall not allow students more time than policy allows.

In the event of an extended illness or prolonged excused absence due to extenuating circumstances approved by the Principal, teachers will be cooperative in providing make-up opportunities. The ultimate responsibility for obtaining and returning completed make-up work rests with the student.

## **Grade Challenges**

The faculty maintains all grades for students. If a student disagrees with an assigned grade, he/she must request a meeting with the teacher within ten working days of issuance. If still not satisfied, the student may file a letter explaining the challenge of the grade with the Principal delineating the steps the student has taken up to this point. Within ten (10) business days of receiving the letter, the Principal will meet, either jointly or separately, with all involved parties to make a decision. The final step is to appeal to the Executive Director. The decision of the Executive Director is final.

## **Course Selections**

Rising seniors should refer to high school graduation requirements and college entrance requirements, as well as their performance as a junior, when making course selections. Pursuit of classes to enhance a college or university major is encouraged. To graduate from MSA, students must select and successfully complete an arts discipline major consisting of eight (8) required Carnegie units.

The school will operate generally in a four-block with an extended fifth block as needed for rehearsals, online classes, or tutorials. Student schedules will include classes, rehearsals, projects, research projects, assemblies, presentations, required field trips and other academic assignments and experiences throughout the day, into the evening, and on weekends. MSA will provide a minimum of 180 days of instruction as required by state law, Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-91(2)(e) and(i). Some courses may be scheduled in late afternoon or at night.

## **Schedule Changes**

Students select courses to fulfill their major fields of study and graduation requirements. Students may not request schedule changes to choose a specific teacher. The counselor or designated staff member will make all schedule changes based on the availability of space. Requests must be made by the first five days of any half credit courses or ten days of any full credit courses. Until formally notified in writing,



students must follow their schedules as assigned. Course adjustments at BHS must be requested through MSA. Students must continue to attend BHS courses as assigned until their schedule is changed.

## **Dropping a Class**

Students who wish to drop a class must seek an appointment with the MSA counselor for advice. If the counselor determines that a student should drop a course, and the parent/guardian has approved the action, the change will be made. If a student drops a one (1) unit course after the first ten (10) days of the course, a letter grade of “F” will be assigned and a numerical grade equal to the student’s average in the course as of that date. If a student drops a half (.5) unit course after the first five (5) days of the course, a letter grade of “F” will be assigned and a numerical grade equal to the student’s average in the course as of that date.

If dropping a course results in a student taking less than a full-time load (four 1.0 credit courses), campus work duty will be assigned for the duration of the time remaining in the semester. In such a situation, the student must report for work duty as if they are attending a class. Tardies and absences will be recorded.

## **Advanced Placement Program (AP)**

MSA offers AP courses in several academic programs. The AP program is sponsored by the College Board ([www.ap.collegeboard.org](http://www.ap.collegeboard.org)) and is a national curriculum that allows students to earn college credit through examination. Highly motivated students who do not enroll in the AP class but are willing to independently prepare, may also register to take an AP exam. Although there are no prerequisites for enrollment in an AP course and all students are encouraged to take rigorous courses, students with strong reading and writing skills usually do better in these programs of study. Students’ past grades in a subject area will help determine if AP courses are best for them.

The MSA offers AP courses to provide students with an opportunity to take challenging work—essentially courses taught at the collegiate level that require significantly more work than the standard high school subject area class. Students who achieve a qualifying score (3 or better) on the AP U.S. History examination (for example) may receive 3 or more hours of college credit at some colleges and universities that give credit by AP examination.

The benefits of AP courses for students include:

1. The AP curriculum requires that students develop strong study skills, which will greatly benefit them in college. AP classes foster academic maturity and self-esteem.
2. Successful completion of AP courses helps students stand out in the college admissions process. College admissions personnel rate students who take AP courses higher than those who don’t.
3. MSA gives additional weight to AP classes in computing class rank and quality point average.
4. Students can earn a minimum of 3 hours of college credit as a high school student for every AP examination they pass.

The benefits of AP courses for parents/guardians include:

1. Students receive excellent academic preparation, which improves their chances of being successful in college by building strong study, time management, and critical thinking skills.
2. Tuition expenses are reduced because the cost of an AP exam is less than a 3-hour college course.

MSA AP teachers attend summer institutes, which are recommended for Advanced Placement certification; the College Board approves course syllabi. MSA expects students who enroll in an AP class to take the AP examination. MSA offers courses in the following subjects: AP U.S. History, AP English Literature, and AP English Language. Brookhaven High School offers AP courses in science and mathematics areas, which MSA students may take if enrolled in those classes. Depending upon the number of interested students, all AP subjects may not be offered every year.

Refer to the College Board website for average costs of the tests. Financial assistance is available for students who qualify. Students or parents should contact the MSA counselor for more information. Questions about the AP program or fees can be addressed to the MSA counselor or MSA AP teachers.

## **Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment/Collegiate Academy**

MSA partners with Copiah-Lincoln Community College (Co-Lin) to offer dual credit and dual enrollment opportunities to students through online and in the MSA class schedule. Dual enrollment is when a student is enrolled in a community college while enrolled in high school and receives college credit for work. Dual Credit is when a student is enrolled at both the community college and high school and receives both high school and post-secondary credit for coursework. To enroll, students must meet minimum ACT and Carnegie Unit requirements as set by the college. Class fees and textbook costs associated with the courses are the responsibility of the enrolled students and their parents. Students and their families are responsible for following Co-Lin's deadlines with regard to dropping or withdrawing as well as any fees associated with these actions. Students must meet attendance requirements set by the college to receive credit for the coursework. Transcripts documenting the course can only be retrieved after the student graduates from high school and submits a final high school transcript with a transcript request form directly to the college. Students are responsible for honoring all rules and regulations as set forth by the college while enrolled. For 2023-2024, all fees will be paid by the MSA except fees associated with dropping/withdrawing from a class.

**Through a partnership with Co-Lin, juniors can apply to be a part of a pilot Collegiate Academy program to pursue an Associate's Degree while at MSA through Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit. The dual enrollment/dual credit coursework will support graduation requirements of the MSA as well as degree requirements of the College. If the student needs additional coursework for the Associate's Degree, they have the opportunity to enroll in the summer for coursework to complete the Associate's degree and MSA graduation requirements. Fees Related costs for the classes will be paid by the MSA while enrolled and maintaining eligibility requirements as deemed by the MSA and Co-Lin. Student application procedures will be established and distributed in summer 2023 with an application deadline in early fall 2023. The program will begin in January 2024 with an anticipated completion date in May 2025. Off Blocks for Students**

Students are not allowed to be in active classrooms if they are on off blocks unless they have work to do for a course directly taught by that classroom teacher. If the student needs to meet with a teacher, he or she must make an appointment that is outside of class time for the teacher and the student (before school, after school, planning period). If at any time a student that needs to work in a classroom on a project for that teacher distracts other students or the teacher, he or she must leave the classroom.

## **Attendance**

The State of Mississippi, as expressed by the Compulsory School Attendance Statute, has established responsible attendance habits as a priority for all Mississippi students. A compulsory-school-age child is defined by Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-91(2)(f). Parents need to support the school by having their student arrive to school on time.

When a compulsory-school-age student has accumulated five unexcused absences, the school shall report the absences to the appropriate school attendance officer in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-91(6). In accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-91(4), a compulsory-school-age child who has an absence that is more than thirty-seven percent (37%) of the instructional day must be considered absent the entire school day.

An excused absence is an absence from school for all day(s) or for any number of periods of the day under circumstances granted by law or recognized by the school. A complete list of all excused absences may be found at Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-91(4). The principal or superintendent must approve pre-arranged absences. The parent/guardian should inform the school in writing at least two days prior to the absence. No excused pre-arranged absences will be granted during exams.

## **Class Attendance**

To take full advantage of the opportunities offered at MSA, students must keep absences to an absolute minimum. Absences from class are either excused or unexcused. Excused absences are given for illness (confirmed by a note from the MSA nurse, other designated staff, or a physician), school-related activities, required family activities, and other justified requests received and approved two (2) days prior to the absence by the Principal in writing. The final authority on approval of requests or absences rests with the Principal based upon review of the recommendation from the classroom teacher. It is recommended whenever possible that family activities, recurring medical appointments at home, and other scheduled activities requiring the student to leave campus be scheduled during extended weekends and school holidays to facilitate the fullest classroom attendance. **Medical excuses must be given to the Attendance Secretary in the Principal's office immediately upon the first school day the student returns. If desired, a medical excuse may be faxed directly from the doctor's office to the Attendance Secretary at 601-823-1555. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the fax arrives. Students must not leave excuses at the desk in the Student Life Center. Failure to provide an excuse will result in an unexcused absence.**

To participate in any school functions (prom, dances, performances, rehearsals, clubs, meetings, etc.) students must be present a minimum of 63% of the school day of or prior to the function. In addition, students missing two or more class periods will not be allowed to check out of the dormitory in the after-school hours.

## **Absences Due to School-Related or Approved Functions**

All school related academic functions and academic field trips are requested through the Principal's office and considered excused absences. Students on academic or disciplinary probation or suspension may not be allowed to participate in school related/approved functions until given permission from the Principal. Absences due to participation in school or sports activities at Brookhaven High School are excused.

Absences due to "ride leaving early" or parent/guardian or other authorized adult arriving early to pick a student up before dismissal time are unexcused unless the reason for such early departure is a required family activity or other justified request which would substantiate an excused absence. Absences incurred because students ride the train or bus home are considered excused because the schedules of public transportation cannot be altered according to the MSA schedule. All other excuses are considered unexcused until proper documentation on the correct form is produced, following approved processes.

## **Tardiness and Absenteeism**

Students must report to class on time. During the first few days of school, schedule adjustments may cause delays in getting to class. Beginning with the third full day of school of each semester, students will receive consequences for tardiness.

### **Definitions:**

**Tardy:** Students are tardy if they arrive after time for a class to begin. Three (3) tardies that are less than 30 minutes equal one (1) unexcused absence. An unexcused tardy that exceeds 30 minutes is automatically counted as an unexcused absence. Tardies and absences are calculated by individual class period. Commuter students must consider traffic patterns to be on time for first period class and/or the bus ride to BHS. Only the MSA administration, faculty, counselor, librarian, or school nurse may grant an excused tardy.

**Absence:** When a student misses 30 minutes or more in a class, an absence will be recorded. Absences fall into two categories: excused and unexcused. The following are examples of excused absences:

1. **Authorized school activities** with prior approval by the Executive Director including field trips, athletic contests, student conventions, music festivals, exhibitions, performances, and etc.;
2. **Illness or injury** which prevents students from being physically able to attend school (for MSA students living on campus, the school nurse or a doctor must provide an excuse to verify the illness);
3. **Isolation** ordered by a county health officer, State Board of Health, or appropriate school official;
4. **Death or serious illness** of a member of the immediate family (i.e., children, spouse, grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters, including stepbrothers and stepsisters);
5. **Medical or dental appointments** when an approval is acquired from the Executive Director or Principal in advance, except in the case of an emergency;
6. **Required attendance** at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal if the child is party to the action or under subpoena as a witness;
7. **Required or suggested attendance** or observance of a religious event;
8. **Valid educational opportunities** such as travel including vacations or other family travel when an approval is acquired from the Executive Director or Principal in advance; and
9. **Demonstration** to the Executive Director or Principal in advance when conditions are sufficient to warrant absence from school.

Minor illness (menstrual cramps, headaches, minor colds) is not considered a justifiable reason to miss classes. When an unplanned absence occurs because of injury or illness, parents of commuter students must contact the school immediately by calling the Administrative Office. Upon return, the student must provide a doctor's excuse for the absence. The school nurse will provide a **Health Center Pass** to the Attendance Secretary each day that a student is ill on campus. The Attendance Secretary will e-mail a **Daily Attendance Report** to the teachers to notify them of excused absences so that teachers will know whether students are allowed to make up work missed.

A student who is ill must inform the nurse as soon as possible. Students who do not check in with the nurse will not receive an excuse for illness and will receive a disciplinary action for skipping class. Parents cannot give permission to a student to stay in their rooms without consultation with the school nurse.

1. Going to the nurse does not automatically excuse a student from class. The nurse and/or a doctor must substantiate the seriousness of the illness. A minor illness does not justify an excused absence.
2. At any time during the school day, an excused absence will be granted providing the student has gone to nurse or other designated adult and has a substantiated illness.
3. Students excused from two or more classes because of illness shall not attend school functions that day and are expected to remain in the residence hall room except for meals unless written permission from a physician or the school nurse is provided. Students excused from class attendance must receive permission from the nurse to leave the residence hall. Students cannot attend any school functions when confined to "bed rest" unless approval is obtained from the nurse or a physician.
4. When a student is not returning to school from a holiday and/or weekend at home because of illness, the parents must contact the school immediately. The absence will be recorded as excused upon return of the student to MSA with a doctor's excuse.

5. The absences of students with unsubstantiated illnesses who refuse to go to class will be recorded as unexcused. Excessive unexcused absences will result in notification of the School Attendance Officer.
6. Violation of the above policies may result in an unexcused absence and disciplinary action.
7. Parents are requested to carefully consider allowing students to miss class due to minor illnesses as these absences disrupt their academic progress.

When a commuter student is suddenly absent for other reasons, his or her parents must call the school Attendance Secretary to explain the absence. The determination of excused or unexcused will be made after the phone call. Parents have permission to grant one absence per semester with the Parent Excuse Form if it is turned in compliant with procedures for all excused absences.

**Parents should refrain from allowing their child to check out early—especially on Fridays—or return to school late on Mondays after they have been home for the weekend. Students may not check out until 2:00 p.m. on full days of class scheduled for go home Fridays. Excused absences are the exception.**

An absence that occurs due to a MSA (or BHS) imposed disciplinary action shall not be counted as a separate violation of the policy against the number of allowed unexcused absences. When a student accumulates five (5) unexcused absences in a **single course**, a report will be made to the School Attendance Officer. Pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-91(4), students who have been suspended are considered unexcused and only major grades may be made up.

Regular school attendance is required by the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law, Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-91. Under this Law, parents must inform MSA of the reason for the child's absence and the school policy and/or administration are required to designate the absence as excused or unexcused. Please see the previous page for the nine reasons a student may receive an excused absence under Mississippi Law. Any parent found in non-compliance with the Law may be subject to fines and/or imprisonment.

**All excuses for absences must be turned in within three days of returning from an absence in order to complete make up work.**

## **Excessive Absences and Tardies**

Excessive, unexcused absences and tardies have been troublesome on the MSA campus. When students leave their rooms in the morning, students must take books, equipment, supplies, and personal items necessary for the day. When students have an off block, ample spaces exist in the common areas of the dorm (e.g., cafeteria, patio, library, computer lab, and fitness center) and outside on the campus to accommodate student needs. Students must not visit classes that are in session and should not be present in the Johnson Institute unless they are scheduled to be in class or with a teacher by appointment.

To emphasize the importance of regular school attendance, students and their parents will receive a copy of the MSA attendance policy at registration. Students and parents will sign a contract acknowledging that they have received the document and understand that regular school attendance is necessary to ensure academic success. To remain in good standing at MSA, students must be prepared for class, be on time, and attend class every day. Absences will be monitored each semester. Any student with 5 or more unexcused absences will be placed on an attendance plan, which could affect the student's privilege plan. **Students with less than 95% attendance per year (based on unexcused absences) will also be ineligible for honors at graduation.**

## **Permission for Planned Absence**

When a parent requires a student to leave school for reasons other than school vacations or off campus weekends, the Principal must grant permission **prior to the absence**. An excused absence approval will be forwarded to the Attendance Secretary so that the student may notify teachers prior to the

excused absence. Students may be excused for the following essential reasons: college days; medical, religious, and family emergency reasons; or family commitments.

## **Requests for College Days**

For college days, students should submit a Request for College Day Form to the Attendance Secretary at least five days prior to departure. In general, seniors are allowed two college days. If more days are needed for a single trip (e.g., for traveling out of state or additional college visits, auditions, or interviews), students must acquire the approval of the Principal in advance. Juniors are allowed one college day. College days are not permitted the week of exams. If college days are planned during exam week, it will count as an unexcused absence. Students must take as few college days as possible to ensure that absences are not detrimental to their academic progress. Class work and homework must be completed in the prescribed time designated in the Make-Up Policy.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips are an important extension of the curriculum. Students are afforded many opportunities during the school year to travel in state and out-of-state. With this privilege comes the responsibility to exhibit expected behaviors while representing MSA. Trip administrators, teachers, or staff members in charge will communicate expectations, and the policies of the student handbook are applicable during all travels. Violators will be referred to the Principal. All students should travel in MSA provided transportation. Under special circumstances, students may drive their cars when written parental permission has been provided in advance. In such situations, students will follow behind the bus when possible. Students will sign out of school and drive at their own risk for school functions if this request is granted in advance. Students are encouraged to participate in all field trips sponsored by the school or their teachers. Students are responsible for contacting teachers prior to missing a class for any field trip scheduled by another instructor.

The following guidelines will govern school-sponsored trips:

- Students are responsible for obtaining class and homework assignments missed as a result of field trips. All work must be completed in accordance with the Make-Up Policy.
- The General Permissions Information Form signed by parents provides parental authority allowing students to participate in all school sponsored field trips. Additional permission slips for out-of-state travel will be required for students to participate.
- Rules and regulations found in the MSA handbook pertain to all school-sponsored trips.
- A student without all required signed permission forms and/or assessed fees by the trip date may not participate in the field trip.
- A student not meeting basic academic requirements may be denied participation in the field trip.

## **Assembly Attendance**

Students must attend all assigned assemblies unless excused by the Principal. A student excused from an assembly is responsible for obtaining any information and/or announcements from the assembly that was missed. Students must sit in areas assigned to their specific class. Students who do not have classes scheduled will sit in the section supervised by the school staff.

## **Appropriate Content**

The MSA is a public high school on a campus that includes residential support services. The school seeks to provide a safe and healthy, positive learning environment. In keeping with this philosophy, things such as tobacco, drug, or alcohol usage, profanity, violence, abuse, lewdness, nudity, sexuality, or any other suggestive subject matter is not considered appropriate content in student generated works created in any medium (e.g., written, performed, electronic, artworks, video, photographs, or cartoons). Additionally, work created of a controversial nature shall be discussed and approved with the sponsoring adult/teacher, as well as the administration, prior to the presentation of the work. This policy applies to all aspects of the campus; students and faculty members shall refrain from generating, producing, or performing works that might be questionable. Written and published works may have to be edited to be appropriate for use in a public school context where students are minor children.

Questions regarding appropriate content should be addressed to the Principal or Executive Director. Students and their parents will sign a contract at registration stating that they know and understand policies related to appropriate content. There may be additional parameters set in the classroom or specific departments to further protect the students and school. For questionable content, students will submit an approval form in advance prior to creating the work.

## **Free Speech, Assembly, and Publication**

Students are entitled to freedom of expression if the expression does not disrupt and/or interfere with normal school operations and discipline. Profane, vulgar, racist, or harassing words by their nature disrupt the educational environment and may not be used. Students are responsible, when assembling, for exhibiting appropriate behavior and policies of the school as established in this handbook.

## **Visual Art Senior Work Donation Policy**

The MSA requests that all graduating seniors select one piece of artwork created during their two-year study at the school to be considered for donation to the permanent collection.

The selection process will be as follows:

1. The visual art instructors will work together to select four pieces of art that have been deemed of high quality from each senior portfolio.
2. The student will select one of the four choices to be donated to the school.
3. After each student has selected their work of art to be considered for donation, all of the seniors selected pieces will be put on display from time to time as part of the rotating art exhibits.
4. Students understand that 12 months after graduation, the artwork not in the permanent collection may be sold to benefit the art department, donated to a good cause, or displayed in venues off of MSA's campus.

Storage of artwork after graduation:

Students are responsible for taking all their artwork home shortly after school is out. Any artwork left on school property that was not donated in the selection process will either be recycled or disposed of as the instructors/administration sees fit. A student forfeits the ownership of any art piece that is left.

## **Visual Art Sales**

MSA does not broker art sales of student work to private collectors or businesses. Any work sought by independent collectors must be purchased or obtained from the student directly. If the piece was generated in class and the student is still enrolled at MSA, prior approval must be requested from the administration before the work is sold or donated.

## **Tutoring and Required Study Hours**

Students may request meetings with instructors when extra assistance is needed. Teachers are available during their planning periods and at the scheduled break. If tutorial sessions are requested, MSA staff will work with students and parents to accommodate individual needs to the degree possible. However, **when a student needs one-on-one tutoring (other than peer tutoring), it is the responsibility of the parent to locate a tutor and pay any costs incurred.** When students are on academic probation, mandatory study hours during the day or night may be assigned.

During evening study hours which may vary according to student privilege plans, Monday through Thursday, students will respect the quiet atmosphere needed for studying, rehearsals, practices, and studio work. Depending on academic status and privilege plans, students may be assigned to a specific area for closely supervised study time. Some students may be assigned to the library during study hours for online course monitoring. Students are expected to respect any assigned quiet areas during the study hours.

## **Library**

Students attending MSA are granted the privilege to use the available resources of the library as long as policies and procedures are followed. Each student is responsible for the proper use and timely return of books and materials checked out. Before the end of each semester, students must return all

items checked out of the library before going home. Failure to return books, materials, and equipment by the appointed time could result in fines up to and including the cost of replacement. Students must pay all fines or replacement costs assessed by the library. Library hours will be posted at the beginning of each semester. In addition to the resources of the MSA library, students may use the local county library that is located north of Lampton Auditorium.

The MSA library is an academic instructional space, and students are expected to behave accordingly. Sitting or lying on the floor is inappropriate. **Eating, drinking, or playing musical instruments is not permitted except during club meetings or special events. Listening to or playing music—except for specific class assignments—is forbidden without headphones.**

## **Textbooks and Other Media—Electronic and Print**

Textbooks and other media (e.g., music, CDs, tapes, prints, library books, tools, and equipment) are the property of MSA and are provided without cost or at minimal cost for students enrolled at the school. Students must exercise care in using and maintaining school property. The student assigned responsibility for textbooks or other media must pay for property lost or damaged. In the event MSA property is lost or damaged, the current value of the item to be replaced will determine the amount owed MSA by the student. For damages, the teacher will assess a fine after examining the books and media as they are returned.

## **Equipment**

While enrolled at the MSA, students have diverse opportunities to use instructional resources and equipment. Available resources range from headphones to darkroom equipment, cameras, computers, and projectors in addition to hand and power tools. Various equipment and accessories are available dependent upon the specific course a student is taking or upon the nature of projects assigned.

To ensure that MSA educational resources receive proper use, care, maintenance, and protection, Parents must be financially responsible for loss or damage of school property and equipment. At no time shall students transport these resources outside the MSA designated walking area or on school trips without prior permission. All equipment must be returned to MSA prior to any scheduled breaks for the holidays to avoid paying a fine.

Equipment, such as cameras and computers, can be used for indeterminate periods of time when properly cared for and protected. Students who lose or damage school equipment resources will be responsible for full replacement value or repair costs. **No food or drink should be near equipment.**

## **Classroom Assessment**

The Principal will establish a schedule for the administration of classroom assessments so that no student has more than two state or semester assessments scheduled on any school day. Teachers must administer all assessments and have prior approval from the Principal to deviate from the approved schedule.

## **Exams and Exemptions**

MSA exam schedules will be coordinated with those at Brookhaven High School. In keeping with the MSA philosophy of the importance of demonstrating knowledge acquired in dance, literary arts, media arts, theatre, visual arts, vocal music and other content areas over time, there will be no exemptions from exams in arts courses at MSA. Teacher, peer, and self-assessments are integral components of meaningful learning. Exemptions for academic courses may be granted for the end of course exams if students have met attendance and grade expectations as set forth at the beginning of the year by the Principal.

Students who are absent from an examination must contact their teachers on the day they miss the exam or receive permission to make up the exam from the Principal. If the student fails to contact the teacher or the Principal, the student will receive a zero for that examination. Students with unexcused absences will not be allowed to makeup final term/class exams.



## Academic Probation Policies

**Academic Probation** is a period of time set by an administrator during which a student is given a chance to improve academic achievement demonstrated in specified terms of prior instruction. The Principal will conduct a review of the academic progress of all students on a regular basis with assistance from teachers, staff, and the counselor. When needed, the staff will design and implement an improvement plan with the assistance of parents and the student.

The review of academic progress will help determine the student's ability to attain and maintain success in prescribed course work and to create strategies to assist those in need of assistance. Upon review of grades, course work, and attendance, the staff will make recommendations for students not successful in their schoolwork. Students will be placed on Academic Probation if they have:

1. Earned a final grade below 65 in one or more courses, and/or
2. Earned a final grade of C or below ( $\leq 79$ ) in one or more major arts discipline courses.

To assist with academic progress, students on academic probation will have specific strategies developed to meet their individual needs. Students on academic probation may be required to curtail extracurricular activities when deemed appropriate by the faculty or administration. Teachers and/or administrators may assign tutorials, study times, and/or assigned practice times to help students reach the expectations of the class and school.

## Academic Probationary Process

The Principal or Counselor will notify students, parents, and teachers in writing of students placed on academic probation. After notification, MSA will arrange a conference with the student and a parent/guardian to discuss a contract including future plans and expectations of the student and the manner in which the student must meet the prescribed requirements. The parents, student, faculty, Principal, Executive Director, and the counselor will receive copies of the signed contract. Students who fail to make required minimum academic progress and/or to improve attendance during the probationary term will be evaluated for dismissal.

Students placed on probation twice, even though not necessarily back-to-back, will retain probationary status until graduation or dismissal from the school. Before a student is considered for dismissal, the student and/or his or her parents or guardians may provide, in writing, an explanation for academic performance, attendance, or behavior deficiencies, a possible remediation plan, and reasons the student should remain at MSA. Parents and/or students may initiate a meeting for consideration of status at any time by contacting the counselor.

## Promotion, Retention, and Early Graduation

As authorized by *Miss. Code Ann.* § 37-140-3, the MSA is a two-year residential high school for juniors and seniors. To be admitted and classified as a junior at the MSA, students must have earned a minimum of 12 Carnegie units of instruction, including those courses specified for admission. After completion of the junior year at MSA, a student must have earned a total of 18 Carnegie units to be promoted and classified as a senior.

**Because the programs of study at the MSA are sequential and require two years of study to receive an in-depth curriculum in a specific literary, visual, or performing arts discipline,** mandated courses must be taken in the sequence specific in the *MSA Course Description Booklet* and will not be scheduled as individual study courses.

In the event of extenuating circumstances, the Executive Director may determine whether a student may continue to study at the MSA longer than two years.

Because of the nature of the visual and performing arts disciplines and the rigorous, in-depth programs of study at advanced levels of accomplishment, most students will require four semesters to complete MSA graduation requirements. When students enroll at the MSA, students commit to a two-year

program of study. Therefore, students should not expect to graduate early. In the case of extreme circumstances, the Executive Director may decide whether a student may be allowed to graduate early.

## **Dropout Prevention Plan**

While attrition will occur with each class that enrolls at state special schools governed by the State Board of Education, students come to the school anticipating success, having completed a significant admissions process. While a residential school is not for everyone, the programming, select faculty, and special residential experiences will support continued involvement and success for all enrolled students. The goal of the school is graduation and pursuit of further learning.

A student who fails to meet standards for attendance, academics and/or behavior will be returned to his/her home school where his/her right to access an appropriate public education lies. Any students with special education needs will be assisted in accordance with their Least Restrictive Environment and federal/state law.

1. College and Career Planning
  - a. On-site print and electronic college and career information, catalogs, and application materials
  - b. Campus visits by recruiters from in-state and out-of-state colleges, universities, and other institutions of higher learning
  - c. Transition to college, financial aid, and other workshops relevant to high school students
  - d. Guest speakers and artists who are professionals working in relevant fields of interest among the students
2. Intervention Programs
  - a. Attendance monitoring
  - b. Grade progress reviews throughout grading periods
  - c. Tutorial and/or study blocks supervised by a staff/faculty member
  - d. Ongoing communication between the faculty, administration, and residential life staff regarding individual needs
3. School, Family, and Community Partnerships
  - a. Student data sharing through school package for student records
  - b. E-mail links between parents, teachers, administration, and students
  - c. Real time access by parents to student attendance, grades, assignments via the Internet through the school package for student records
  - d. Additional support for individual students from community and parent groups
4. Support for Transition back to Home Schools
  - a. Communication with parents and students
  - b. Emotional support throughout the decision-making process
  - c. Prompt transfer of records and data upon request of the new school
  - d. Monitoring to ensure that students enroll in new school

## **Summer School**

With prior written approval from the Principal and acceptance from a local district or other approved school, a student may attend summer school to remediate a failed non-arts course or to complete courses needed to fulfill graduation requirements. Before permission to attend Summer School is granted, academic officials will review student records to determine academic needs. Students must obtain approval before summer school begins. The student must provide a course description from the institution attended. Approval rests with the administration of MSA. The course description, the length of the course, and other factors deemed important by the administration will impact the final decision. Students may not enroll in summer school to facilitate a request for early graduation.

## **On-Line Courses**

Occasionally, MSA students may seek enrollment in on-line courses to fulfill their academic course needs. All requests must meet the same criteria as those set forth for summer school courses. Students

who request on-line courses must show evidence of being responsible in self-directed learning situations. Students enrolled in virtual courses while enrolled at the MSA must be scheduled for an on-line course monitoring block, like a regular class period. This block is usually scheduled in the library where work is monitored, and testing occurs in a secure area under the supervision of the media specialist or another staff member. Students who enroll in an on-line course must successfully complete the course or an "F" will be assigned and a numerical grade equal to the student's average in the course as of that date. If a student drops the course prior to the withdrawal deadline, there will be no penalty. If a student is enrolled in an online course that continues all semester (two nine weeks), he or she is only required to work in the library each day for a period of 45 minutes. If the course is to be completed in one nine weeks, students must remain in the library for the entire block.

## MSA Individual Study Courses

Students who are interested in working individually with an arts teacher to research a specific aspect of their arts discipline must discuss the proposal with the instructor. Working with the faculty member to craft a written proposal based on key content in the Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks, the student must submit the final written proposal—including the supervising teacher's signature—to the Principal for approval. **The proposal must be approved prior to the beginning of the semester in which the student wants to schedule the independent study.** Individual study courses will not be scheduled during a faculty member's planning period. Exceptions to the approval process will not be made due to lack of advance planning.

## Credit Recovery

Due to the nature and purpose of the MSA as a special state school, the academic curriculum does not provide options for credit recovery. Because students are eleventh graders when they are admitted and a 2.5 overall GPA is required for admission, the school curriculum does not offer courses or have the human or material resources for the remediation necessary for credit recovery of content failed in the first two years of high school.

## Academic Honors

### Grade Point Average/Quality Point Average

The grade point average (GPA) will be determined for ninth and tenth grades when students are admitted to MSA. GPA will be calculated at the end of the eleventh grade and at the end of the twelfth grade to determine class rank and honor graduates. All courses for which Carnegie units have been awarded (including eighth grade) will be used to determine grade point averages.

Overall grade point averages will be composed on a 100-point scale adding weight to quality points for Advanced Placement, Honors, and Accelerated courses. Numeric grades transferred from other schools will be recorded as shown on the transcript. If the transferring school does not provide a numeric grade, the MSA grading scale will be used for conversion to a numeric equivalent. If the transferring school does not provide quality points, the MSA quality points for each letter grade given to a student will be A (4.0), B (3.0), C (2.0), D (1.0), and F (0.0). Due to the excessive numbers of districts and varying weighted course policies, class rank will be based upon the weight and quality points according to MSA policy regardless of the student's previous school's policies. Courses will be listed on the transcripts as they were taken, but all grades will be maintained at the MSA policy. The quality points earned for each course taken toward graduation requirements make up the student's Quality Point Average (QPA).

## Valedictorian and Salutatorian

A Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be named for each graduating senior class. These students must have followed a college preparatory curriculum as defined by course content required for acceptance into Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning. At the end of the spring semester of the senior year, the student with the highest accumulated QPA, including weighted averages for AP, Honors, and Accelerated courses, will be named Valedictorian. The student with the second highest accumulated QPA, including weighted averages for AP, honors, and accelerated courses, will be named Salutatorian. Seniors with chronic absenteeism (less than 95% attendance per year based upon

unexcused absences) will be ineligible for the title of Valedictorian or Salutatorian. The only exception is in an extenuating circumstance as deemed approved by the administration. If a tie should occur, the following factors shall be examined in the following order by a Graduation Committee appointed by the Principal until a clear ranking is established: (1) The unweighted numeric grade point average of each student; (2) ACT and/or SAT scores; (3) Whether the student has completed the Mississippi Scholars curriculum; (4) The total number of courses attempted; (5) School service; and (6) Participation in extracurricular activities. In addition to grades, students who qualify for Valedictorian or Salutatorian must be in good standing in relation to attendance with 95% attendance per year and discipline—having had no academic dishonesty referrals (e.g., cheating or plagiarism), or suspensions while at MSA. The decision of the Graduation Committee is final. The Graduation Committee reserves the right to revoke the honor of Valedictorian or Salutatorian if after rankings are announced the designees violate any of the qualifying criteria.

### **Class Rank and Honor Graduates**

Student QPA at the end of the spring semester of the twelfth grade will determine student class rank (e.g., 3.25). In addition, a category of special honor graduates will include students with a QPA of 3.75 or higher. Special honor graduates will wear a gold cord at graduation. Students with a QPA of 3.25-3.749 will be classified as honor graduates. Honor graduates will wear a silver cord. In addition to grades, students being considered for Special Honors or Honors must be in good standing in relation to discipline—having had no more than two academic dishonesty referrals (e.g., cheating or plagiarism) while at MSA.

### **Diploma Pathways**

MSA offers diploma pathways of Academic Distinguished, Academic, and Traditional diplomas, which are chosen in junior year. These designations are monitored for compliance and will be indicated on the student's final transcript at graduation. The pathways are established by the Mississippi Department of Education and can be referenced at <https://www.mdek12.org/ESE/diploma>.

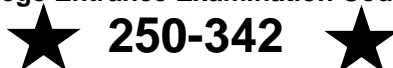
### **Awards Ceremonies**

Near the end of the school year, students will be honored during an awards program. Students and faculty members will take part in planning the program. The categories of honors to be recognized are academic achievement, subject areas, citizenship, attendance, and residential life.

### **College Testing Programs**

The MSA administration will make a good faith effort to avoid scheduling activities on most weekends when the ACT is scheduled. MSA will not provide transportation to testing sites unless they are within the immediate area of Brookhaven. Students are encouraged to take the ACT and SAT as often as possible to attain the highest score possible. Registration packets are available in the counselor's office or students may register on-line. Students are responsible for their own registration and payment of fees. To receive permission to leave campus to take the SAT, the student must provide verification of their scheduled participation in the SAT. All juniors are encouraged to take the PSAT that will be administered on the MSA Campus in October each year. PSAT registration costs are normally around \$15.00. Each test has the possibility of a fee waiver for students who meet financial need criteria as established by the separate testing institutions.

**MSA College Entrance Examination Code (CEEB)**



**ACT Registration**

**ACT Registration: <http://www.actstudent.org/regist/dates.html>**

**ACT Online Preparation: <http://www.actstudent.org/onlineprep/index.html>**

**SAT Registration**

SAT Registration: <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/calenfees.html>  
SAT Online Preparation: [http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/prep\\_one/prep\\_one.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/prep_one/prep_one.html)

#### PSAT Registration

PSAT Registration: <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/reg/dates.html>  
PSAT Online Preparation: <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html>

## Publications

Publications of the school may include newspapers, a yearbook, a literary magazine, or other media. All publications are part of the humanities curriculum and, therefore, do not form a public forum. The school administration and faculty will direct the nature and function of school-sponsored publications. The final product must reflect and fulfill the MSA vision and mission.

To ensure compliance with the MSA vision, mission, and the Student Code of Conduct, student speeches, advertisements, posters, and handouts must be cleared through the Executive Director or Principal before being released, posted, distributed, or presented to others via print or electronic means.

## Beta Club

The MSA Beta Club is an affiliate of the National Beta Club with the mission to promote the ideals of character, service, and leadership among students. To be invited to become a member of the Beta Club—or to continue membership—students must meet academic criteria: an overall numerical grade point average of 90.00 or higher, fulfill required service, and maintain a good disciplinary record as stated in the *MSA Beta Club Standing Rules*. Disciplinary records will be reviewed before invitations for membership are issued; a student who has received an academic dishonesty referral (e.g., cheating or plagiarism), one or more Level III offenses, or has been suspended from school shall not be eligible for membership.

## Arts Ambassadors

Arts Ambassadors are students who project the vision and mission of MSA as official representatives for the school in greeting prospective students, new students, community members, and campus visitors. Arts Ambassadors are responsible for aiding in recruiting new students, working with the recruiting and admissions department for public relations events, and helping with on-site auditions. MSA students may apply to the Arts Ambassador Program in the junior and/or senior years of study.

Arts Ambassadors must attend all meetings or have prior approval by sponsor to miss a meeting. Students may be dismissed from membership for **failure to meet the program's minimum expectations (see Arts Ambassador Manual) or by not upholding the school's mission and vision.**

## Student Government Association

The Mississippi School of the Arts Student Government Association (SGA) is a body of elected student representatives whose goals include providing a bridge between student, faculty, staff, and administration; organizing extracurricular activities, and to assist in the governance of the MSA community.

Students who seek election to SGA must complete a nomination form, have an overall 2.5 GPA, have a good disciplinary record (no academic dishonesty referrals [e.g., cheating or plagiarism], Level III disciplinary offenses, or suspensions), and acquire the signatures of 10 peers and the representative of the office for which they seek election. Elections will be held at the beginning of the fall semester. If questions arise concerning disciplinary records, the Principal or Executive Director will make a final decision.

## **Student Organizations and Clubs**

Students may form and join lawful groups for common purposes that are consistent with the vision and mission of MSA. Clubs will be co-curricular serving the educational purpose of MSA. Students have the responsibility, and will be required, to conduct the activities of the organization in a manner that reflects compatibility with the school and its purpose, policies, and procedures. To meet, all student organizations must have an adult sponsor approved by the MSA administration. Sponsors must attend and supervise all meetings and club activities. Club members shall choose a specific date and time for meetings that repeats monthly (e.g., the first Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the cafeteria). A listing of dates must be submitted to the Attendance Secretary at the beginning of the school year after the first club meeting. Sponsors should check available dates on the MSA Master calendar before offering options to club members. The Attendance Secretary maintains the master calendar. If students wish to organize a new club, the initiator must complete a MSA **Club Proposal Form**, acquire the signatures of ten students who wish to join the club, and submit the information to the Executive Director for approval.

## **Who's Who Elections**

Within each arts discipline (dance, literary arts, media arts, theatre, visual arts, and vocal music), a candidate will be nominated for each category of Who's Who. The categories proposed for Who's Who must be approved by the Principal and/or Executive Director. Due to a disproportionate ratio of male and females in the MSA student population, two students (regardless of gender) will be selected for each category at the junior and senior levels. When the nominations are complete, six names will be placed on the ballot to run for Who's Who.

The same process will be followed for Mr. and Miss MSA for nominations; one male and one female student will be selected. If there is no eligible candidate in one gender, there will be a Mr. or Miss MSA. To be considered for Mr. and Miss MSA, students must have at least a 2.5 overall QPA for the current school year, no failing grade in any course, and a good disciplinary record—no academic dishonesty referrals (e.g., cheating or plagiarism), and no suspensions. All Who's Who elections will take place second semester. If questions arise concerning disciplinary records, the Principal or Executive Director will make a final decision.

## **Athletics**

In keeping with the MSA Wellness Policy, MSA encourages students to be actively involved in physical activities. To the extent possible, MSA students may choose to participate in organized sports programs within the community or at Brookhaven High School. However, since students are enrolled at MSA to focus in depth on the visual and performing arts which require extra time and commitment, involvement in sports must not conflict with arts courses, rehearsals, performances, or other mandatory educational activities.

MSA is a member of the Mississippi High School Activities Association. MSA students who qualify are eligible to participate in the athletic programs at Brookhaven High School as their schedules permit. The athletic program at BHS is extensive with opportunities for both males and females. The coaches are directly responsible for maintaining high qualities of performance and sportsmanship. Interested students should talk with a coach of a particular sport for more information. Grades, conduct, and attendance all play important roles in athletic success. For eligibility requirements, please refer to the Brookhaven High School handbook. Students should check enrollment requirements at BHS in relation to the sport in which he or she is interested.

# **For Parents**

## **Family Involvement and Communication**

Continuous family involvement and communication is an essential element to students successfully adjusting to life away from home. The MSA environment will provide security, support, materials, and

structure to help students continue an academic path to graduation. Ongoing interactive support, communication, and commitment from MSA and parents/guardians are imperative.

Opportunities for parent involvement in student life are multifaceted. Informational and orientation meetings, telephone and campus conferences, varied forms of communication, and options for monitoring student progress via the Internet are just a few of the programs in place to encourage continuous communication.

The Parent Network—connects parents to MSA and builds a statewide support system to advise and promote school programs and student activities.

MSA publishes a regular newsletter that discusses important academic and college admissions topics. Parents/guardians may also request that their e-mail address be added to a parent listserv in order to receive e-mails that students receive regarding college admissions, scholarships, college entrance testing, summer program, and etc. The MSA counselor welcomes communication from parents/guardians and will communicate to parents/guardians as needed to address concerns about their student.

## **Expectations for Parents**

MSA parents/legal guardians are fully responsible for the behavior and performance of their children while enrolled at MSA. When requested, parents/legal guardians must provide all information and appropriate documentation required by the school and the Mississippi Department of Education. Important aspects of parental support are encouraging and enforcing appropriate student behavior, monitoring schoolwork and grades, and keeping up with all school activities and information as reported in correspondence, internet reports, letters, the school web site, and other notices.

Parent(s) and/or guardian(s) should reveal all information regarding any exceptional needs that their child may have (i.e., IEP, 504 Plan, medical, behavioral, or psychological) to ensure that student educational needs are met. Parental failure to provide such information prohibits appropriate scheduling and provision of necessary support services. Failure to provide vital medical information affecting the overall health of the school residential environment to appropriate administration could result in revocation of admittance or dismissal of the student to their local school district. Parents must be diligent in updating changes in address and other contact information with the school registrar to ensure communication in events of an emergency. Parent(s) and/or guardian(s) are fully responsible for providing any custodial agreements effecting students, especially those regarding restrictions of visitors/family members.

## **Costs**

Students pay no tuition at the MSA, a state public residential high school. Legislative appropriations support most of the costs for attendance at MSA. Parents will be responsible for expenses such as room and board, incidental fees, laundry, spending money, and for individual expenses.

## **Incidental Fees**

As stipulated by Miss. Code Ann. § 37-7-335, the MSA may charge reasonable fees for supplemental instructional materials and supplies; other fees designated that are relevant to a valid curriculum educational objective, including transportation; fees for extracurricular activities; and fees for any other educational activities of the school that are not designated as being related to specific curriculum objectives (e.g., competitions or sports events).

In keeping with code requirements, the MSA's fee policies include a financial hardship waiver. Students who wish to apply for a hardship waiver to be exempt from instructional fees must provide the same documentation required for exemption from room and board payments. MSA maintains information related to financial hardships in the strictest of confidence. **Qualifying for a financial hardship waiver does not exempt students from fees for optional services (e.g., vehicle registration).**

The fee schedule for the school year is as follows and is subject to change with advance notice. The charges below do not include fines for loss or damage to school property; expenses for standardized tests that are optional; club memberships; school yearbooks; class rings; graduation expenses; entertainment; dances; field trips, or etc.

## Student Fees

**Financial hardship waivers apply to the required fees listed below. All students who do not meet hardship criteria that have been verified through documentation must pay the following fees.**

Documentation must meet the requirements set forth by MSA and State Board of Education policies and state law. Failure to provide documentation requested will result in denial of hardship waivers. Fees for a specific arts discipline apply only to those students enrolled in specific courses. Payments may be made for room and board as well as fees on one check. The memo line should state the indicated amounts for each. Any checks received without designation on the memo line will be divided as deemed necessary by MSA.

## Required Fees for All Students

<b>Room &amp; Board</b>	\$1000 per year; \$500 per semester. \$250 is due on or before the first day of the fall semester (Term 1); the second payment for is due on or before the first day of Term 2. \$250 is due on or before the first day of second semester (Term 3) and \$250 on or before the first day of Term 4. <b>According to MSBE policy, students may be returned to their home schools for nonpayment of room and board.</b> MSA students who elect to commute rather than live on campus must pay \$250 per semester to help defray the overall costs of operating a state school that provides unique educational opportunities. Payments are due on the dates described above. Hardship waivers apply when families meet the qualifications.
<b>Visual Arts</b>	Per course fees: Painting I & II—\$25.00 each; Sculpture—\$30.00; Advanced Portfolio—\$30.00; Advanced Drawing and Painting—\$30.00; Senior Focus—\$30.00; Mixed Media - \$25.00; 2-D Media Exploration—\$25.00; 3-D Media Production—\$25.00; Digital Arts I and II—\$25.00 each; Photography— \$50.00 (if photography is included in the Intro to Design or only one nine weeks, the fee for that class will be \$25.) – These fees are not exhaustive, and students will be expected to provide an additional list of supplies as directed.
<b>Vocal Music</b>	1. Theory Workbooks (Consumable): Juniors—\$135.00. (Juniors will use the same book for their junior and senior years.) 2. \$20 for dry cleaning performance attire (required of all choir members regardless of waiver status)
<b>Dance</b>	\$20 costume fee for dry cleaning performance attire (required of all dance discipline students regardless of waiver status)
<b>Literary Arts</b>	Paper/Printer fee - \$25
<b>Media Arts</b>	Per course fees: \$25 each course. These fees are not exhaustive, and students will be expected to provide an additional list of supplies as directed.
<b>Theatre</b>	Paper/Printer fee - \$25
<b>Technology</b>	Computer Lab and Supplies: \$30.00 (all students).

## Fees or Materials for All Students

**Hardship waivers do not apply to these expenses.**

<b>Student Services</b>	<b>\$175 per year—Includes Health Center, Refrigerator, Mail Box, Student I.D. Badge, and local transportation (not special trips or field trips).</b>
<b>Literary</b>	1. Student provided journal for writing. 2. <b>\$10</b> - Cost of one Literary Magazine publication.
<b>Visual Arts</b>	1. Costs for specialized matting and shrink-wrapping will relate to the number and size of works prepared by individual student. 2. Required materials/supplies above what is provided by MSA —the art department provides a list for students during the summer.
<b>Theatre</b>	Costume Rental: Costs vary in relation to items required. Parents will be notified in advance if costume rental is incurred.
<b>Vocal Music</b>	1. Blank CDs for burning accompaniment performances; teacher will notify student when needed.



	2. The regional and district competition fee amounts required for vocal music students do not include NATS (not a school-sponsored event). Parents will be notified in advance of additional costs for hotel, travel, or food for special conferences or events.
<b>All Students</b>	1. Competition and/or conference costs will include registration fees, hotel, food, and travel. Costs vary according to event. Parents will be notified in advance. 2. Field Trips: Costs will be based on transportation, tickets, meals, and other expenses related to each activity. Parents will be notified in advance.
<b>Seniors</b>	Graduation expenses (cap & gown rental; keepsake stole, cap, and tassel; diploma and cover) are approximately \$110. Students and parents will receive itemized information regarding graduation costs during the spring semester.

## Costs for Optional Services

All students must pay the following fees if they elect to participate in the services offered.

<b>Dual Enrollment/Credit</b>	If a student enrolls in a dual credit/enrollment course and fails or drops the class after fees are assessed, the student will be responsible for reimbursement to MSA for costs incurred.
<b>Vehicle Registration</b>	\$25.00; Car on campus is optional.
<b>Food Service Extras</b>	Student purchase of extras (e.g., ice cream, beverages not included in basic meal plan) will be based on current market value. Prices will be posted.
<b>Club Memberships &amp; Costs</b>	Club Membership Fees vary according to organizations; sponsors will notify students regarding club costs. Club memberships are optional.
<b>Senior Memorabilia</b>	MSA graduation costs do not include the expenses for special senior class memorabilia or announcements. All orders and payments go straight to the vendor; MSA does not handle these expenses.
<b>Class Rings</b>	Class rings are available for purchase from an outside vendor; prices vary in relation to the design that the student selects. All payments go straight to the vendor; MSA does not handle these expenses.
<b>Yearbook</b>	Average cost is \$60-70
<b>Literary Magazine</b>	\$10 for each copy
MSA reserves the right to increase fees for optional services based upon vendor requirements.	

## Fines for Policy Violations, Loss, or Damage

<b>Returned Check Charge</b>	\$35.00 per incident plus billed charges (applies only to offenders); all future payments must be made in cash or money order.
<b>Phone Calls Charged to MSA Accounts</b>	\$25.00 per incident plus billed costs for unauthorized calls charged to MSA accounts (applies only to offenders)
<b>Lost Student I.D. Badge</b>	\$25 Replacement cost per incident
<b>Lost Temporary I.D. Badge</b>	\$50 Replacement cost per incident
<b>Lost Parking Permit</b>	\$5 Replacement cost per incident
<b>Lost Keys</b>	\$30.00—room key; Mailbox key—\$10.00; Wardrobe Key—\$5.00
<b>Other Lost or Damaged Items</b>	All students are responsible for replacement of lost or damaged textbooks, library books, cameras, computers, calculators, and other digital equipment and/or any other school property entrusted to them.
<b>Disassembly of Dorm Furniture</b>	\$100 reassembly fee. Students cannot put furniture together to avoid fees.
<b>Late pick up of students</b>	\$25/hour will be charged for late pick up of students after 6pm on mandatory go-home weekends.
<b>Late payment of fees</b>	\$10 per month late fee will be added for late payments due on all fees and/or room and board payments.

## State Board of Education Room and Board Policy

The Mississippi Legislature mandates that the MSA charge a fee for room and board. The amount of this fee as established by the Mississippi Legislature, may be paid in increments of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) for each semester or two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) for each term.

This fee shall be waived for those students who demonstrate a financial hardship.

### I. Application for a Financial Hardship Waiver

Prior to enrollment for the school year, each parent or guardian applying for a financial hardship waiver of fees must complete an application and provide written evidence/documentation to verify the financial information and written confirmation of a household's circumstances must be provided at the time of application for a waiver of fees.

This documentation must consist of one of the following:

- a. Proof of enrollment in the State Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP ; or
- b. The most recent Mississippi Resident Income Tax Form showing adjusted gross income that would qualify the student for the National School Lunch Program (pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-7-335).

To receive a Financial Hardship Waiver for Room and Board or Instructional Fees, parents or guardians must:

1. Complete a Financial Hardship Application Form.
2. Fill out the Family Circumstances Form; and either  
Attach a copy of your most recent Mississippi Individual Income Tax Form.
  - A. Include tax return showing income of both parents and all dependents.
  - B. If parents file jointly, only one form is required.
  - C. If parents file singly, include copies of both tax returns.
  - D. W-2 statements are not acceptable.

or

If your child participates in the state Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP), include a copy of the CHIP card.

3. **Submit all materials to MSA prior to the deadlines set for each school year. Failure to meet deadlines will result in denial of hardship waivers. A change in status during the year will be considered for families as necessary.**

The MSA does not award room and board scholarships. However, the MSA Foundation provides information to each student upon request about how to solicit scholarship sponsors in hometown communities.

## II. Certification of Information

The parent/guardian requesting a financial hardship waiver of fees must certify in writing that all information furnished to the school is true and correct and provide a social security number for each member of the household or indicate that such member does not have a social security number. Information provided for a waiver of fees may be verified at any time during the school year to determine if the student qualifies for a waiver of fees.

## III. Households

Households receiving a waiver of fees must notify school officials during the school year of any change in income that would disqualify the student from waiver of fees.

## IV. Confidentiality

The information provided in compliance with this hardship waiver shall be kept in the strictest of confidence with all files and personal disclosures restricted from review by the general public and shall be used solely for the purposes of determining the student's eligibility for the financial hardship waiver of fees.

## V. Refund of Fee

If a student decides not to attend the MSA prior to moving in the dormitory prior to the beginning of the semester, one hundred percent (100%) of the fee paid may be refunded.

If a student ceases enrollment and moves from the dormitory, a proportional percentage of the fees paid shall be refunded, based on the number of days enrolled. Proration shall be based on a rate of \$500 (per semester) divided by the number of residential days (days per semester) to determine a daily cost.

No refund of the fee will be made after the end of the first nine-week period in either fall or spring semester. All requests for refunds must be made in writing no more than 30 days after withdrawal from enrollment to the MSA by completing the documentation required by

the administrators' operating procedures. Any outstanding fines or fees will be deducted from payments received prior to issuing any refunds.

## **VI. Failure to Adhere to Fee Policy**

MSA may dismiss any student for the failure to adhere to the prescribed procedures as described in the school's student handbook.

The implementation of the \$500.00 fee for room and board per semester will not impact other established policies and procedures.

## **Reimbursement of Fees**

All fees, with the exception of room and board and food service accounts, are nonrefundable after the first day of classes. Application for a partial refund of the room and board fee may be made provided the student ceases enrollment prior to the end of the first nine weeks of each semester. Optional fees are nonrefundable.

## **Fund Raising**

All student fundraising projects must be submitted to the faculty sponsor of an organization. If the sponsor approves the project, the faculty sponsor submits the request to the Principal and Executive Director for final approval. Requests should be submitted four (4) weeks in advance of the proposed activity. All funds raised must be submitted to the Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director for receipt, deposit, and proper accounting. An annual accounting should be submitted to the Executive Director in May. Fundraising projects must meet the goals of the MSA Wellness Policy. Parents are not permitted to fundraise as MSA representatives without prior approval of the Executive Director.

## **Distribution of Non-MSA Printed Material**

Any information advocating non-MSA causes must be submitted to the Principal or Executive Director for approval and dissemination. Signs, posters, or other print materials must be approved prior to posting. The MSA does not post or distribute materials from commercial vendors or faith-based organizations.

## **Media Policies**

MSA has a positive working relationship with the news media to promote the school and its mission. The Executive Director is the spokesperson for coordinating media coverage. All news releases, newsletters, public service announcements, publicity, promotional brochures, advertising (except for advertising for purchasing), graphics, photography, and etc. will be originated, produced, disseminated and/or approved by the Executive Director or designee. All students, clubs, and organizations affiliated with MSA must comply.

## **Privacy Policy**

The administration, faculty, and staff at the MSA respect the right of privacy of the members of the student body. This guiding principle does not apply when disclosure is required to prevent clear and imminent danger to an individual or another member(s) of the MSA family, or when legal requirements demand that confidential information be revealed, or when a member of the administration, faculty, or staff becomes aware that an individual is making self-destructive choices. Only information that is directly relevant to the purpose for which the disclosure is made should be revealed on a "need to know" basis pursuant to State and Federal law.

## **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)**

The schools governed by the Mississippi State Board of Education will protect the confidentiality of all previous or currently enrolled students regarding information contained in its records as prescribed by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's educational records. These rights are:

The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day MSA receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the Executive Director (or their designee) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Executive Director will arrange for access and notify the parent or the eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the school to amend a record should write the Superintendent/Executive Director (or their designee), clearly identifying the part of the record they want changed and specifying why it should be changed.

If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent of eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing. If, as a result of the hearing, the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to insert a statement in the record setting forth his or her views.

The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school and/or the Mississippi Department of Education as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); or a person serving on the Mississippi Board of Education. A school official may also include a volunteer or a person, company, consultant or other party or contractor with whom the school and/or Mississippi Department of Education has outsourced to perform an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of personally identifiable information from education records (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district or college in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer.

Any disciplinary actions affecting attendance are included in the student's permanent record and cumulative folder. The school will forward education records, including disciplinary records, to other schools or colleges in which the student seeks or intends to enroll upon request.

The school may disclose directory information about students without consent. Directory information means information contained in an education record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes, but is not limited to, the student's name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, grade level, enrollment status, dates of attendance, participation in officially recognized

activities and sports, weight and height or members of athletic teams, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended.

The school may disclose personally identifiable information from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student under certain conditions set forth in the FERPA regulations. Personally identifiable information includes, but is not limited to, the student's name; the name of the student's parent or other family members; the address of the student or student's family; a personal identifier, such as the student's social security number, student number, or biometric record; other indirect identifiers, such as the student's date of birth, place of birth, and mother's maiden name; other information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific student that would allow a reasonable person in the school community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student with reasonable certainty; or information requested by a person who the educational agency or institution reasonably believes knows the identity of the student to whom the education record relates.

The parent or eligible student has the right to refuse to let the school designate any or all types of information about the student as directory information. The parent or eligible student must notify the Executive Director (or his/her designee) in writing within 14 days of receipt of this notice that he or she does not want any or all of those types of information about the student designated as directory information or disclosed to military recruiters.

The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:  
Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

## **Confidentiality and Disclosure Policy**

Schools governed by the Mississippi State Board of Education respect the privacy rights of all their constituents. This policy does not apply when disclosure is required to prevent clear and imminent danger to an individual or the school community, or when legal requirements demand confidential information be revealed, or when it becomes clear to the faculty or staff that an individual is making self-destructive choices. This includes, but is not limited to, threats of suicide, child abuse, pregnancy, communicable or fatal diseases, eating disorders, substance abuse, self-mutilation, or etc. Only information related to the reason for disclosure will be revealed on a "need to know" basis. Individuals should consult with members of the administrative staff as to the validity of an exception.

## **Armed Forces Recruiter Access**

The Armed Forces Recruiter Access to Students and Student Recruiting Information Forces Act requires that MSA provide student names, addresses, and telephone numbers to military recruiters and institutions of higher education upon request. Parents may choose to prohibit the school from providing any of this information by completing the Refusal of Directory Information and Recruiter Access Form and returning it to the MSA school counselor within three weeks of registration each year.

## **Withdrawals**

### **Types of Withdrawal**

**Academic Withdrawal**—for students who are required to leave for failure to meet academic expectations or who fail to meet the graduation requirements.

**Financial Withdrawal**—for students who are required to leave for failure to comply with room and board policies established by the State Board of Education. If payments have not been received by the end of the week following the due date, the student can be dismissed.

**Voluntary Withdrawal**—for students who feel their academic and personal needs and interests would be better served in another learning environment.

**Exchange Student Withdrawal** – for students departing the United States to serve as an exchange student and will return to repeat the junior or senior year. Students may or may not be allowed to reenroll pending decision from the administration based upon an application/audition and the standing of the student with regard to grades and discipline while enrolled at MSA.

### **Withdrawal Procedures**

1. Students planning to withdraw should consult the MSA counselor/Principal who will explain withdrawal procedures. An exit conference with the custodial parent(s) and the student must be held with the counselor/Principal. Students must have a signed parental consent in order to withdraw, regardless of the student's age.
2. When exiting MSA, all students must complete a **Withdrawal Form** that may be obtained from the Executive Director or Principal. This form must be completed in its entirety and signed by the required MSA administrators and staff members. The Withdrawal Form becomes part of a student's permanent record. MSA will release student records to another school when the parent(s) or guardian(s) complete and sign a withdrawal form. The only exceptions to this policy might be cases involving dismissal or expulsion; under such circumstances, the disciplinary documentation will serve as a record of withdrawal.
3. To withdraw, the following stations must be cleared:
  - a. Textbooks (BHS) returned to the Principal whose office is located in the Johnson Institute,
  - b. Textbooks (MSA) returned to individual teachers for each course,
  - c. Library books and equipment returned to the MSA library,
  - d. Technology accounts closed by the Technology Coordinator,
  - e. Medicine picked up from the School Nurse,
  - f. Room inspected and keys (dorm room, wardrobe, and mailbox) returned,
  - g. School supplies, equipment, and uniforms returned to arts discipline teacher(s),
  - h. Parking permit and student ID card returned to the Security Office,
  - i. Food accounts closed with Food Services, and
  - j. Fees, fines, and damages paid before withdrawal is complete. Payments may be made in the Y-Hut.
4. Once a student has withdrawn from MSA, students may/may not be allowed to reenroll based upon standing of the student regarding grades and discipline, and time elapsed after withdrawal forms are submitted.

Since the working hours of MSA staff members vary, a withdrawing student must make an appointment with the Director of Residential Life or the Director of Maintenance to have the room inspected before the withdrawal is completed. All student belongings must be removed prior to inspection.

**All withdrawals must occur between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.** Students are required to leave the MSA campus by 7:00 p.m. on the date of withdrawal. Students may not withdraw on a weekend, holiday, or at night when most of the staff is not on duty. MSA reserves the right to prohibit a student who has withdrawn from returning to the campus or attending any school functions.

# Expectations for Students

MSA is strongly committed to academic excellence and artistic growth for all students. Goals for students include acquiring accomplished artistic knowledge and expertise, becoming divergent thinkers, improving knowledge in arts and non-arts subjects, perfecting written and oral communication skills, displaying a sense of community, and maintaining high standards of behavior. Students must devote a great deal of personal time and effort toward meeting these expectations. To emphasize the importance of student self-discipline and social responsibility, all students and their parents will sign a contract at registration acknowledging that they read and understand expectations set forth in this Handbook and embodied in the Student Code of Conduct.

## Privilege Plans

The MSA has a system of privilege plans to reward students for work well done and for being good citizens. Rather than limit junior student activities until the end of the first grading period, the school trusts students to be individually responsible for succeeding in their academic courses, following school rules and regulations, and participating in extracurricular activities.

The privilege plan process is based on student and staff suggestions and refinements made to the program over the years. Privilege Plan Levels are denoted by color: **Blue** (clear blue sailing), **Green** (growing and progressing), **Yellow** (caution) and **Red** (STOP, something needs to change!). The following will be considered to determine the various levels of privileges for individual students:

1. Students with all A's (4.0) on their progress report or report card will be placed on blue plan as long as there are no outstanding discipline issues (Campus Work Service, campus work tasks, or disciplinary probation).
2. Students with A's and B's (3.0-3.9) on their progress report or report card will be placed on the green privilege plan as long as there are no outstanding discipline issues (campus work service, campus work tasks, or disciplinary probation).
3. Students with A's, B's, and C's (only in traditional academics: science, math, social studies, English, or etc.) will be placed on green privilege plan as long as there are no outstanding discipline issues (campus work service, campus work tasks, or disciplinary probation).
4. Students with a 79-65 in arts discipline class(es) or students with a 69-65 in traditional academic courses (math, science, social studies, English, or etc.) will be placed on yellow plan as long as there are no outstanding discipline issues (campus work service, campus work tasks, or disciplinary probation).
5. Students with a grade below a 65 or below in any class or a student with multiple grades below a 70 will be placed on red plan.

The juniors' first assigned privilege plan will be green school until grades for MSA have been earned. Seniors begin their senior year on blue unless they have a final grade at the end of junior year of failing in any course. This allowance to return is only if the student is still eligible to graduate based upon the committee invitation to return. Student will be on academic probation and red plan until grades are earned for the term. During any term, if students have an incomplete at the end of the grading period, they are automatically placed on the Red Privilege Plan until the grade is final.

Students who have campus work service or detentions assigned that have not been completed by the deadline given at the end of each grading cycle will be automatically placed on the Red Privilege Plan until the consequences are met. Graduating seniors must finish all campus work tasks, detentions, and campus work services owed to participate in graduation exercises. Juniors will not receive an invitation to return until all obligations are met. Those students who volunteer to perform campus work service are rewarded with bonus points on his or her Privilege Plans.

At the end of each four-week period, the administrative staff will review grades and look at each student's discipline. Students will be notified regarding the level for which he or she qualifies as soon as possible. Students with incomplete grades at the end of a term will automatically be placed on the Red Plan until the incompletes are removed.

Throughout the school year, students must be aware that any future disciplinary violations will be assigned the corresponding consequences regardless of his or her privilege plan. The consequences for rule violations supersede any earned privilege with which they conflict. For example, a violation that results in dorm restriction would result in the punishment having to be served even if the plan includes off-campus privileges. Once the penalty is served, the privilege plan resumes. Likewise, if the punishment for a disciplinary infraction has not been completed when the four-week period ends, the consequences will continue until fulfilled, even if a new nine weeks has started. It should be noted that unless an extreme circumstance prescribes it, students will not be placed on new privilege plans in the middle of a four-week term. Students with excessive absenteeism and an attendance plan are subject to being assigned a lower privilege plan.

**Parents can request that their children be put on a specific privilege plan level for disciplinary reasons, lower than that earned by the student. If a student is placed on probation or fails to correct behavior at any time during the school year, privilege plan levels may be impacted. The administration welcomes suggestions regarding student privileges and rewards for good citizenship throughout the year. MSA requests that parents do not try to circumvent the privilege plan system by giving permission for students to check out when they are not permitted by their prescribed plan. Parents must sign out students in person at school if they are permitted to be away greater than the allowed times. Privilege plans will not be changed to a better plan by parent request unless there is proof of a grade or discipline dispute that is in favor of the student.**

## **Student Dress Code**

All students must observe minimal standards of hygiene, sanitation, and personal grooming. The Student Dress Code is based on two precepts—good health and safety and consistency with instructional processes. To prepare for increased restrictions and responsibilities within the adult workplace, students must learn while still in school to observe basic regulations for the whole group. Students must follow dress code guidelines. Violations of this code will result in disciplinary action. In all instances, school administrators and staff will determine the appropriateness of school clothing. Students that attend classes at Brookhaven High School are also required to follow their prescribed dress code as established in their handbook and reviewed with students at the beginning of school. Dress code guidelines include, but are not limited to the following:

- Students must wear clothing as intended to be worn and in a manner that is appropriate for school. Students must be covered appropriately as they select clothing for wearing in all public areas of the campus.
- Shoes, boots, or sandals are always required during school related activities or in public areas on campus except during dance class or rehearsals.
- The length of shorts, skirts, and dresses must be worn no shorter than 6 inches above the knee when sitting (i.e., below the fingertips when standing and long enough for stooping, bending, and sitting modestly) at all times when the student is participating in school related activities or in public areas on campus. The length of the hem should be at fingertip length all the way around (front, back, and sides).
- Straps on dresses, skirts, and tops must be a minimum of two inches wide; underwear must be concealed.
- Personal grooming during class is inappropriate.
- Students should have their under garments concealed. Students should also wear appropriate under garments while outside of their dorm room.
- Clothing, wigs, face paint, and other items of attire that could be classified as “costumes” are not appropriate for general school wear. Such attire must be limited to occasions where appropriate (e.g., dances and costume parties).
- Students should dress in relation to the context and occasion and in a manner that would uphold the student code of conduct.
- The top layer of clothing must meet dress code (coats do not constitute a layer of clothing).
- Caps shall be worn with the bill in the front.



MSA adopts the CROWN Act, which stands for “Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair,” which prohibits race-based hair discrimination because of hair texture or protective hairstyles including braids, locs, twists, or bantu knots.

### **Inappropriate Apparel**

Inappropriate apparel includes:

- Clothing depicting vulgarity; tobacco, drug, or alcohol advertisements; suggestive (sexual connotations) slogans or pictures; profane language; or messages with double meanings;
- Tops that are revealing (e.g., tank tops, spaghetti straps, cut-off tops, tube tops, halter tops, sports bras, and muscle shirts); shirts that are excessively low in the front, back, or under the arms; or clothing that exposes midriffs;
- Pants, shorts, capris, and etc., that hang below the waist;
- Cutoffs, clothing with holes above the knee, or clothing that tends toward immodesty;
- Sweatbands, plastic shower type caps, curlers, or night regime garments;
- Obtrusive hats or sunglasses in the classroom;
- Pajamas, robes, and bedroom slippers;
- Raincoats or trench coats, except in inclement weather; coats must be removed inside;
- See-through garments;
- Pajamas or clothes that appear to have been slept in; and
- Dance attire outside of the dance class.

**Students must not wear the above listed garments in the common areas of the dorm (e.g., cafeteria, laundry room, patio, second floor lounge, and library), in classrooms, or any other public location on campus.** Failure to comply with dress code regulations will result in disciplinary action. Students will dress casually and comfortably in relation to the specific activity or occasion (e.g., swimming, recreation, or relaxing in the dorm). At all times, students must exercise good judgment when making decisions pertaining to personal grooming and dress. The staff will provide assistance when students have questions about dress codes. Teachers have the right to make additional requirements for dress code in their classroom (i.e. no hats, dance attire, or etc.).

### **Dance/Movement Attire**

When students enroll in a dance or movement course, they will receive a list of clothing appropriate for class. Students are given time to dress out at the beginning of class and to change into regular school attire at the end of class. **Dance attire is not acceptable outside the dance studio or rehearsal space.** Long hair shall be pulled back and pinned securely into a bun away from the student’s face and neck. Hair that is too short for a bun shall be pinned or styled neatly. Hair in the face or loose hanging hair styles are prohibited. Any students with questions regarding a personal hairstyle change should request a conference with the teacher.

### **Representing MSA and Special Occasions**

MSA students are involved in a wide variety of activities in diverse contexts and are expected to dress appropriately and professionally. MSA faculty and staff reserve the right to guide students in making appropriate choices. Depending on the context, when a student is representing the MSA, unconventional hair colors (e.g., blue, green, pink, or purple) may not be allowed. In professional settings (e.g., auditions, performances, and competitions), earrings, studs, or other items of adornment in pierced body parts other than the ears are discouraged and may have to be removed. Some school activities may require more formal dress. MSA faculty and staff will notify students of these activities and dress requirements in advance and enforce compliance with proper dress standards. Learning to wear appropriate attire is important to student social and professional career development and preparation.

Performance attire may be more formal than regular dress standards. The MSA faculty and staff will set the standards for performance including appropriate clothing, jewelry and hairstyles. Dressing appropriately for performance is an important part of learning to perform in a professional manner.

For students performing in recitals that do not require specific attire (i.e., Vocal music recitals where students wear their own clothes), dresses must be in accordance with dress code and seen prior to the event. Students should keep in mind that dresses above the knee are generally discouraged when performing on a stage to prevent wardrobe malfunctions. If students plan to sit down at any time during their performance on stage, dresses above the knee are not allowed. Strapless or low-cut dresses are also not allowed. Straps must be at least two inches wide and in accordance with MSA dress code.

## **Cell Phones and Other Personal Communication Devices**

Students may choose to bring a cell phone or other personal communication devices (PCDs) for use while they are in residence at MSA. The following regulations as specified in the MSA Personal Communication Device Contract will govern the possession and use of cell phones and other personal communication devices (PCDs) on campus at the MSA.

1. Personal communication devices are defined as any mechanism designed to accommodate electronic or wireless communication (e.g., cell phones, laptops, smart watches, tablets, and Bluetooth devices).
2. Use is defined as making any outgoing or receiving any incoming call, page, text message, post on social media, opening application, or e-mail. This includes incoming communications (ringing, vibrating, or silent) that are not answered.
3. Students must not photograph or video individuals by means of camera phones without the person's permission in advance.
4. Students must refrain from the use of camera phones at school functions unless special permission has been granted in advance by the administration.
5. On weekends or in the evening hours, PCD regulations apply.
6. PCDs may be required to be turned in during state testing, study hours, meetings, assemblies, or performances. If not required to be turned in, all PCDs must be on silent or off. Violation of this policy during state mandated testing may invalidate the students' tests during the test administration.
7. If a student violates PCD policies at Brookhaven High School, parents/guardians must deal directly with the BHS administration. The MSA administration will not act on behalf of parents.
- 8. The MSA assumes no responsibility for loss, theft, or damage to personal communication devices.**
9. The MSA assumes no responsibility for unauthorized communications or charges made by means of PCDs.
10. No video of any student or staff may be taken without their consent.
11. The cell phone policy for possession and use must be followed to avoid disciplinary action.

**Failure to follow the guidelines above may result in additional consequences, including possible confiscation.**

## **Personal Communication Device Policy**

The MSA permits the possession of personal communication/electronic devices (including phones, MP3/iPod, tablets, and etc.) on the school campus at the Executive Director's discretion. The use of these devices is permitted before and after the official school day. All devices must be out of sight and turned off during the official school day, unless specifically instructed by the academic teacher to use for instructional purposes only. These devices must also be turned off while in special activities, assemblies or events and anytime requested by an MSA staff member. Students who violate this policy and the associated regulations shall be deemed to have created a disruption and are subject to appropriate disciplinary action. No student shall photograph, videotape, record or reproduce, via any audio or video means, another student or staff member while on school premises without the expressed prior permission of the subjects and the administration.

The teacher has discretion on use of electronic devices during class as it relates to instructional purposes only. The teacher may not mandate the use of a personal electronic device. Use of electronic devices during class at any time shall comply with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and the Children’s On-line Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). Compliance includes all social media and any prohibited websites as mandated by the Mississippi Department of Education or the MSA.

Use of personal electronic devices in the residential setting are also subject to the same laws and mandates as it is on the MSA campus. All privileges can be revoked if required to maintain compliance and order.

MSA computers or other equipment must not at any time under any circumstance be connected to a personal hotspot hosted by a personal communication device. MSA does not accept responsibility for any fees associated with the use of electronic devices or data use. In addition, students are solely responsible for the security of their personal electronic devices. MSA does not assume responsibility for any unauthorized use of any device. MSA must honor the Brookhaven School District Secondary Parent/Student Handbook for any offenses related to PCDs.

### **Portable Listening Devices**

1. All MSA employees will take measures to educate students about unhealthy actions that threaten long-term hearing and put the ear at risk.
2. Based upon teacher permissions, music in the classroom is allowed by means of radio as long as the volume is kept low. Students can share appropriate music selections and learn about diverse types of music. Opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning abound when music is used appropriately in classrooms.

### **Student Employment**

Given the primary purpose of the school and the extended hours of work related to art production and performance as well as increasing graduation requirements, it is not recommended for MSA students to be employed. The completion of advanced programs of study in visual and performing arts discipline within two years demands concentration, focus, and self-discipline including afternoons, nights, and weekends. In the event of dire financial circumstances, the Executive Director will consult with parents and may consider a student working while enrolled at MSA. However, MSA expectations must remain the primary focus of every student. Grades, discipline expectations, and overall student performance will be evaluated prior to and during employment to ensure the student’s success at MSA.

### **Brookhaven High School**

Students who are enrolled in classes or activities at the Brookhaven High School are subject to the rules and regulations established by the Brookhaven School District Handbook. Enrolled students are provided orientation to these policies at the beginning of the school year. Additionally, a copy can be obtained at the [www.brookhavenschools.org](http://www.brookhavenschools.org).

### **Mississippi State Laws**

The State Legislature has passed several laws in an attempt to prevent school violence and motivate students to modify or extinguish delinquent behavior. A copy of the entire law may be found in the volumes of Mississippi Code Annotated of 1972, as amended. The following statutes are examples of some of the state laws that pertain to student conduct but are not meant to be an exhaustive list of all statutes applicable to student conduct on or off school property. A complete copy of the Mississippi Code of 1972 may be found at the Mississippi Secretary of State website: [www.sos.ms.gov/communications-publications/mississippi-law](http://www.sos.ms.gov/communications-publications/mississippi-law).

Miss. Code Ann. §37-3-51	Notification of the Department of Education of conviction of certified person of certain felonies of sex offense
Miss. Code Ann. §37-3-81	School Safety Center established by the Mississippi Department of Education
Miss. Code Ann. §37-3-84	Confiscation of illegal firearms; reward

Miss. Code Ann. §37-3-89	School discipline and classroom management courses; requirement; approval
Miss. Code Ann. §37-3-93	School Crisis Management Program; quick response teams; toll-free telephone service for reporting school violence
Miss. Code Ann. §37-7-323	Application and enforcement of general laws of state
Miss. Code Ann. §37-9-14	General duties and powers of superintendent of school district
Miss. Code Ann. §37-9-17	Fingerprinting and criminal background check for applicants
Miss. Code Ann. §37-9-71	Suspension of pupils
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-5	Instruction in fire drills and emergency management
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-18	Automatic expulsion of student possessing controlled substance or weapon or committing violent act on school property
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-18.1	Automatic expulsion of habitually disruptive students aged 13 years or older upon third occurrence of disruptive behavior within school year
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-19	Suspension or expulsion of student damaging school property; liability of parent for damages
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-20	Intimidation, threatening, or coercion of students for purpose of interfering with attendance of classes
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-21	Abuse of superintendent, principal, teacher, or bus driver
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-23	Disturbing public school sessions or meetings
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-29	Reporting of unlawful activity or violent act on educational property
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-35	Penalties for failure to file reports pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-29 and Miss. Code Ann. § 97-5-24
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-37	Public high school fraternity, sorority or secret society, definition
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-39	Public high school fraternity, sorority or secret society, illegality
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-41	Public high school fraternity, sorority or secret society, membership or participation in activities
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-43	Public high school fraternity, sorority or secret society, duties of board of trustees
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-49	Wearing of approved eye protective devices required during participation in certain vocational, industrial arts, and chemical-physical courses of instruction
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-53	Distribution of school district's discipline plan; content of plan; discipline conference; fines and penalties; recovery of damages
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-55	Code of Student Conduct
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-57	Immunity of school personnel from liability for carrying out action in enforcing rules regarding control, discipline, suspension and expulsion of students
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-67	Bullying or harassing behavior prohibited in schools
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-69	Prohibition against bullying or harassing behavior
Miss. Code Ann. §37-13-91	Compulsory school attendance requirements, generally, enforcement of law
Miss. Code Ann. §37-15-3	Storage of cumulative folders; access to records; disposition of records upon transfer of student between schools; destruction of records
Miss. Code Ann. §37-15-6	Central reporting system for information concerning expulsions from public schools; access to information
Miss. Code Ann. §37-15-9	Requirements for enrollment of children in public schools
Miss. Code Ann. §41-29-105	Definitions related to possession, transfer, etc. of controlled substances
Miss. Code Ann. §41-29-113-121	Controlled substances, Schedules I-V
Miss. Code Ann. §41-29-313	Drug-Free Workplace of 1988
Miss. Code Ann. §49-29-105	Inhalants, definitions
Miss. Code Ann. §63-11-30	Operation of vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or controlled substances
Miss. Code Ann. §67-1-5	Alcoholic beverages, definitions

Miss. Code Ann. §67-1-81	Underage purchase, receipt, possession, sale of alcohol
Miss. Code Ann. §71-7-1	Drug and Alcohol Testing
Miss. Code Ann. §93-5-26	Right of non-custodial parents
Miss. Code Ann. §97-31-27	Sale, possession of intoxicating beverages prohibited
Miss. Code Ann. §97-31-47	Transportation of intoxicating liquors into or within the state
Miss. Code Ann. §97-32-1	MS Juvenile Tobacco Access Prevention Act
Miss. Code Ann. §97-32-3	Definition of tobacco products
Miss. Code Ann. §97-32-9	Juvenile purchase, possession of tobacco on school property
Miss. Code Ann. §97-32-27	Definition of adult, minor, educational property
Miss. Code Ann. §97-35-13	Disruption of a public place
Miss. Code Ann. §97-32-3	Definitions of tobacco products
Miss. Code Ann. §97-32-13	Juvenile misrepresentation of age for the purchase or possession of tobacco products
Miss. Code Ann. §97-37-1	Deadly weapons; carrying while concealed; use or attempt to use
Miss. Code Ann. §97-37-17	Possession of weapons by a student; aiding or encouraging
Miss. Code Ann. §97-44-1 et. seq.	Mississippi Streetgang Act
Miss. Code Ann. §41-29-313	Precursor chemicals or drugs; presumption; unlawful manufacture of
	controlled substances; offenses; penalties
Miss. Code Ann. §43-21-353	Reporting abuse or neglect
Miss. Code Ann. §43-47-7	Reports of abuse neglect exploitation
Miss. Code Ann. §97-3-54.1	Human trafficking
Miss. Code Ann. §97-5-1 et seq.	Offenses affecting children
Miss. Code Ann. §97-5-24	Sexual involvement of school employee with student, reporting
Miss. Code Ann. § 97-3-105	Hazing; punishment
Miss. Code Ann. § 97-29-3	Sex between teacher and pupil
Miss. Code Ann. § 97-29-45	Obscene electronic and telecommunications
Miss. Code Ann. §§ 97-32-5	Sale of tobacco to persons under 18 prohibited
23 U.S.C. §158	National minimum drinking age

## Philosophy

At the heart of the vision and mission of MSA is a strong belief in intellectual, academic, and social honesty and integrity. To develop a strong sense of community, the student code of conduct provides a framework within which a sense of closeness, cooperation, sharing, enjoyment, and belonging can emerge. All groups find comfort in establishing standards or rules that help guide the behavior of its members. MSA recognizes the need for such rules, and also understands the value of defining possible consequences in the event those rules are disregarded.

Standards of discipline have been established to provide clear expectations. Both parents and students should spend time familiarizing themselves with these policies. Parents can support the school by holding their children accountable for their actions and not seeking exceptions to policies. Parents are urged to work cooperatively with the academic and residence life staff in maintaining established behavioral standards. MSA will consistently determine consequences for inappropriate behavior.

While sharing responsibility for ensuring a safe living and learning environment, students at MSA must practice self-discipline. MSA staff will assist students in managing their behaviors through education about policies, confronting those in violation, and issuing consequences. MSA encourages and promotes positive behavior and will ensure due process for all students. If students make decisions or choices that do not follow the policies and standards of MSA, they will be held accountable for their actions. The faculty and staff will handle minor violations. However, serious incidents may be referred directly to the administration. A student who is in the presence of a peer breaking MSA policy is “knowingly present” and thus equally responsible for reporting the violation.

The MSA administration, faculty, and staff will determine what constitutes standards of acceptable behavior and address violations of those guidelines utilizing discretion. Unanticipated, unacceptable incidents will arise and require follow-up action. The intent of the school is not to supplant student

responsibilities by itemizing every possible violation and defining consequences. Hence, the absence of specifically defined rules or regulations, procedures, or policies should not be viewed as an indication of acceptable behavior. Students should ask for clarification before making assumptions or conducting questionable behavior.

An ongoing goal is to administer discipline with fairness, impartiality, and justness. MSA will judge students as individuals; considerations may include student attitudes and past disciplinary histories. Creating an all-inclusive list of actions resulting in the disciplinary sanctions is impossible.

## **Disciplinary Action Policy**

Students are subject to discipline while they are subject to the jurisdiction of the MSA, while participating in or going to or from any school-related activity, at any place where an activity, contest, or event is taking place, during the course of any field trip, during the course of any trip or activity sponsored or supervised by the school, while under the supervision or direction of any teacher, administrator, or other authority of the school, or when such conduct does or may threaten to interfere with or disrupt the educational or residential environment or poses a threat to the safety of students or others.

Willful or inadvertent disregard for school rules implies a need for learning proper conduct. Learning to correct action, or behavior, is brought about using natural, predetermined consequences. The consequence is intended to reasonably fit the seriousness of the violation and ultimately to change behavior. To this end, three levels of violations and corresponding consequences have been developed. Level I violations are minor infractions that are disruptive to the daily operation of academic and residential life. Level II violations are more serious and indicate a more substantial disregard for school procedures. Level III violations are the infractions indicating disregard for the welfare of self and others and usually include dorm restriction, suspension, dismissal, or expulsion and possible law enforcement involvement.

The Executive Director, Principal, or any school administrator is authorized to contact law enforcement officials and/or to take appropriate disciplinary action, including immediate expulsion within the student's constitutional rights of due process, consideration for suspension, detention, campus work service, dorm restriction, or campus restriction against any student for misconduct, including but not limited to the infractions listed in the Violations and Consequences Charts (Levels I-III) at the end of this section.

## **Student Code of Conduct**

The MSA selects students with various backgrounds, experiences, and educational expectations. In a community of diverse learners, standards of behavior ensure that all students live in a safe environment conducive to learning and free from disruptions that impede the freedom to develop and grow as artists and productive individuals in society. The MSA Student Code of Conduct provides guidelines for students to utilize when interacting with others and making daily life decisions that occur as part of a residential setting.

Since no document provides for all circumstances, students, parents, faculty, and staff must exhibit good judgment, fair play, and discretion always. Students and parents will sign a contract at registration that indicates that they have been given a copy of the Student Code of Conduct and discipline policies in the Student Handbook and understand that all students must comply with school policies and procedures whether on or off campus.

In keeping with the general requirements of the Student Code of Conduct, students will:

1. Act with honor, courtesy, and respect;
2. Respect the rights and properties of others in the school and community;
3. Care for, support, and respect the physical, natural, educational, and social environment of the school, community, and state;
4. Be truthful and honest to peers, administrators, faculty, staff, parents, and community members in all aspects of their lives;

5. Be committed to self-discovery, self-motivation, and continual personal development necessary to achieve artistic, intellectual, social, and personal growth;
6. Be the only source of any work for which they take credit. They will not cheat, plagiarize, appropriate, or copy the work of others;
7. Participate fully in learning activities required by the teachers and/or the school;
8. Exhibit behaviors that promote personal wellness;
9. Uphold the values of academic integrity;
10. Understand that it is a privilege to attend MSA, and students are accountable for their own actions; and
11. Follow all school, local, federal, and state guidelines, regulations, and laws throughout their tenure at MSA.

## **Violations of Academic Integrity**

MSA expects all students, faculty, and staff members to uphold the Values of Academic Integrity. Decisions regarding infractions fall to the teacher and other supervisory personnel including residential life staff members. To ensure due process, supervisors (faculty and other staff members) will report suspicion or other indications of dishonesty to the Principal as soon as the infractions occur. Violations occur in both academic and residential contexts and may fall into various categories as listed below. This listing of infractions is not intended to be exhaustive but represents basic behaviors that are not acceptable on the MSA campus. Any acts of dishonesty may result in disciplinary action.

## **Definitions of Violations of Academic Integrity<sup>5</sup>**

### **1. Cheating:**

- Receiving unauthorized help from or giving help to another student during an in-class or take-home exam;
- Using unauthorized notes, study aids, calculators, or information on an examination;
- Altering a graded work after it has been returned, then submitting the work for re-grading;
- Looking at another student's test, answer sheet, or other materials;
- Talking during a test. The teacher cannot be expected to determine the content of a private conversation between students, therefore, all talking during tests is considered cheating;
- Programming a calculator or PCD for use in accessing answers;
- Failing to follow prescribed security protocols for completing an exam for a virtual course (e.g., MVPS, Connections Education, other MDE approved vendor) or an Independent Study (correspondence) course;
- Obtaining course assignment or examination answers in a manner or from sources not authorized by the instructor (includes but is not limited to inappropriate use of the Internet);
- Allowing another person to do one's work and submitting that work under one's own name;
- Acting contrary to the teacher's instructions regarding collaboration; or
- Using the internet to search for answers for tests or homework assignments in an online class without direct instruction to do so;
- Submitting identical or similar papers for credit in more than one course without prior permission from the course instructors.

### **2. Plagiarism:**

- Using a commercially prepared paper or research project;
- Submitting material that in part or whole is not entirely one's own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source;
- Making it appear in one's writing as if another's writing, including text, stories or

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<sup>5</sup>The following are excerpts quoted or adapted from: The University of Southern Mississippi College of Business Handbook, The Northwestern University Undergraduate Academic Conduct Committee Violations Definitions, and The Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy Handbook.

- narratives, thoughts, or discovered facts are one's own;
  - Representing the artistic creation, graphic, or tabular presentation of others as one's own;
  - Copying words, concepts, ideas, or images from any source and submitting the material as one's own without acknowledging the source by the use of footnotes, quotation marks, or both; or
  - Citation of sources not actually used in preparation of an assignment.
3. **Fabrication:**
- Falsifying or inventing any information, data or citation;
  - Presenting data or information that was not gathered in accordance with guidelines given by the instructor;
  - Failing to include an accurate account of the method by which the data were gathered or collected;
4. **Obtaining an Unfair Advantage:**
- Stealing, reproducing, circulating or otherwise gaining access to examination materials prior to the time authorized by the instructor;
  - Obtaining a copy of tests or scoring devices.
  - Knowingly giving false information to a member of the faculty to request an alternative date or time for an examination or assignment;
  - Reading [or accessing the help] of other sources in place of assigned work (e.g., English version of German poem, using on-line translators);
  - Stealing, destroying, defacing or concealing library materials with the purpose of depriving others of their use;
  - Unauthorized collaboration on an academic assignment;
  - Retaining, possessing, using or circulating previously given examination materials, where those materials clearly indicate that they are to be returned to the instructor at the conclusion of the examination;
  - Intentionally obstructing or interfering with another student's academic work,
  - Appropriating or copying an artistic image or sound and submitting it for credit as one's own original designs; or
  - Otherwise undertaking activity with the purpose of creating or obtaining an unfair academic advantage over other students' academic work.
5. **Aiding and Abetting Academic Dishonesty:**
- Failure to report violations of academic integrity;
  - Revealing information to another student about an examination or assignment that has not been returned to students by the instructor or has not been authorized by the instructor;
  - Providing material, information, or other assistance to another person with knowledge that such aid could be used in any of the violations stated above;
  - Providing false information in connection with any inquiry regarding academic integrity; or
  - Falsifying evidence or intimidating or influencing someone in connection with an honor violation investigation.
6. **Falsification of Records and Official Documents:**
- Altering documents affecting academic or residential life records;
  - Forging signatures of authorization or falsifying information on an official document, grade report, letter of permission, petition, drop/add form, ID card, or any other official school document;
  - Knowingly giving false information to another academic institution or a prospective employer about academic performance.



## **Public Display of Affection (PDA)**

Public displays of affection beyond a brief friendly hug, a quick kiss on the cheek, arm loosely around shoulder or waist, or holding hands, are considered a breach of MSA expectations and are subject to disciplinary procedures. Listing every behavior that constitutes PDA is impossible. Students must use common sense in relation to appropriate behavior. PDA restrictions apply to students regardless of their relationship status or gender.

Students must be ever vigilant and avoid crossing the boundary line of behaviors that are not tolerated in public settings. Displays of affection such as kissing on the lips, touching, fondling, pecking, cuddling, canoodling, petting, caressing, extended hugging, holding, groping, rubbing, necking, massaging, licking, sitting on another's lap, laying on one another, and any other behavior deemed inappropriate in a public environment will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action.

All MSA staff, not just Residence Life Staff, have the responsibility to use their judgment in asking students to cease any behavior they determine to be PDA. Failure to respond to such a request in a timely manner will escalate the situation to a more serious disciplinary matter. The disciplinary procedure will correspond to the gravity of the PDA situation and current disciplinary record.

## **Gang Activity and Secret Societies**

It is unlawful in the State of Mississippi to organize fraternities, sororities, or secret societies in the public high schools. It is also unlawful for a public school student to be a member of, belong to, or participate in such organizations, and to solicit student membership in such organizations. Students in violation of this policy are subject to suspension or expulsion.

Schools governed by the Mississippi State Board of Education are committed to maintaining a safe school environment for their students and staff. Students are expected to adhere to the school standards of conduct that promote well-being and supports the learning process. Gang activity will not be tolerated in any form. Gang-related activities in the school, on school property or vehicles, or at school-related activities are prohibited. Where gang activity is suspected or confirmed a complaint will be filed in accordance with the "Mississippi Street Gang Act" pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 97-44-1 et seq.

Gang activity, which initiates, promotes, or advocates activities that threaten the safety or wellbeing of persons or property on school grounds or which disrupts the school environment are harmful to the educational process. The use of hand signals, graffiti, or the presence of apparel, jewelry, accessory, or manner of grooming which, by virtue of color, arrangement, trademark, symbol, or any other attribute which implies membership or affiliation with such a group, presents a clear and present danger and is to be discouraged by school officials. Students displaying interest, involvement, or affiliation with a gang shall be subject to disciplinary action and will be encouraged to seek involvement in authorized school organizations to enhance self-esteem and promote activity that can have a positive impact on the student.

## **Bullying Prohibition**

No student or school employee shall be subjected to bullying or harassing behavior by school employees or students. The MSA prohibits bullying or harassing behavior of students or school employees. The MSA will make every reasonable effort to ensure that no person or school employee is subjected to bullying or harassing behavior by other students or other school employees.

(1) Bullying or harassing behavior is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic\*, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, or any act reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus, and that:

- a) places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or

- b) creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits. For the purposes of this section, a "hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

Conduct described in subsection (1) is considered bullying if that conduct interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of a school.

\* Bullying or harassing behavior includes cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is bullying or harassing behavior that occurs electronically. Bullying or harassing behavior will not be condoned or tolerated when it takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or when it takes place off school property when such conduct materially disrupts classwork or involves substantial disorder or invasion of the rights of others.

No person shall engage in any act of retaliation or reprisal against any person, including a victim, a witness, or another person with reliable information about an act of bullying or harassing behavior and/or who in good faith provides information concerning an incident of bullying.

#### **Procedures for Reporting, Investigating, and Addressing Bullying or Harassing Behavior**

A student who feels he/she has been a victim of bullying or harassing behavior and/or a student or volunteer who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student, school employee, or volunteer has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior should report the incident to a school employee, who shall immediately report the incident in writing to the Principal and/or Executive Director. Students should report bullying or harassing behavior to a school employee promptly, but no later than five (5) working days after the alleged incident(s) occurred.

Reports should include: the name of the reporting person\*, the specific nature and date of the misconduct, the name(s) of the victim(s) of the misconduct, the name(s) of any witness(es), the name(s) of the alleged bully, and any other information that would assist in the investigation of the report. \*If a student chooses to anonymously report bullying or harassing behavior, the school's ability to take action based solely on an anonymous report may be limited.

A school employee who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student or school employee has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior shall immediately report the incident in writing to the Principal and/or Executive Director. Reports against the Principal shall immediately be made in writing to the Executive Director, and reports against the Executive Director shall immediately be made in writing to the Chief Academic Officer.

The school administration will investigate reported incidents of bullying within five (5) working days of receiving the report.

The school administration will speak with the alleged victim and alleged bully separately. Students may submit evidence for the school administration to review and a list of witnesses for the school administration to interview. Students should preserve evidence of bullying/cyberbullying and/or harassing behavior.

All teachers, employees, volunteers, and students shall fully cooperate with the investigation and answer truthfully all inquiries relative thereto.

Upon completion of the investigation, the school administration will immediately notify the alleged victim and alleged bully regarding the outcome of the investigation and/or what discipline actions and/or other appropriate actions will be taken, if warranted.

The school administration will provide notice by phone, email, and/or written letter of an incident of bullying and the outcome of the investigation and/or what discipline actions and/or other appropriate actions will be taken, if warranted, within a reasonable amount of time to a parent or guardian of the victim and a parent or guardian of the bully not to exceed five (5) working days after the incident

The MSA recognizes the fundamental right of every student to take “reasonable actions” as may be necessary to defend himself or herself from an attack by another student who has evidenced menacing or threatening behavior through bullying or harassing. “Reasonable action” includes, but is not limited to, promptly reporting the bullying or harassing behavior to a school employee and student’s use of reasonable self-defense.

If, after an investigation, a student is found to be a victim of bullying, such student shall not face disciplinary action on the basis of that student’s use of reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying.

Discipline for bullying of a student with disabilities shall comply with the applicable requirements under federal law including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq.*). Available counseling options for a student who is a victim of bullying or a witness to bullying or a student who engages in bullying include: School Guidance Counseling • Conflict Resolution Training • Anger Management Training • Problem Solving Skills Training (proactive, constructive, relationship-building) and • Social Skills Training].

Support and intervention in response to bullying may be provided by the MSA through the assistance of the any of the following agencies: Mississippi Department of Education • Community/Family Public or private community-based mental health services • Faith-based services • Law enforcement agencies and • guidance counselor’s office at MSA.

The procedure for reporting bullying will also be posted on the school’s website. False accusations or reports of bullying are prohibited and may warrant discipline action. Any perceived criminal conduct will be immediately reported to law enforcement. Source: *Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-11-67 and 37-11-69 (Rev. 2017)*

## Harassment

The MSA is committed to sustaining a safe and supportive school environment free from harassment. In keeping with this commitment, the school will not tolerate harassment of employees or students by anyone, including administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents, volunteers, or any others on campus.

MSA prohibits all types of harassment based on, but not limited to, color, race, religion, creed, national origin, gender, age, or disability. MSA will promptly investigate all complaints of harassment—formal or informal, written or verbal—and take appropriate actions against any member of the school community found in violation of this policy.

Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment must be handled in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Mississippi Department of Education Board Policy Part 3, Chapter 99, Rule 99.1.

## Definitions

**School Community** includes, but is not limited to, all students, parents, school and state employees, contractors, volunteers, committee members, and other visitors.

**School Employee** includes, but is not limited to, all administrators, teachers, staff, bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers, and agents of the school.

**Harassment** means verbal or physical conduct based on an individual's actual or perceived race, religion, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability that affects or interferes with a student's educational performance or creates a hostile, offensive, or intimidating environment.

Harassment may include any form of unwelcome verbal, physical, or written conduct that offends, degrades, or belittles an individual. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, unsolicited derogatory remarks, jokes, demeaning comments, offensive behavior, slurs, mimicking, name calling, graffiti, innuendo, gestures, physical contact, stalking, threatening, bullying, extorting, or the display or circulation of written materials or pictures or videos. These stipulations apply whether the harassment is between people of the same, or of a different gender.

**Sexual Harassment** includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; threats; bodily contact; sexually oriented verbal teasing; abuse; pressure for sexual activity; repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications; unwelcome touching such as pinching, patting, or constant brushing against another's body; suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, employment status, or similarly personal concerns; filing a false complaint of sexual harassment; or other deliberate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature made by any school employee or volunteer to a student or to another school employee or volunteer; a student to another student; or a student to a staff member when:

1. Submission to such contact is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of an individual's privileges, access to campus resources and activities, grades, or educational development;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for education decisions affecting such individual; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment.

Students believing, they have been sexually harassed should immediately report the incident(s) to the administration or school employee. The administration shall investigate and take appropriate corrective action.

**Peer Harassment** includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome attention from peers or other individuals and includes such actions as name calling, threatening gestures, unwanted physical contact, vandalism of personal property, and filing a false complaint.

**Racial and Color Harassment** includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct directed at the characteristics of an individual's race or color. Nicknames, emphasizing stereotypes, racial slurs, comments on one's manner of speaking, and negative references to racial customs are examples of racial or color harassment.

**Religious Creed Harassment** includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct directed at an individual's religion or creed such as derogatory comments regarding surnames, religious clothing, religious slurs, or graffiti.

**National Origin Harassment** includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct directed at the characteristics of an individual's national origin such as negative comments regarding surnames, manner of speaking, customs, language, or ethnic slurs.

**Disability Harassment** includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct directed at a person's disabling mental or physical condition such as manner of speech or movement or interference with an individual's equipment.

## **Reporting Harassment**

Students who believe they are a victim of any form of harassment should immediately report the incident(s) to the administration or a school employee. Any school employee or student, who observes, overhears, or otherwise witnesses harassment is encouraged to take appropriate action to report the incident immediately. In the event the school employee or student is unable to personally take prompt action, they are encouraged to report the incident or complaint in writing to the Director of Residential Life, Principal, and/or the Executive Director. Any complaint of harassment filed by a student or staff member will be reported immediately to the Director of Residential Life, Principal, and/or the Executive Director. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment must be handled in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Mississippi Department of Education Board Policy Part 3, Chapter 99, Rule 99.1.

Filing of a complaint or reporting harassment in any manner will not affect an individual's status, work assignments, or grades.

Under certain circumstances, sexual harassment behaviors may constitute physical or sexual abuse. Therefore, when educators become aware of suspected abuse, they must report the incident to the Mississippi Department of Human Services. Such acts constitute violations of Mississippi criminal law resulting in law enforcement investigations and possible criminal charges.

### **Retaliation to Harassment**

Members of the school community may not retaliate against any person who reports alleged harassment or any person who testifies, assists, or participates in the investigation, proceedings, or hearing related to such harassment. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment and may be redressed through the same process for reporting, investigating, and enforcing procedures for harassment. Any person who knowingly files a false claim or report may be subject to the same actions that MSA might take against any other individual violating this harassment policy.

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and the accused, will be respected consistent with the legal obligation of the school and the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and to take corrective actions when such conduct occurs.

### **Consequences to Violation of Harassment Policies**

Any school employee or student found to have violated this policy may be subject to action including, but not limited to, warning, remedial training, education or counseling, suspension, expulsion, termination, or discharge from duties.

## **Title IX Grievance Policy**

### **1. RIGHT TO EXPRESS CONCERNS, COMPLAINTS OR GRIEVANCES**

It is the policy of the SBE and the MDE to maintain a safe and supportive learning and educational environment that is free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination.

MDE is a conduit for federal money to the local school districts and ensures the local school districts' compliance with federal financial grants. As such, MDE requires each local school district and each state school to have a grievance policy in place to address any complaints alleging discrimination under the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title II of the American Disability Act, Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Complaints alleging discrimination by the local school district, its staff, or students should be first directed to the local school level and handled pursuant to local policy.

As specifically related to Title IX, this policy sets out the minimum steps that MSA shall take in response to a notice of alleged discrimination based on sex, including discrimination in the form of sexual harassment, which encompasses sexual violence, such as dating violence, domestic violence, and cyberstalking. The SBE and MSA forbid unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature amounting to or constituting harassment and/or discrimination against any student under its purview.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

### A. Sex Discrimination

The practice of treating a person differently, or less favorably, than other people or groups based on sex.

### B. Allegation

An assertion that someone has engaged in discrimination based on sex.

### C. Sexual Harassment

Unwanted conduct based on sex. Examples of such behavior include:

- Direct or indirect threats or bribes for unwanted sexual activity
- Sexual innuendos and comments
- Asking or commenting about a person's sexual activities
- Humor or jokes about sex or females/males in general
- Making sexually suggestive remarks, gestures, or jokes, or remarks of a sexual nature about a person's appearance
- Repeated unsuccessful attempts at gaining dates or sexual behavior
- Sexual touching, pinching, brushing, or patting
- Displaying offensive sexual illustrations in the school/work place
- Insulting and belittling a person-sexual ridicule
- Letters, notes, telephone calls, or materials of a sexual nature
- Stalking a person either inside or outside the institution
- Attempt or actual sexual assault

### D. Complainant

The person who has experienced the alleged discrimination based on sex. This person is considered a complainant regardless of whether they choose to file a formal complaint under Title IX.

### E. Respondent

The person accused of the alleged discrimination. This person may be a student or a school employee. If the person is an employee, the school shall adhere to the process found in Miss. Code Ann. § 37-9-59.

### F. Title IX Coordinator

The individual responsible for overseeing the school's efforts to comply with its obligations under Title IX and Title IX regulations, including, but not limited to, coordinating any investigations of complaints of sex discrimination, implementation of supportive measures, and remedies where appropriate.

## 3. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS

MSA shall have a grievance policy adopted by the governing board and accessible in both the student handbook and employee handbook. The grievance policy shall include the following:

### A. Receiving and Responding to Reports

Employees who believe or have been made aware that a student has been subject to Title IX Discrimination, shall report it to the Title IX Coordinator. Failure to make such a report may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

MSA shall respond whenever any school employee has been put on actual notice of improper behavior as defined in the school's policy. Such notice may be from an oral report of sexual harassment by a complainant or anyone else, a written report, through personal observation, through an anonymous report, or through various other means. When a complaint or report is made under the policy, the Title IX Coordinator shall: (1) confidentially contact the complainant to offer supportive measures, consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures, and inform them of the availability of supportive measures with or without filing a formal complaint; (2) explain the process for how to file a formal complaint; (3) inform the complainant that any report made in good

faith will not result in discipline; and (4) respect the complainant's wishes with respect to whether to investigate unless the designated staff member determines it is necessary to pursue the complaint in light of a health or safety concern for the community.

#### B. Confidentiality

MSA must keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of any form of prohibited sex discrimination, including any reporter, complainant, respondent, or witness, except:

1. As may be permitted by FERPA;
2. Or as required by law; or
3. To carry out the Title IX regulations, including the conduct of any investigation, hearing, or judicial proceeding arising thereunder.

The confidentiality of the reporting party will be observed providing it does not interfere with the school's ability to investigate or take corrective action. If the complainant reports rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, or other behaviors which constitute criminal activity, school officials shall contact appropriate law enforcement agencies and the superintendent/executive director.

#### C. Supportive Measures

Supportive measures are short-term measures that are designed to restore or preserve access to the school's education program or activity. Supportive measures are available regardless of whether the complainant chooses to pursue any action under the school's policy, including before and after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. They are meant to restore access to education, protect student and employee safety, and/or deter future acts.

Supportive measures are available to the complainant, respondent, and as appropriate, witnesses or other impacted individuals, and these measures should be provided based on an individualized assessment of the needs of the individual. These supports are non-disciplinary and non-punitive individualized services designed to offer support without being unreasonable burdensome.

Examples of supportive measures may include, but are not limited to, counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, campus escort services, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, changes in work or housing locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus, and other similar measures.

#### D. Formal Complaint

A "Formal complaint" means a document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging discrimination or sexual harassment against a respondent and request that the school investigate the allegation(s). A formal complaint may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, or by electronic mail, by using the contact information provided by the school district. The complaint document, whether physical or electronic, shall contain the complainant's physical or digital signature. Where the Title IX Coordinator signs a formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinator is not "the complainant" or otherwise considered a party but shall comply with applicable procedures.

#### E. Investigations

Once a formal complaint is filed, an investigator will be assigned and the parties will be treated equitably, including in the provision of supportive measures and remedies. Each party will receive notice of the specifics of the allegations as known, and as any arise during the investigation. The investigator will attempt to collect all relevant information and evidence. While the investigator will have the burden of gathering evidence, it is crucial that the parties present evidence and identify witnesses to the investigator so that they may be considered during the investigation.

The principal of the school, so long as the principal is neither the Title IX Coordinator, the investigator, or any other individual who may have a conflict of interest, shall serve as the decision-maker, and will facilitate a written question and answer period between the parties. Each party may submit written questions for the other party and witnesses to the decision-maker for review. The questions must be

relevant to the case, and the decision-maker will determine if the questions submitted are relevant and will then forward the relevant questions to the other party or witnesses for a response. The decision-maker can then review all the responses, determine what is relevant or not relevant, and issue a decision as to whether the respondent is responsible for the alleged act.

#### F. Presumptions about Complainants, Respondents, and Witnesses

The school presumes that reports of prohibited conduct are made in good faith. A finding that the alleged behavior does not constitute a violation of this school's policy or that there is insufficient evidence to establish that the alleged conduct occurred as reported does not mean that the report was made in bad faith.

The respondent is presumed to be not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made by the decision-maker.

#### G. Determination Regarding Responsibility

The decision-maker shall review the evidence provided by all parties and will make a final determination of responsibility after the investigation based on a preponderance of the evidence. "Preponderance of the evidence" means evidence that is of greater weight or more convincing than as asserted fact or facts occurred than evidence in opposition to such facts. It is evidence which as a whole shows that an assertion to be proven is more likely than not.

The decision-maker shall provide a final determination to the parties at the same time, with appeal rights provided. It will explain if any policies were violated, the steps and methods taken to investigate, the findings of the investigation, conclusions about the findings, the ultimate determination and the reasons for it, any disciplinary sanctions that will be imposed on the respondent, and any remedies available to the complainant to restore or preserve equal access.

#### H. Sanctions and Remedies

MSA will take reasonable steps to address any violations of the policy and to restore or preserve equal access to the school's education programs or activities. Sanctions for finding of responsibility depend upon the nature and gravity of the misconduct, any record of prior discipline for similar violations, or both.

When a respondent is found responsible for the prohibited behavior as alleged, remedies shall be provided to the complainant. Remedies are designed to maintain the complainant's equal access to education and may include supportive measures or remedies that are punitive or would pose a burden to the respondent.

Whatever the outcome of the investigation or appeal, the complainant and respondent may request ongoing or additional supportive measures. Ongoing supportive measures that do not unreasonably burden a party may be considered and provided even if the respondent is found not responsible.

#### I. Informal Resolution

Informal resolution is available only after a formal complaint has been filed involving parties of the same status (e.g., student-student or employee-employee), prior to a determination of responsibility, and if the complainant and respondent voluntarily consent to the process in writing. Informal resolution is not available in cases which an employee is alleged to have sexually harassed a student.

#### J. Parent and Guardian Rights

Consistent with the applicable laws of the State of Mississippi and absent a court order or other legal requirement to the contrary, a student's parent or guardian shall be permitted to exercise the rights granted to their child under the school's policy, whether such rights involve requesting supportive measures, filing a formal complaint, or participating in a grievance process. A student's parent or guardian shall also be permitted to accompany the student to meetings, interviews, and hearings, if



applicable, during a grievance process to exercise rights on behalf of the student. The student may have an advisor of choice who is a different person from the parent or guardian.

#### 4. APPEALS

Appeals are available after a complaint dismissal or after a final determination is made. Appeals may be made due to procedural irregularities in the investigation affecting the outcome, new evidence becoming available, or due to bias or a conflict of interest by the personnel that may have affected the outcome. The school should set a reasonable time frame to submit an appeal, but not less than 10 days nor more than 30 days. Or, if there is no administrative response to the student/parent/guardian grievance by the school, the grievance should be made to the superintendent of the school or the superintendent's designee.

Parties shall be given an opportunity to submit a written statement in support of or in opposition to the final determination. A new decision-maker shall issue a final decision at the same time to each party. The following procedures shall be followed when submitted student/parent/guardian grievances regarding administrative decisions:

Level 1: An aggrieved party should express his or her concern to the school level administration for resolution or file a formal grievance with the executive director. The executive director shall investigate allegations as soon as circumstances allow, but not later than five (5) business days from submission of the original written grievance. The administrator shall provide a written response to the aggrieved party no later than ten (10) business days after receipt of the original written grievance. If there is no administrative response to the aggrieved party within the ten (10) business days, or if the response is unsatisfactory, the aggrieved party may elevate to Level 2.

Level 2: If any party deems the resolution unsatisfactory, the party may appeal the decision by submitting a copy of the grievance and decision to the Mississippi Department of Education's Associate Superintendent responsible for oversight of the state school, along with a written statement detailing the reasons for the dissatisfaction. The Associate Superintendent shall investigate and review the matter. After review, the Associate Superintendent shall provide a written response to the parties postmarked no later than ten (10) business days following receipt of the appeal. If there is no response by the Associate Superintendent to the appealing party within the ten (10) business days, or if the response is unsatisfactory to either party, the aggrieved party may advance the grievance to Level 3.

Level 3: The aggrieved party, after review of the written response from the Associate Superintendent, may appeal that response to the State Superintendent or the State's Superintendent's designee no later than ten (10) business days after receipt of the written communication at Level 2. The State Superintendent or his/her designee shall review the grievance and shall provide the parties a written response postmarked within ten (10) business days following the receipt of the appeal.

Level 4: The aggrieved party may appeal the response from the State Superintendent to the State Board of Education by submitting a written request for appeal to the State Board of Education along with all documentation from Levels 1-3 no later than ten (10) business days after receipt of the State Superintendent's written response at Level 3. The State Board of Education shall review the grievance and shall provide the parties an opportunity to appear at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting to present his or her grievance and response in accordance with the Family Education Right and Privacy Act (FERPA) 20 U.S.C. 1232g, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) 20 U.S.C. 1400 *et. seq.* implementing regulations, and other federal and state laws that govern the protection of student information. If the party or parties elect not to appear personally, the parties may request the Board's review of the written documentation only. The decision of the State Board of Education shall be final.

Source: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; 34 C.F.R. § 106; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-1-3

## Prohibited Items

In addition to tobacco, alcohol, and drugs, MSA prohibits the items listed below from campus. Alternative nicotine products as defined by Miss Code Ann. § 97-32-51, vapor cigarettes, electronic cigarettes/cigars/pipes, and accessories (e.g., pipes, holders, rolling papers, lighters, and matches) are not allowed. Any natural herbs, seeds, or plants that are used for the purpose of altering state of mind in students are strictly prohibited. Items that are used outside of their intended purpose to alter the state of mind in students are considered prohibited items. Students will be subject to disciplinary action accordingly. If the action by students with prohibited items does not meet the prerequisites of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs, the student will receive the following consequences:

1. An automatic five (5) day suspension,
2. Report to the school principal or designee for further activity, and/or
3. The student will be dismissed or expelled from school on a second offense.

## Substance Abuse Policies

Through educational services and other supportive services, MSA is an alcohol, drug, and smoke-free campus at all times. All federal, state, and local laws drive the policies and procedures of MSA in regard to violations of substance abuse.

### Tobacco and Tobacco Products

Pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 97-32-9, it is illegal for juveniles to purchase tobacco and no student shall possess tobacco on any educational property. Miss. Code Ann. § 97-32-29 prohibits tobacco use on school property; thus, the campus of MSA is a tobacco-free environment. Cigarettes, cigars, and other tobacco products (e.g., snuff, chewing tobacco, and pipe tobacco) are not allowed. Smoking, possession, or use of tobacco products are prohibited by students and adults on campus and at school related activities. While under the patronage of MSA, the same drug-free policies exist for all MSA administration, faculty, staff, and students. Students need not be observed smoking to be in violation; possession of tobacco or related paraphernalia constitutes a violation and will be referred to administration as a Level III violation. A student's first offense will result in result in the following consequences:

1. An automatic five (5) day suspension,
2. Report to the school principal or designee for further activity and assignment of an tobacco education program, and/or
3. The student will be dismissed or expelled from school on a second offense.

### Alcohol

The following sections of the Mississippi Code Annotated govern the purchase and use of alcohol by minors; offenses that are not only against the law, but also have the potential to be life threatening.

Miss. Code Ann. § 63-11-30	Operation of vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or controlled substance
Miss. Code Ann. § 67-1-5	Alcoholic beverages
Miss. Code Ann. § 67-1-81	Underage purchase, receipt, possession, sale of alcohol
Miss. Code Ann. § 97-31-27	Sale, possession of intoxicating beverages prohibited

Because the purchase and use of alcohol by minors is against the law, MSA considers this a very serious matter and will make every effort to educate and encourage its students to refrain from the use of harmful substances.

When the findings of an administrative investigation strongly support the claim that the student used, purchased, possessed, distributed, or is under the influence of alcohol, the MSA administration will notify parents and a test may be required (at parental expense) to verify allegations. If a test is completed, the administrator will communicate results to the parents and schedule a comprehensive conference to discuss disciplinary actions. The student will remain under the supervision of the campus official until parents arrive to pick them up. Offense(s) related to the possession, purchase, distribution, or use of alcohol will result in the following consequences:

1. An automatic ten (10) day suspension,
2. Report to the school principal or designee for further activity and assignment of an alcohol education program,
3. Return home for the first two weekends for weekend home restriction,
4. Complete two weeks campus restriction after completing the weekend home restriction, and,
5. The student will be dismissed or expelled from school on a second offense.

## **Illegal Drugs**

The administration, faculty, staff, and student body are responsible for ensuring a drug-free campus for the support of a strong academic and residential learning environment. Illegal drugs present a threat to the health and safety of all MSA members and cause serious problems for teens in social, emotional, medical and educational contexts. MSA provides programs, services, and publications that promote the prevention of substance abuse.

The **Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988** requires all agencies receiving federal grants to certify that they will enforce drug-free policies. This policy provides for the implementation of statutory requirements in providing a drug-free workplace. Students are responsible for complying with Mississippi law that makes it illegal to possess, sell, deliver, or manufacture any controlled substance. Violation of the law may result in prosecution and punishment by the civil authorities as well as disciplinary proceedings by MSA.

When the findings of an administrative investigation strongly support the claim that the student used, purchased, possessed, distributed, or is under the influence of illegal drugs, the MSA administration will notify parents that a drug test may be required (at parental expense) to verify allegations. If a test is completed, the administrator will communicate results to the parents and schedule a comprehensive conference to discuss disciplinary actions. The student will remain under the supervision of the security officer until parents arrive to pick them up. Offense(s) related to the possession, purchase, distribution, use or being under the influence of drugs will result in a suspension pending investigation which may result in dismissal or expulsion for a specified period of time dependent on the nature of the offense. Expulsion shall take place subject to the constitutional rights of due process described in the section of this Handbook.

## **Students Suspected of Substance Abuse**

If any MSA staff member receives a report or observes student behavior that indicates a possibility of prohibited items or illegal substance use, the appropriate administrator(s) must be notified, and an investigation conducted immediately. The behaviors listed below include signs and symptoms that are generally agreed upon by experts that substance abuse may be occurring. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive:

- Glazed eyes, dilated pupils, difficulty focusing, or rapid eye movement;
- Slurred speech, extreme talkativeness, changing subject rapidly, or not making sense;
- Changed behaviors that are unusual (e.g., passivity, irritability, aggression, combativeness, argumentativeness, anxiety, or depression);
- Difficulty sitting still, limp appearance, or “blankness” or absence of facial expression;
- Decline in personal hygiene and dress;
- Unusual medical complaints (e.g., nausea, vomiting, dizziness, chills or sweating, or bruises or accidents);
- Odor on clothing, breath, bad breath, dry lips and mouth, frequent lip licking; and/or
- Decline in schoolwork, withdrawal from or change in friends and or activities, or change in family relationships.

When a student is suspected of using, purchasing, possessing, or distributing, or being under the influence of prohibited items or illegal substances, an administrator will conduct an investigation immediately including the following:

- Conference with the student(s) accused;
- Interview with witness(es) or person(s) reporting the infraction;
- Upon reasonable suspicion, a search of the dorm room(s), personal possessions, vehicle(s), or other appropriate space(s) on campus that are utilized by the student;
- If there is reason to believe student(s) have consumed illegal substances, MSA officials may ask them to be drug tested. If the student provides a written confession that verifies guilt, the test will not be conducted. If the student refuses to take the test, the administration will consider the refusal as an admission of guilt and the appropriate disciplinary action will be initiated. All drug testing will be conducted at the expense of the parents; and
- Parents/guardians will be immediately contacted and disciplinary consequences invoked.

Violations of any drug or alcoholic beverage control laws may result in criminal penalties and are subject to possible civil liability. A negative result to any test does not exonerate a student because possession, delivery, and selling illegal substances are separate issues.

If the student's behavior creates an urgent medical concern, the student may be transported to the emergency room at the cost of the parents.

## **Search and Seizure**

### **General Searches**

School officials may, without a search warrant, search a student and/or their personal possessions based upon reasonable suspicion. The school retains the right to search school property without a search warrant, such as desks, at will. Reasonable suspicion means that a school official has grounds to believe that the search will result in evidence of a violation of school district policy, rules, and/or law. If school officials (e.g., administration, faculty, residence life staff, counselors, or nurse) have a reasonable suspicion to suspect a student may be in possession of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, weapons, or other contraband while on campus, the school will:

1. Search pockets, purses, book bags, cell phones, technical equipment, and other properties of the student;
2. Conduct a same sex pat down of the student;
3. Search the student's vehicle if applicable; and,
4. Search the student's dormitory room and personal belongings.

If the items in question are located, they will be confiscated and described in a list sent to the appropriate MSA administrators. ALL illegal contraband will be confiscated. MSA will notify appropriate law enforcement officials of any unlawful activity that may have occurred on educational property or during a school related activity based upon reasonable suspicion that such activity has occurred.

The school will monitor student Internet activity and will conduct a search on reasonable suspicion of the commission of a criminal act or the commission of an act in violation of school policy, a student's history of Internet activity and any files saved to a server(s), on a personal computer, or on storage disks.

### **Room Searches**

Authorized MSA staff will use a passkey to enter student rooms in non-emergency situations such as maintenance, building code inspections, and/or to ensure the safety of room occupants or students in surrounding areas. Staff may enter rooms unannounced when there is a reasonable suspicion of violation of residence hall rules. Where there is a reasonable, articulable suspicion that violations of school policy or criminal law are occurring, a comprehensive room search may be authorized by a school official. Room searches will be conducted as discreetly as possible. Students assume responsibility for activities occurring in their rooms. To ensure building safety during school vacations, staff will enter rooms to see that windows are closed, lights out, and radios unplugged.

The following factors are examples of considerations when determining whether to conduct a search:

- Observed infraction/offense in progress,
- Observed item believed to be stolen,
- Observed weapon or portion thereof,
- Observed contraband,
- Smell of burning tobacco or marijuana,
- Student appears to be under influence of alcohol/drugs,
- Student admits violation,
- Student appears to be lying,
- Student fits description of suspect of recently reported offense,
- Student(s) flee from vicinity of recent offense,
- Student(s) flee upon approach of school official,
- Information provided by others,
- Threatening words or behavior,
- Incriminating evidence was found during a lawful consent search,
- Incriminating evidence was discovered by a teacher/administrator,
- Incriminating evidence was turned over by another student, and/or,
- Other suspicious conduct.

### **Other Relevant Circumstantial Factors**

- Reputation and/or affiliations of student to be searched,
- Student to be searched has history of previous similar violations,
- Student was previously disciplined for a similar offense/infraction,
- Student was already subject of investigation for similar offense/infraction,
- Report of stolen item,
- Student seen leaving area where infractions are often committed (e.g., location where students congregate to smoke),
- Student became nervous or excited when approached,
- Student refused to make eye contact,
- Student made a suspicious or “furtive” movement (must describe the exact conduct and why it was suspicious),
  - Did the student deny making the suspicious movement you observed?
- Student is part of a group known to have committed similar offenses/infractions.

### **Law Enforcement and Parental Notification**

When presented with a duly authorized search warrant, the Principal/Director will notify the Executive Director and grant permission to search a student’s room. An MSA official shall escort the officer(s) during the search. An MSA representative, normally, the Principal, will notify the student’s guardian whenever any MSA official makes a report to any law enforcement agency concerning student misconduct, is requested by law enforcement personnel other than MSA security acting in the normal course and scope of his/her assigned duties to allow access to a student, or learns that a student has been taken into custody by law enforcement personnel during the school day or while under school supervision.

### **Narcotics Detection Canine Searches**

The use of law enforcement scent canines is a dramatic tactic designed to dramatically illustrate that neither school authorities nor law enforcement agencies will tolerate illicit drugs or other scent-detectable contraband on campus. Scent detection canine searches may include the common areas of the Student Life Center, academic building(s), and the parking lot including the external surfaces of automobiles. When the narcotic detection canine alerts, further search and seizure with regard to that

property or individual will be authorized by the appropriate law enforcement agency in accordance with their policies and procedures. Local law enforcement officers, with the assistance of MSA personnel, will conduct all scent detection canine searches. At all times when canines are present on the school grounds, students will be restricted to their classrooms or to locations that will not be swept to ensure that narcotics detection canines will not come into direct contact with students.

## **Detention, Restriction, Campus Work Service**

**Detention** (evening, morning, or any other specified time that may be dependent on staff availability) is a consequence for students who have repeated unexcused tardies, absences, and disciplinary infractions. Detention must be served at the time assigned even if it means that a student may miss rehearsals or other planned activities. No faculty member or other adult (without written authorization of the Principal or Executive Director) has the authority to permit students to miss detention.

During detention, students must complete work assigned by MSA staff. Such assignments may include character education materials, extra campus work service, or other appropriate activities. They may not listen to music, sing, play instruments, play computer games, surf the Internet, talk on cell phones, or interact with other students at any time. Sleeping is not allowed. Detention must be served on the dates assigned unless the administration approves a change.

**Restrictions** may be placed on students who are habitual offenders in relation to academic or residential guidelines to the campus or to the dorm at the discretion of the Executive Director.

**Campus Restriction** means that students may not leave the campus at any time except to go home.

**Dorm Restriction** means that students may not leave their assigned dorm floor except to attend classes or other required academic activity. Students have one hour per evening on weekdays and two hours per day on weekend days to go elsewhere in the student life center. On weekends, students may not leave the student life center except for a required academic activity or to go home.

**Both campus restriction and dorm restriction require that students sign in every hour at the main Student Life Center desk to facilitate staff monitoring their activities.** Visitation may be limited dependent upon circumstances.

**Campus Work Service Hours** (two-hour sessions) is assigned for more serious disciplinary infractions. Campus Work Service will meet at a designated location on weekends when students are scheduled to be on campus. Students that miss Campus Work Service without prior approval from administration will be given three (3) day of out-of-school suspension.

1. During Campus Work Service, students must complete work assigned by MSA staff. Such assignments may include character education materials, campus work, or other appropriate educational work. Failure to complete assignments or poor quality of work may result in assignments in addition to work required during Campus Work Service sessions.
2. During Campus Work Service, students must remain silent and are not allowed to talk except during discussions. Students are not permitted to listen to music, sing, play instruments, play computer games, surf the Internet, talk on cell phones, or interact with other students at any time. Sleeping is not allowed. *Food and/or drinks are not allowed.*
3. Students must dress according to MSA dress code requirements.
4. Campus Work Service must be served on the day assigned unless the Executive Director or a designee approves the change. Students must report on time or they will not be admitted. Tardies or failure to report to Campus Work Service will result in time being doubled and/or additional punishment.

## **Disciplinary Probation Policies and Procedures**

**Probation** is a period of time set by an administrator during which a student is given a chance to improve behavior exhibited in prior violations of school policy. The Executive Director or Principal will

notify students, parents, and teachers in writing of students placed on probation. This notification may include a contract including future plans and expectations of the student and the manner in which the student must meet the prescribed requirements. The parents, student, faculty, Executive Director or Principal, and the counselor will receive copies of the signed contract. Students who fail to correct behavioral problems during the probationary term will be evaluated for dismissal. Students placed on probation twice, even though not back-to-back, will retain probationary status until graduation or dismissal from the school.

## **Disciplinary Management Policy**

Occasionally a student's conduct, speech, behavior, or attitude is unacceptable and disruptive to the educational and/or residential environment. When reasonable and prudent efforts to improve misconduct have proven ineffective, more drastic action shall be taken. The Mississippi State Board of Education delegates the authority to suspend, dismiss, or expel students for violation of school policies to the Executive Director, principal, or a designee—subject to the procedural limitations listed in school policy.

## **Suspension for Good Cause**

### **General Suspension for Ten (10) Days or Less**

**Suspension** is the administrative removal of a student from class attendance at the MSA for a specified period of time due to violations of school policy. All suspensions at MSA are out-of-school; the student must remain at home for the number of days assigned. The Executive Director or Principal may suspend a student from MSA for a period of ten (10) school days or less when it is determined that a student's behavior is detrimental to the good order of the school, and that suspension is an appropriate disciplinary action for a serious violation, or frequent violations, of school rules. The procedure for suspending a student is as follows:

1. MSA officials will provide the student with notice of the charge(s) orally or in writing. If the student denies the charges, he/she shall be given an explanation of the evidence against him/her and shall be given an opportunity to refute the charges. No time delay is necessary between the time a student is notified of the charge(s) and the time of the informal hearing before MSA officials. This will be the only hearing conducted.
2. If the facts indicate the student's guilt, the Executive Director or Principal will determine the appropriate term of suspension in accordance with school policy.
3. Upon notification of the suspension, the student is placed on room restriction or with MSA Security until leaving the school to begin the suspension. The suspension may begin immediately. MSA will inform the parent(s) of the suspension in person or by phone prior to the student leaving campus.
4. Within five (5) working days of the informal hearing with the student, MSA officials will send written notification to the student and parents specifying the reasons for the suspension.
5. Suspended students may not attend school-sponsored functions on or off campus during the suspension, including weekends. Such exclusions include field trips, competitions, social events, and etc. Suspended students may not come on campus for visitation or to pick up another student to provide transportation.
6. Suspended students will have school technological resources (i.e., DormNet, MSANet, and identification badge entry badge) disabled until they return to campus in good standing.
7. Students suspended from school are considered unexcused and may not make up work missed while they are absent, except major grades. Teachers are not obligated to repeat classroom lectures or provide private tutoring for material missed in class.
8. Upon completion of suspension, a student returning to school must make an appointment with the school official who handled the suspension to discuss returning to school and any additional restrictions that may apply. Also, parents may be requested to consult with the MSA official.

## **Emergency Suspension**

**Emergency Suspension** occurs when the Executive Director or Principal summarily suspends a student for not more than three (3) school days prior to completing an investigation for serious student

misconduct under circumstances where immediate removal of the student is necessary to restore order, protect persons on the school grounds, protect the student, or protect school property. The school official will meet with the student to briefly explain the purpose of the suspension, charges/violations, and evidence against them. The student may respond to the disciplinary charges. Parents will be immediately notified of the suspension, and the student will be immediately placed in the care of MSA Security and may not attend any classes. The student must leave school as soon as possible.

During the student's absence, a school official will complete the investigation. In such cases, the administration will complete an investigation following the emergency suspension. The administration will communicate findings to the student by phone and allow the student to respond.

Further disciplinary action will be recommended or taken as needed. If additional suspension is necessary, the Executive Director or Principal may extend the suspension for a period not to exceed a maximum of ten (10) school days. A written notification of the reasons for the suspension will be sent to the student and parents within three (3) school days.

If no further suspension or dismissal is imposed, the student must initiate contact with the school official upon his return as indicated under Suspension.

### **Offenses Leading to Suspension**

While enrolled at the MSA, attending class is critically important to meet educational expectations. However, when student misconduct, speech, or acts of insubordination reach more serious levels of gravity, out-of-school suspension may be necessary. The following list—that is not intended to be exhaustive—includes offenses that warrant suspension, but are not limited to:

1. First offense for violating policies related to tobacco;
2. First offense for violation of alcohol policies;
3. Repeated violations of school policies and procedures despite corrective interventions; and/or,
4. Other serious or habitual circumstances that warrant suspension out of school for a specified period of time.

### **Invitation to Return after Junior Year**

A student's attendance at MSA is a privilege, not a right; with this privilege comes responsibilities. During the school year, students not demonstrating appropriate academic or behavioral expectations can be placed on probation or returned to their home school to continue their education provided that applicable due process protections are afforded the student.

Admission to MSA is for one academic school year during which time a student must remain in good standing (in academics, attendance, and behavior). Students deemed unwilling to accept the responsibility and commitment necessary to be successful at MSA will be dismissed. Upon completion of a student's junior year at MSA, he or she must be extended an invitation by the administration in order to return for his or her senior year.

In keeping with the MSA philosophy of high academic expectations and criteria for admissions, student success is anticipated. A student must maintain an overall 2.5 GPA. Students with one failing grade at the end of the first semester of any school year, the second semester of the junior year, and/or grades less than a B in arts discipline major courses, will be evaluated for continuance at MSA. All students whose grades fall below a 70 in any non-arts subject or below an 80 (B) on an arts discipline course must attend mandatory study hours. Students with excessive absenteeism (with less than 95% attendance rate, as it relates to unexcused absences) and an attendance plan will be reviewed for continuance in the senior year. At the end of each semester, the Academic Behavioral Review Committee will examine all student records to determine attendance status for the upcoming semester and/or school year. Students may be invited to return, placed on academic and/or behavioral probation, or returned to their home school district. Prior to the first of July, juniors will be invited to return for their



senior year or notified of the Committee's decision. Those students who are not invited to return will be notified by certified mail.

Students or parents who wish to appeal this decision must submit a formal written appeal to the Principal or Executive Director within ten (10) working days of receipt of notification. The appeal shall include a written statement by the student explaining the reasons for appeal. Upon receipt of the appeal, the Principal or Executive Director will review the student's entire record while at MSA. The Principal or Executive Director may request a conference with the student. Within five (5) working days of receipt of the appeal, the Executive Director shall render a written decision to be forwarded to the student and/or parents by certified mail. The Executive Director's decision is final.

Any students with an IDEA ruling will be held to the standards created through federal law.

## **Dismissal**

**Dismissal** is an administrative removal of a student from enrollment at the MSA due to violations of school policy or probation to enroll in another school of choice. Dismissal to the home school district (or another school of choice) may be considered when students fail to make required minimum academic progress, to improve attendance, to correct behavioral problems during probation, or violate school policies including, but not limited to nonpayment of room and board by scheduled due dates.

When the Executive Director or Principal determines that a student should be considered for dismissal, the parent or guardian will be called to meet immediately with the Executive Director or Principal. This meeting may be held by phone in extenuating circumstances. At the conference, the Executive Director or Principal will notify the student and parents/guardians of the intent to dismiss based on violations of school policy or probation and give the student a chance to respond. During this conference the student and parents/guardians will be advised of their option to request an informal meeting with the State Superintendent of Education or his/her designee as outlined below. Immediately following the conference, written notification of the intent to dismiss and the informal meeting option will be provided.

Based on the conference between the Executive Director or Principal and the student and parent/guardian, the student may be removed from campus or suspended for a period of ten (10) school days or less until a final decision on dismissal is made. A request for the informal meeting with the State Superintendent or his/her designee must be made within two (2) school days following the conference. Such request must be in writing and include the following information:

1. An explanation for the student's performance, attendance, or behavior deficiencies;
2. A possible remediation plan; and
3. Reasons the student should remain at MSA.

A failure to request the informal meeting within the two-day period will result in the decision to dismiss by the Executive Director or designee being final.

The date for the informal meeting and rendering of final decision shall not exceed ten (10) school days from the date of the imposition of the suspension unless mutually agreed upon in writing by all parties or extenuating circumstances prevent the student from returning to school. Following consideration and evaluation of information provided in the student or parent's response and at the meeting, the State Superintendent or designee will make a final decision regarding dismissal of the student to the home school district (or another school of choice). Because attendance at the MSA is a privilege, not a right, the decision of the State Superintendent or designee is final. The State Superintendent or designee will notify the parents and the MSA in writing of the decision.

If the decision of the State Superintendent or designee is to dismiss the student from MSA, the student's belongings must be removed from the campus within five (5) working days of the final decision of dismissal. A student who has been dismissed from MSA may not apply for enrollment at a later date and is prohibited from campus and may not participate in school-related functions or activities on or off campus unless permitted by the Executive Director in advance.

## Offenses Leading to Dismissal

At the MSA, students must realize that certain serious actions and offenses result in grave consequences. Punishment for offenses listed below results in immediate dismissal and forfeiture of all privileges to attend the MSA at any time in the future. Enrollment in the home school district or another school of choice is left to the discretion of the student and parents. Offenses in this category include, but are not limited to:

1. Second offense involving violation of policies related to tobacco;
2. Third offense involving academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, stealing or appropriating the work of another);
3. Second offense related to the purchase, possession, use of, sale or distribution of, or being under the influence of alcohol;
4. Multiple non-criminal Level III violations; Purchase, possession, use of, sale or distribution of, or being under the influence of prescription drugs—not turned in to the nurse according to policy—that are classified as scheduled controlled substances (Schedules I-V). Such circumstances include prescriptions drugs written to the student or possession of those written for another individual; and /or
5. Other circumstances that warrant dismissal and forfeiture of privileges to attend a special state school.

## Expulsion

Expulsion is administrative removal of a student from enrollment at the MSA due to violations of law and/or policy (i.e., felonious acts or habitually disruptive behavior). Expulsion from the MSA may result in denial of admission to another school.

Such expulsion shall take place subject to the constitutional rights of due process described below and required by Miss. Code Ann. 37-9-71, which shall include the student's right to a due process hearing. When the Executive Director or Principal determines that a student should be recommended for expulsion, the parent or guardian will be called to meet immediately with the administrator. If there are extenuating circumstances, a conference can be held by phone.

During the conference, the Executive Director or Principal will notify the student and parents/guardians orally or in writing of the intent to suspend pending a recommendation based on violations of school policy and/or law or probation and give the student an opportunity to respond. Based on that meeting, the student may be suspended for up to ten (10) school days pending an expulsion. In that case, the parent must immediately remove the student from campus (if not already off campus) and the Executive Director or Principal will submit a recommendation for expulsion to the State Superintendent.

The student and parents/guardians will be advised of the right to a due process hearing and provided information on how to request said hearing. If a hearing is not requested within two (2) school days, the recommendation for expulsion will stand. If a hearing is requested, the State Superintendent or designee shall set the time, date, and place for a hearing.

The State Superintendent or designee will appoint a hearing officer within three (3) working days of receipt of a request for a hearing. **The date for the hearing shall not exceed fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of the imposition of the suspension unless mutually agreed upon in writing by all parties.** In the notice, State Superintendent or designee shall advise the student and the parents/guardians in writing of the following rights to:

1. Be informed of the charges against him/her,
2. Present evidence,
3. Cross-examine witnesses represented by the school,
4. Call witnesses in his/her own behalf, and,
5. Be represented by legal counsel at his/her own expense.

The MSA will have legal representation throughout expulsion proceedings. Failure of the student or parent to appear at the hearing will result in the forfeiture of all procedural rights to contest the expulsion. A court stenographer will transcribe the hearing. The State Superintendent or designee will prepare his findings, conclusions, and a final decision in writing and hand deliver or mail them to the Executive Director or Principal of MSA and the student's parents within ten (10) calendar days of the hearing. The student or parents may request a copy of the transcription of the hearing at their own expense.

Following expulsion, the MSA will notify the student's school of residence that the student is no longer enrolled. Upon request, educational records will be provided to the school where the student enrolls. A student who has been expelled from MSA may not apply for enrollment at a later date, is prohibited from campus, and may not participate in school-related functions or activities on or off campus unless permitted by the Executive Director in advance. Even though the duration of an imposed expulsion may be less than a year, students who have been expelled from the MSA have forfeited their privileges to attend the school and must seek enrollment in their home school districts or another school of choice.

## **Appeal to the State Board of Education**

Upon receipt of a final decision from the State Superintendent or designee, the student's parents have five (5) working days to request in writing to the State Board of Education an appeal regarding an expulsion. The appeal must include a written statement by the student explaining the reasons for appeal. If no such request is received within five (5) working days of notification, the right to an appeal is waived and the discipline may be imposed forthwith by the Executive Director or Principal.

Only the Mississippi State Board of Education can decide an appeal regarding expulsion. The hearing officer will certify the complete record to the Mississippi State Board of Education. The Mississippi State Board of Education will consider the matter at a special called meeting or its regularly scheduled meeting at the discretion of the Board Chair. The Mississippi State Board of Education will review the final decision and the record of the hearing and will consider oral arguments only from the Executive Director or Principal or legal counsel and from the student, his or her parent/guardian, or legal counsel. No new evidence or presentation of witness testimony will be considered. The Mississippi State Board of Education will render a written decision within a reasonable amount of time. The decision of the Mississippi State Board of Education is final.

**Note:** Students with disabilities against whom the actions described in this section are contemplated will also be granted the protections afforded to them under applicable federal laws and regulations.

## **Offenses Leading to Expulsion**

The Mississippi School of the Arts wants students to understand the consequences of certain serious actions and offenses. Punishment for offenses listed below results in immediate expulsion for up to one calendar year and forfeiture of all privileges to attend the MSA at any time in the future. Enrollment in the home school district or another school of choice is left to the discretion of the administration of that entity. Offenses in this category include:

1. Purchase, possession, and/or use of a weapon (including martial arts), explosives, ammunition, fireworks, handgun, knife, or firearm(s), instrument considered to be dangerous and capable of causing bodily harm;
2. Extreme violence toward any person, including verbal or written threats to life or safety, wielding a weapon, wielding a knife, or threatening conduct with any type of weapon or knife or committing a violent act on educational property;
3. Purchase, possession, use of, sale or distribution of, or being under the influence of any controlled substance in violation of the Uniform Controlled Substances Law (Miss. Code Ann. § 41-29-101, *et. seq.*); and
4. Other felonious conduct.
5. Expulsions will be reported to youth court and local law enforcement personnel in accordance with state law.

This is not to be considered an exhaustive list of offenses that may lead to expulsion.

## **Disciplinary Procedures and Due Process**

### **Notification to Student of Level I or Level II Violations**

MSA officials will notify students when Level I violations or Level II violations occur with a copy of the report generated by the student administrative data management system (SAM Spectra).

Except where circumstances dictate otherwise (e.g., further investigation needed, availability of students, referral to an administrator), notification will occur within twenty-four (24) hours of the staff becoming aware of the violation. Consequences, as defined in the Violations and Consequences Chart, will be applied depending on the level of the violation and the frequency of the offense. A warning will be noted and need not be discussed unless requested by the student. However, in all other instances, the staff issuing the disciplinary referral to the student must discuss the situation with the student(s) within twenty-four (24) hours unless extenuating circumstances intervene. Upon completion of the conference, the student will sign the disciplinary report and the staff will give a copy of it to the student, mail a copy to the parents, and retain a file copy.

If a student intends to ask for a review of the disciplinary action, a written request must be made to the Executive Director or Principal. The student must appeal or request any review of a write-up within 24 hours of notification in writing to have a write up reversed. The appeal for residence life write ups is to the Director of Residence Life and then the Executive Director. The appeal for academic write ups is to the Principal and then the Executive Director. Students must fulfill consequences after appeal, even if they choose not to sign the notification. The consequence remains in the system for year of attendance.

### **Determination of Consequences**

Staff may use discretion in relation to assigning one or more consequences regarding an incident. When an incident occurs involving multiple violations on the same level, staff may count each violation separately or consider the incident as one violation for the purpose of determining the consequence(s). However, when an incident involves multiple violations on different levels, the most severe consequence of the higher level will apply. The administration reserves the right to add additional consequences for infractions as deemed necessary.

### **Accumulation of Violations and End of Year Violations**

**All violations accumulate throughout the entire year.** At the discretion of the administration, a senior who commits a serious violation (Level II or III) during the final weeks prior to the end of the school year may be dismissed or may not be permitted to participate in the graduation ceremonies. Likewise, a junior may not be invited to return for the senior year.

### **Failure to Abide by Disciplinary Action**

If a student fails to fulfill consequences assigned for a Level I or Level II violation, he or she must complete the restitution, and MSA officials will invoke disrespect charges one level above the current violations. Students who commit major violations of restriction guidelines or fail to abide by the consequences of incidents involving multiple Level II violations will be referred to administration and assigned a Level III violation.

### **Notification to Student of Level III Violations**

Level III violations (one or more, depending on the severity of the infraction) may result in a student's suspension, dismissal, or expulsion. The student and parents will be notified by MSA in writing of the alleged incident and the consequences by hand-delivered letter, certified mail, or overnight delivery. Such notification will advise the student and parents that they may have a right to request a hearing, depending on the level of disciplinary action.

### **Students Banned from Campus**

Occasionally, friends, relatives, or visitors of MSA students or school alumni may be banned from campus for a specified period of time based on actions inappropriate or unsafe for a school campus. In addition, students who have been dismissed or expelled from MSA are banned from campus and may

not come on campus for visitation, transport students in a vehicle, or participate in school-related functions or activities on or off campus until permitted by the Executive Director, after a formal request is made by the banned person and approved by the administration. Students who are banned, dismissed, or expelled from the school forfeit all access and visitation privileges in relation to friends, girlfriends or boyfriends, relatives, former classmates, teachers, staff members, or any other person(s) related to MSA operations.

## Consequences for Tardies

Tardies are considered separate from violations as defined in the discipline ladder. Students who are tardy for class, mandatory study hours, or other mandatory student activities will receive an immediate assignment for detention to be served in the next detention session offered. Non-compliance in the detention will result in a write up as defined in the following charts.

## Level I Violations and Consequences

The following list of violations is not meant to be all-inclusive. Administration will assign activities not listed to the appropriate level. When a student has received three (3) Level I violations, all subsequent offenses beginning with the fourth violation will be administered at Level II. When an incident occurs involving multiple violations on the same level, staff may count each violation separately or consider the incident as one violation at a higher level for the purpose of determining the consequence(s).

Level One Violations – Residence Life	Level One Consequences
<p><b>RL1.1 Attendance Violations—Not at assigned location:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Breaking Curfew (&lt; 30 minutes)</li> <li>b. Failing to attend mandatory meetings, study hours</li> <li>c. Failing to be at assigned location on time—room check, etc.</li> <li>d. Forgetting to sign in for a.m. roll call</li> </ul> <p><b>RL1.2 Behavior Lacking Consideration of others:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Breaking line in the cafeteria</li> <li>b. Disturbing others</li> <li>c. Creating excessive noise or music, horseplay, running</li> <li>d. Having lights on after designated times</li> <li>e. Kissing other than allowed by PDA/Dating Guidelines</li> <li>f. Talking on the phone after lights out</li> <li>g. Leaving personal belongings in common areas</li> <li>h. Profanity</li> </ul> <p><b>RL1.3 Damage to Property, Accidental:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Damaging individual, school, public property</li> <li>b. Misusing and/or unauthorized use or abuse</li> </ul> <p><b>RL1.4 Failure to Follow Written Protocol:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Carrying food or beverages on BHS bus</li> <li>b. Failing to meet dress code</li> <li>c. Eating or drinking in the library</li> <li>d. Failing room inspection standards</li> <li>e. Failing to display parking permit</li> <li>f. Failing to turn in car keys</li> <li>g. Leaving clothes in laundry room, washers/dryers</li> <li>h. Parking illegally</li> </ul> <p><b>RL1.5 Technology Offenses (Computer, Network, Phone):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Eating or drinking at school computers</li> <li>b. Violating DormNet regulations</li> <li>c. Committing Personal Communication Device offenses</li> <li>d. Committing Listening Device offenses</li> <li>e. Committing land line phone violations</li> <li>f. Technology acceptable use violations</li> <li>g. Mass email for non-school purposes</li> <li>h. Monopolizing computers/equipment</li> <li>i. Wasteful use of equipment/printers/paper/supplies</li> <li>j. Use of personal hotspot on MSA equipment</li> </ul> <p><b>RL1.6 Safety or Legal Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Failure to return temporary ID badge</li> <li>b. Failure to wear ID badge</li> <li>c. Deface the ID badge</li> </ul>	<p>Campus Work Task = CWT</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Written Warning</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: One (1) detention session Parent(s) notified</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: One (1) CWT 1 detention session Parent(s) notified</p> <p>4<sup>th</sup> Offense: See Level II.</p> <p>Level One Offenses will be carried over until the end of the year. After repeated offenses, student may be placed on probation.</p> <p>Habitual offenses (more than three) of the same violation may merit up to a two (2) day suspension.</p>

Level One Violations – Academics	Level One Consequences
<p><b>AL1.1 Attendance Violations—Not at assigned location:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Failing to attend mandatory meetings, study hours</li> <li>b. Missing the Bus to BHS—no written warning</li> <li>c. Forgetting to sign in for a.m. roll call</li> <li>d. Violating study hour guidelines</li> </ul> <p><b>AL1.2 Behavior Lacking Consideration of others:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Breaking line in the cafeteria</li> <li>b. Disturbing others</li> <li>c. Kissing other than allowed by PDA/Dating Guidelines</li> <li>d. Profanity</li> </ul> <p><b>AL1.3 Damage to Property, Accidental:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Damaging individual, school, public property</li> <li>b. Misusing and/or unauthorized use or abuse</li> </ul> <p><b>AL1.4 Failure to Follow Written Protocol:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Carrying food or beverages on bus</li> <li>b. Failing to meet dress code</li> <li>c. Eating or drinking in the library</li> </ul> <p><b>AL1.5 Technology Offenses (Computer, Network, Phone):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Eating or drinking at school computers</li> <li>b. Violating MSANet regulations</li> <li>c. Committing Personal Communication Device offenses</li> <li>d. Committing Listening Device offenses</li> <li>e. Committing land line phone violations</li> <li>f. Technology acceptable use violations</li> <li>g. Mass email for non-school purposes</li> <li>h. Monopolizing computers/equipment</li> <li>i. Wasteful use of equipment/printers/paper/supplies</li> <li>j. Use of personal hotspot on MSA equipment</li> </ul> <p><b>AL1.6 Safety or Legal Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Failure to return temporary ID badge</li> <li>b. Failure to report lost ID badge</li> <li>c. Deface the ID badge</li> </ul> <p><b>AL1.7 Morning Protocol Violations</b></p>	<p>Campus Work Task = CWT</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Written Warning</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: One (1) detention session Parent(s) notified</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: One (1) CWT 1 detention session Parent(s) notified</p> <p>4<sup>th</sup> Offense: See Level II.</p> <p>Level One Offenses will be carried over until the end of the year. After repeated offenses student may be placed on probation (Refer to page 106 of handbook).</p> <p>Habitual offenses (more than three) of the same violation may merit up to a two (2) day suspension.</p>

Level One offenses for academics and residence life will be independent of each other. Each category stands alone giving a student three offenses in academics and three offenses in residence life before going to the level two violations. Students can be given a level two or three violation without accumulating level one offenses if the offense is egregious and a violation of the higher level.

## Level II Violations and Consequences

The following list of violations is not meant to be all-inclusive. Administration will assign activities not listed to the appropriate level. When a student has received three (3) Level II violations, all subsequent offenses will be administered at Level III. When an incident occurs involving multiple violations on the same level, staff may count each violation separately or consider the incident as one violation at a higher level for the purpose of determining the consequence(s).

Level Two Violations-Residence Life	Level Two Consequences
<p><b>RL2.1 Attendance Violations—Not at assigned location:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Allowing other students in room after curfew</li> <li>b. Committing curfew violations (&gt;30 minutes)</li> <li>c. Failing to attend mandatory assemblies, study hours, meetings</li> <li>d. Being off assigned floor after hours</li> <li>e. Entering or exiting campus buildings without authorization</li> <li>f. Being in an off limits area of the campus</li> </ul> <p><b>RL2.2 Behavior Lacking Consideration of others:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Disrespecting or defying school personnel</li> <li>b. Harassing another individual</li> <li>c. Behaving inappropriately in a romantic relationship</li> <li>d. Exposing oneself indecently</li> <li>e. Making lewd gestures (profane or obscene behavior, etc.)</li> <li>f. Using profanity, verbal or written against others</li> </ul> <p><b>RL2.3 Damage to Property, Deliberate:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Committing acts of minor vandalism</li> <li>b. Defacing school property</li> <li>c. Misusing or unauthorized use of property</li> </ul> <p><b>RL2.4 Dishonesty</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Conveying false information</li> <li>b. Lying to staff</li> <li>c. Violating Privilege Plan</li> </ul> <p><b>RL2.5 Failure to Follow Written Protocol:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Failure to clean up after oneself in cafeteria and/or common areas</li> <li>b. Taking utensils, food, drinks, and flatware from cafeteria</li> <li>c. Materials encouraging the use of illegal substances</li> <li>d. Exhibiting materials in windows visible from the outside</li> <li>e. Failure to register vehicle</li> <li>f. Failure to sign in the dorm</li> <li>g. Violating the Student Code of Conduct</li> </ul> <p><b>RL2.6 Multiple Level I Violations</b></p> <p><b>RL2.7 Safety or Legal Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Compromising hall security</li> <li>b. Failing to follow evacuation and emergency procedures</li> <li>c. Failure to wear ID badge</li> <li>d. Inviting or admitting students banned from campus</li> <li>e. Exceeding limits of MSA walking guide</li> <li>f. Possessing pornographic, lewd, or obscene materials</li> </ul> <p><b>RL2.8 Technology Offenses (Computer, Network, Phone):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Committing DormNet violations</li> <li>b. Violating Personal Communication Device offenses (Cell Phone)</li> <li>c. Committing Listening Device offenses</li> <li>d. Making landline phone violations</li> <li>e. Technology acceptable use violations</li> <li>f. Failure to logoff of school computers</li> <li>g. Use of emails for fraudulent, financial gain, or other inappropriate purposes</li> <li>h. Streaming/large downloads/games that degrade performance</li> <li>i. Misuse of printers or equipment</li> </ul>	<p>Campus Work Task = CWT Campus Work Service = CWS</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> Offense 1 CWT 2 hours CWS Parent(s) notified</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> Offense 2 CWT 1 detention session 2 hours CWS Parent(s) notified</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> Offense 4 hours CWS 1 week of dorm restriction Parent(s) notified</p> <p>4<sup>th</sup> Offense Referred to the Principal or the Executive Director as a Level Three violation</p> <p>Level Two violations will be carried over into the next semester. After repeated offenses the student may be placed on probation.</p> <p>Habitual offenses (more than three) of the same violation may merit up to a two (2) day suspension.</p> <p>The administration reserves the right to increase consequences as deemed necessary.</p>

Level Two Violations - Academics	Level Two Consequences
<p><b>AL2.1 Attendance Violations—Not at assigned location:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Cutting class (includes absences due to missing the bus)</li> <li>b. Failing to attend mandatory assemblies, meetings, educational programs, and field trips</li> <li>c. Leaving class without permission or campus pass</li> <li>d. Entering or exiting campus buildings without authorization</li> </ul> <p><b>AL2.2 Behavior Lacking Consideration of others:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Disrespecting or defying school personnel</li> <li>b. Harassing another individual</li> <li>c. Behaving inappropriately in a romantic relationship</li> <li>d. Exposing oneself indecently</li> <li>e. Making lewd gestures (profane or obscene behavior, etc.)</li> <li>f. Using profanity, verbal or written against others</li> </ul> <p><b>AL2.3 Damage to Property, Deliberate:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Committing acts of minor vandalism</li> <li>b. Defacing school property</li> <li>c. Misusing or unauthorized use of property</li> </ul> <p><b>AL2.4 Dishonesty</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Cheating or other academic dishonesty (first offense)</li> <li>b. Conveying false information</li> <li>c. Lying to staff, faculty or administration</li> <li>d. Signing out more times than authorized during the day</li> </ul> <p><b>AL2.5 Failure to Follow Written Protocol:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Failure to clean up after oneself in cafeteria</li> <li>b. Taking utensils, food, drinks, and flatware from cafeteria</li> <li>c. Materials encouraging the use of illegal substances</li> <li>d. Exhibiting materials in windows visible from the outside</li> <li>e. Failure to sign in or out of campus</li> <li>f. Leaving dorm room when sick or absent from class</li> <li>g. Using inappropriate content in student work</li> <li>h. Violating the Student Code of Conduct and Honor Code</li> </ul> <p><b>AL2.6 Multiple Level I Violations</b></p> <p><b>AL2.7 Safety or Legal Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Failing to follow evacuation and emergency procedures</li> <li>b. Failure to report lost ID badge</li> <li>c. Possessing pornographic, lewd, or obscene materials</li> </ul> <p><b>L2.8 Technology Offenses (Computer, Network, Phone):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Committing MSANet violations</li> <li>b. Violating Personal Communication Device offenses (Cell Phone)</li> <li>c. Committing Listening Device offenses</li> <li>d. Making landline phone violations</li> <li>e. Technology acceptable use violations</li> <li>f. Failure to logoff of school computers</li> <li>g. Use of email for fraudulent, financial gain, or other inappropriate purposes</li> <li>h. Streaming/large downloads/games that degrade performance</li> <li>i. Misuse of printers and equipment</li> </ul>	<p>Campus Work Task - CWT Campus Work Service = CWS Academic Dishonesty (First Offense): Grade of "0" on class assignment, 2 weeks campus restriction, 10 hours campus works service, parents notified.</p> <p>Other Offenses:</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> Offense 1 CWT 2 hours CWS Parent(s) notified</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> Offense 2 CWT 1 detention session 2 hours CWS Parent(s) notified</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> Offense 4 hours CWS 1 week of dorm restriction Parent(s) notified</p> <p>4<sup>th</sup> Offense Referred to the Principal or the Executive Director as a Level Three violation</p> <p>Level Two violations will be carried over into the next semester. After repeated offenses the student may be placed on probation (refer to page 106 of handbook).</p> <p>Habitual offenses (more than three) of the same violation may merit up to a two (2) day suspension. The administration reserves the right to increase consequences as deemed necessary.</p>

Level Two offenses for academics and residence life will be independent of each other. Each category stands alone giving a student three offenses in academics and three offenses in residence life before going to the level three violations. Students can be given a level three violation without accumulating level one or two offenses if the offense is egregious and a violation of the higher level.



## Level III Violations and Consequences

The following list of violations is not meant to be all-inclusive. Other than habitual minor offenses, level III violations will result in probable dorm restriction, suspension, dismissal or expulsion. Administration will assign activities not listed to the appropriate level.

Level Three Violations	Level Three Violations
<p><b>L3.1 Attendance Violations—Not at Assigned Location:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Being on the hall or in the room of the opposite sex</li> <li>b. Exiting SLC after curfew</li> <li>c. Violating visitation guidelines regarding students in a romantic relationship</li> </ul> <p><b>L3.2 Behavior Lacking Consideration of Others:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Behavior impeding school and dorm operations</li> <li>b. Gross violations of PDA guidelines</li> <li>c. Causing a false emergency alarm</li> <li>d. Direct disobedience or insubordination</li> <li>e. Indecent behavior or exposure</li> <li>f. Misconduct during school-sponsored events</li> <li>g. Profanity, gross or obscene language or actions</li> </ul> <p><b>L3.3 Dishonesty:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Academic Dishonesty (second offense)</li> <li>b. Being knowingly present when policy violations are occurring and not notifying school personnel</li> <li>c. Documenting false information</li> <li>d. Lying to the administration</li> <li>e. Signing out/in under false name</li> <li>f. Signing out to one place and going elsewhere</li> <li>g. Failure to sign out/leaving campus without authorization</li> </ul> <p><b>L3.4 Safety or Legal Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Actions unsafe for self and/or others</li> <li>b. Assault</li> <li>c. Being picked up by the police</li> <li>d. Breaking and entering</li> <li>e. Compromising campus security and life safety</li> <li>f. Conspiring to violate school policy</li> <li>g. Contributing to the delinquency of a minor student</li> <li>h. Creation, distribution, possession of fake I.D.s</li> <li>i. Extortion</li> <li>j. Facilitating unauthorized persons on campus including banned former students</li> <li>k. Fighting, including battery</li> <li>l. Forgery, fraud, submission of false information</li> <li>m. Gambling or gaming</li> <li>n. Harassment</li> <li>o. Molestation</li> <li>p. Multiple and/or simultaneous Level II violations</li> <li>q. Possession and/or use of banned materials</li> <li>r. Purchase, possession, use, distribution of tobacco products</li> <li>s. Purchase possession, abuse of prescription or over the counter (OTC) drugs/inhalants</li> </ul>	<p><b>L3.4 Safety or Legal Issues (continued):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>t. Purchase/possession/use of a dangerous weapon (including martial arts), explosives/ammunition/fireworks/firearms</li> <li>u. Purchase, possession, use of, distribution of, or being under the influence of alcohol</li> <li>v. Purchase, possession, use of, distribution of, or being under the influence of illegal drugs</li> <li>w. Riding in a vehicle without proper permission by parents</li> <li>x. Signing out walking and getting in a vehicle for transportation without proper authorization</li> <li>y. Theft, shoplifting, or receiving stolen property</li> <li>z. Threatening bodily harm</li> <li>aa. Transporting a student in a vehicle without proper authorization</li> <li>bb. Unauthorized absence from campus, including running away</li> <li>cc. Unauthorized use of public property</li> <li>dd. Using inappropriate content in student work</li> <li>ee. Vandalism, destruction, or other severe misuse of property</li> <li>ff. Violating municipal, state, or federal law</li> </ul> <p><b>L3.5 Technology Offenses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. MSANet or DormNet violations</li> <li>b. Personal Communication Device offenses</li> <li>c. Listening Device infractions</li> <li>d. Telephone violations</li> <li>e. Hacking, unauthorized access or use</li> <li>f. Cyberbullying/harassment/Obscene use</li> <li>g. Attempt to degrade, crash or modify network/equipment</li> <li>h. Relocate equipment without permission</li> <li>i. Housing website on MSANet</li> </ul> <p><b>L3.6 Multiple Level II Violations</b></p> <p><b>L3.7 Habitual Minor Infractions</b></p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Level Three Consequences</b></p> <p>Academic Dishonesty (Second Offense): A failing grade will be recorded for the class, the parents will be notified, and the student will lose honor status.</p> <p>Students who have disciplinary infractions reaching the point of all Level III violations will be placed on disciplinary probation.</p> <p>All Level III Violations are referred to the Executive Director or designee for action and dependent upon the severity of the infraction may include dorm restriction, suspension, dismissal, and/or expulsion and possible law enforcement involvement.</p>

# Health and Safety

## MSA Safety/Crisis Management Plan and MSA Safety Manual

The Director of Maintenance, Transportation, and School Safety as well as the Executive Director are responsible for creating and updating the MSA Safety and Crisis Management Plan and Manual, which are distributed to all administration, faculty, and staff. The purpose of these manuals is to assure that adequate programs are provided for the protection of health and safety of students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community and for compliance with appropriate codes and regulations. Procedures for emergency/safety plans will be printed and posted so all MSA students, faculty, staff, and administration will be knowledgeable of safety procedures. Drills will be held throughout the year to assist students and staff in proper procedures for various situations.

The manuals identify health and safety problems; establish standards; evaluate and report on the status of compliance with health and safety standards, codes, and regulations; provide technical services; recommend and implement accident experiences; and develop and manage training resources.

In emergency situations and when required to do so by codes, regulations, or licensure agreement, any trained employees are authorized to take preventative, investigative, and remedial actions.

## Emergency Situations

During times of emergencies on campus and/or situations caused by inclement weather or other conditions across the state, the MSA authorities will not allow a student to leave school premises until it has been determined that conditions are safe for travel to a given destination.

To determine when students should return to campus following an emergency or when hazardous weather or road conditions impact our state, please call one of the numbers below for updates. When it is safe to return to campus, specific information will be provided in relation to the re-opening of school. When electricity is available and e-mail systems are operable, the latest update information will also be e-mailed to all students and staff members. MSA also has an instant messaging program that will call or text all phones in the school database for students and staff. Social media updates will also be made.

**MSA Primary Number: 601-823-1300**  
**MSA Security Office: 601-823-1350**

**SLC Main Desk: 601-823-1356**  
**Health Center: 601-823-1347**

## HEALTH SERVICES

### Nursing Care

Preventive health services are ideal. The school has formulated policies designed to enhance the health and well-being of all students. Included in these policies are room inspections, nutritious, wholesome meals, lights-out regulations, activity programs, physical fitness activities, residential life curriculum, and required medical information from each student.

A registered nurse is on duty from 7:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and on call at other times and can be reached by the Director of Residential Life if deemed necessary. The school nurse will examine students and coordinate appointments with a local doctor or determine if the student should return home due to the seriousness of the illness. While the nurse can administer allergy shots, provide basic first aid services, and perform health care counseling, the nurse is not a personal physician.

Students should report to the nurse in the event they become ill during the school day. If a student becomes ill during the evenings or on the weekend when the nurse is off campus, the Residence Counselor will help determine student needs initially and contact the Director of Residential Life or the Assistant Dorm Supervisor. The Director of Residential Life or a designee will make every effort to contact a parent/guardian prior to medical treatment. In emergency situations an ambulance service

may be called and the service of the emergency room of a local hospital utilized. Parents/guardians **MUST** sign an **MSA Health Information/Medical Treatment Form** allowing a student to receive hospital care in the case of an emergency. MSA will notify parents/guardians immediately in the event of an emergency.

A physician may direct the school nurse to restrict a student's activities if deemed necessary for a speedy and complete recovery and for the general welfare of the school community. Failure to comply with confinement will result in unexcused absences for the days missed from class.

### **Medical Expenses, Insurance, and Scheduling Treatment**

Parents are responsible for all medical costs and will assume all financial obligations incurred by their child in health-related situations. Visits to the doctor's office will be billed to the parents. MSA assumes no responsibility for student medical expenses. Parents are encouraged to provide medical insurance for their child. Information and applications for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), a joint federal/state program that provides health insurance coverage to low-income uninsured children, is available upon request in the school nurse.

Parents should schedule routine medical and/or dental visits and surgical procedures when students are home for breaks or holidays to prevent disruption of academic courses. MSA will not be responsible for providing transportation for medical services outside of the Brookhaven area. Parents are asked to refrain from knowingly sending a sick student to campus without taking them to the doctor. **Doctor visits for general checkups and non-emergency visits related to a previously diagnosed illness are the responsibility of the parents/guardians. MSA will not be responsible for providing transportation services for non-emergent care visits for medical and/or dental visits.**

Please note that transportation to doctor's appointments is for emergent care only. Emergencies qualify as the following, which include but are not limited to: bone breaks, head injuries, extreme cases of stomach illness, injuries related to falls, or illness requiring immediate medical care that cannot wait for travelling home as determined by the nurse in collaboration with the MSA administration.

**Students who are sick requiring more than 24 hours out of school are required to return home until they have recovered. Parents must be prepared to pick up their children if called due to the severity of illness regardless of the distance of travel or inconvenience to the parents. Students should not return to school ill and expect to stay in their rooms for 24 hours. For the wellness of the campus, students should seek medical attention and remain at home if the illness prevents them from attending class or school functions.**

### **Required Medical Information**

All medical information is confidential. Parents must complete fully and accurately all medical forms required for admission to MSA. All students must have a physical and a completed Medical Examination Form before checking into the residence hall. A copy of the immunization form 121 must also be included with the cumulative school records or be delivered with all medical release forms. All students are encouraged to take a flu shot prior to or while attending MSA.

Admittance to MSA is contingent upon providing the following medical information no later than July 1 of the upcoming school year:

1. **Record of Immunization.** Students may obtain a copy of this form at their local school or pediatrician. Ordinarily schools include this information with the school cumulative records. Immunizations must be current according to state code on the Form 121.
2. **MSA Health Information/Medical Treatment Form.** This form is very important because it authorizes a doctor or hospital to provide treatment for both non-emergency and emergency situations.
3. **Medical Examination Form.** All students must have a physical and a form completed by a physician.

4. **Residence Hall General Medication Use Permission Form.** This form authorizes MSA to administer over-the-counter medications with parental permission.
5. **Administering Prescription Medication to Students Form/Signed Doctor's Orders.** This form must be completed each year and must be modified whenever a medication is prescribed or changed.
6. **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).** This notice describes how medical information about your child may be used and disclosed and how you may gain access to your child's health information. The form attached to the notice must be completed at the beginning of each school year so that MSA staff may seek medical assistance for your child and provide medical information to caregivers.
7. **Mental Health Evaluation Form.** All students with diagnosed mental illness must have a form completed by the current treating mental health professional.

**Parents must notify the Executive Director, Director of Residential Life, and the school nurse immediately regarding changes in medications, guardianship, insurance, address, and employment.** Photocopies of prescription and insurance cards should be attached to medical forms if applicable.

## **Mental Health Evaluation**

Students diagnosed with mood or anxiety disorders (or other mental health problems) within the last two years must submit the **MSA Mental Health Evaluation form** from their licensed professional counselor, psychologist, or psychiatrist stating that, in his or her professional opinion, the student can handle the academic and residential pressures of the MSA environment, and outlining any treatment protocol that should be continued during the student's enrollment at MSA. **Preventative measures or triggers for anxiety/panic attacks must be disclosed to the administration to maintain the safety and order of the school and residential environment.**

It is expected that parents provide information to MSA regarding previous and current mental health issues prior to the start of the year including recommendations and symptoms for the necessary staff to be aware to guarantee a healthy environment for all students. If a parent does not disclose fully in advance a student's mental health diagnosis or prior issues concerning mental health that lead to significant health risks for the student or the school, the student may be dismissed until the issues are fully disclosed and follow recommendations of a mental health professional. Re-admittance will be at the discretion of the administration.

In the event a student exhibits destructive behaviors, MSA shall have the right to require that the parent/guardian pick up the student immediately. If the student plans to return to MSA, he/she must submit a formal mental health evaluation by their treating licensed professional counselor, psychologist, or psychiatrist – not a regular physician, to be conducted at the expense of the parent. The student will not be allowed to return to the MSA campus until the evaluation is completed and the licensed mental health professional has submitted the Mental Health Evaluation form or a detailed letter, stating in writing that: (1) the student is not a danger to self or others and (2) the student can handle the academic and residential pressures of the MSA environment, and (3) the student is complying with the recommendations of the mental health professional.

If the situation does not carry a disciplinary sanction of suspension, the student's absences will be excused as medical absences. Prior to returning to the MSA campus, the student and his or her parent/guardian must meet with school officials and arrangements made for the student to comply strictly with the recommendations of the mental health professional and to meet regularly with the school counselor, Executive Director, and/or an outside mental health professional to assess consistent stability.

**If a parent does not fully disclose problems in advance that lead to significant health risks for the student or the school, the student may be dismissed until the issues are fully disclosed and the recommendations of a mental health professional are being followed. Re-admittance will be at the discretion of the administration.**

## OTC, Prescription Medication, and General Administration Guidelines

Parents/Guardians must notify the school if a student is on any medication and/or under a doctor's care for a medical condition. This information must be provided in written detail from the doctor and the parents/guardians before enrollment in MSA. **MSA assumes no responsibility for any adverse or negative reactions due to lack of medication as a result of faulty records from parents/guardians and reserves all rights including the possibility of third-party action.**

MSA students must file all prescription drug and over-the-counter cold medicine needs and use with the school nurse who will inform the Director of Residence Life. Prescriptions must be written for the student and recently dated. Students must act responsibly while handling all medications. Abuse of prescription drugs or failure to abide by MSA medication regulations may result in a Level III violation as defined in this handbook. Any change in medication administration should be discussed between the student and doctor. Self-diagnosis and removal of medication from a student's regimen that results in erratic or destructive behaviors may require a mental health evaluation at the expense of the parent/guardian before continuation at MSA is allowed.

Students must not transfer or share prescription or over-the-counter medications. Improper use of any type of medications will be treated as a disciplinary procedure Level III violation under the school alcohol and drug policy and may result in suspension, dismissal, or expulsion. Caffeine pills are not permitted for student consumption. The nurse or a designee must administer all prescription or schedule medications. **Any over-the-counter cold or cough medications containing dextromethorphan (e.g., Coricidin or Robitussin) are forbidden on campus and may be taken only with doctor's orders to be administered by the nurse or designated MSA staff member.** All medications must be kept in the proper, original, container with clear directions and a label in evidence for proper storage.

**Furthermore, all prescription and over-the-counter cold medications must be registered with the nurse with permission given by the parent and a list of all items that the student will maintain ownership of while on campus. No new medications can be added without updating the file and informing the nurse. MSA requires that the school nurse or MSA designee administer any controlled substance prescription medications. No narcotic pain medications will be stored on campus. Students may store OTC medications except for cold medicines, including birth control medications in their dorm rooms. Failure to follow policies could result in a Level III disciplinary infraction that may include suspension, dismissal, or expulsion.** When a doctor prescribes medication for a student illness, the nurse must be notified immediately, and all forms completed and turned in to MSA. The nurse will follow up or oversee the administration of any controlled substance (scheduled drugs 1-5), non-psychotic or other prohibited medications. **Failure to comply with the doctor or nurse's directions will result in a disciplinary procedure as a Level III violation.** MSA will not permit medical cannabis to be administered, stored, or used on campus.

Students will report to the nurse or designated representative at the predetermined time for administration of medications. All prescription medications must be accompanied by a completed MSA Prescription Medication form which will be kept on file in the nurse's station. Regardless of parent or physician statements, no prescription medications may be taken to a student's room and/or self-administered unless approved by the Executive Director or school nurse. It is also the student's responsibility to take medication daily or as prescribed.

All prescription medications must be in an appropriate container labeled with the drug name, dosage, frequency of administration, date of issue, and prescribing physician. Medications classified as controlled substances (scheduled drugs 1-5), non-controlled anti-psychotic medication, and any other medication as prohibited by MSA **WILL NOT** be permitted in the student rooms, even if both the parent/guardian and prescribing provider give consent.

MSA and its employees and agents assume no liability because of any injury sustained by a student from the self-administration of asthma inhalers or other prescription medication as approved by the parent and physician.

## **Self-Administration of Medication**

All medications must be registered with the nurse except students who meet the requirements to possess and self-administer prescription asthma or anaphylaxis medication pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-71. A School Asthma Plan (SAP) for students diagnosed with asthma, Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-71 requires each student with asthma have a current school asthma plan on file for use by the school nurse, teachers and staff. The parents of the child are required to annually have the child's health care provider develop and sign the SAP. The SAP must include: (1) child's name, (2) date, (3) school, (4) age, (5) physician's signature, (6) instructions to the school if coughing or wheezing and indicate dosage and delivery method details, and (7) whether the student administers his or her own medication or school personnel may administer medication. The plan must also indicate whether pre-medication is required and shall indicate dosage and delivery method details.

A student may self-administer prescription anaphylaxis medication if MSA is provided a written (1) parental authorization, (2) parental release of liability, and (3) the required doctor's statement pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-71. A student with asthma may self-administer prescription asthma medication if MSA is provided a written (1) parental authorization, (2) parental release of liability, (3) school asthma plan completed by the prescribing physician authorizing self-administration, and (4) the required doctor's statement pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-71.

Upon fulfilling the requirements of these regulations for self-administration, a student with asthma may possess and use asthma medications when at school, at a school-sponsored activity, under the supervision of school personnel while on or off school properties including residence in the dormitory.

## **Excused Absence from Class for Health Reasons**

A student who is ill must inform the nurse as soon as possible. Students who do not check in with the nurse will not receive an excuse for illness and will receive a disciplinary action for skipping class. Parents cannot give permission to a student to stay in their rooms without consultation with the school nurse.

1. Going to the nurse does not automatically excuse a student from class. The nurse and/or a doctor must substantiate the seriousness of the illness. A minor illness (e.g., cramps, headache, and minor cold) does not justify an excused absence.
2. At any time during the school day an excused absence will be granted providing the student has gone to the nurse or other designated adult and has a substantiated illness.
3. Students excused from two or more classes because of illness shall not attend school functions that day and are expected to remain in the residence hall room except for meals unless written permission from a physician or the school nurse is provided. When a student is not returning to school from a holiday and/or weekend at home because of illness, the parents must contact the school immediately. The absence will be recorded as excused upon return of the student to MSA with a doctor's excuse.
4. Students with unsubstantiated illnesses who refuse to go to class will result in the absences being recorded as unexcused. Excessive unexcused absences will result in notification of the School Attendance Officer.
5. Violation of the above policies may result in an unexcused absence and disciplinary action.
6. Parents are requested to carefully consider allowing students to miss class due to minor illnesses as these absences disrupt their academic progress.

## **Communicable Diseases**

MSA will comply with all federal and state laws pertaining to the management of communicable diseases. The school will also follow the directives of an attending physician to determine risk factors on a case-by-case basis. Every reasonable precaution will be taken to minimize risks to other students

and school personnel. Faculty and staff will not discriminate against students with health conditions and will promote sensitivity, confidentiality, and fair and reasonable accommodations.

If current medical knowledge indicates a student's health condition does not pose a risk to others, the student will continue at MSA as normally as possible. If the student is having academic problems because of the health condition, the Principal will be notified immediately. Modifications, if any, may be provided in the work and academic environment. Each situation will be considered individually. If a communicable disease or medical condition is deemed detrimental to the immediate health or welfare of the student or general school population, the student will be sent home immediately upon diagnosis from a physician or recommendation of the school nurse. Such illnesses and/or symptoms include, but are not limited to high fever, measles, chicken pox, mumps, and influenza. All temporary leaves from school for illness are for the improved health of the student.

Before returning to MSA, students who have recovered from a communicable disease must acquire a medical release excuse from the attending physician in the student's hometown. The excuse must be presented to the nurse immediately when the student returns to the campus.

MSA policy mandates confidentiality of student health history in compliance with medical, legal, and ethical standards of the school and state.

## **Wellness**

The MSA Wellness Policy emphasizes a commitment to nutrition, physical activity, comprehensive health education, marketing, and implementation. It is designed to effectively utilize school and community resources to serve the needs of students and staff, taking into consideration cultural differences. While enrolled at the MSA, all students must participate in a mandatory wellness program designed to promote lifelong habits and skills for healthful living and general wellness to improve the overall quality of life and productivity. The school nurse will monitor wellness programs and conduct periodic assessments while students are enrolled at MSA. Exemption from wellness policies requires written documentation from a physician.

## **Visitation**

The MSA encourages visitors to the school campus; however, for the protection of the students and the integrity of the academic and residential life of the campus, policies and procedures have been created.

### **Access to the School Campus During the School Day**

#### **Visitation by General Public**

Visitors are welcome to designated public areas of the MSA campus. These spaces include school offices, performance spaces, the classrooms, the cafeteria, the library, and the commons areas. MSA welcomes visitors to performances and organized campus tours when appointments are scheduled in advance. Between 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Fridays, all visitors must report to the Security Office in the Student Life Center, present and leave a valid picture identification card, sign in, and receive a visitor's pass. The Security Office will notify the appropriate persons that the visitor has arrived on campus. Before a visitor can go to a classroom during the instructional day, Security will call the Principal or Executive Director for clearance. After 5:00 p.m. on weekdays and on weekends, visitors may report to the Security Office, follow procedures described above, and then go to the reception desk in the Student Life Center for notification of person being visited.

MSA does not permit unauthorized persons in school buildings or on school grounds. Faculty, staff, and administration are authorized to take appropriate action to prevent such persons from entering buildings or from loitering on campus grounds. Such persons can be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Alumni are not permitted to check students out of the school unless they are family with permission. Persons wishing to visit the school without prior arrangements must report to the Security Office in the Student Life Center, present and leave a valid picture identification card. The Security Office will notify

the school administration office where arrangements for the visit will be finalized. Solicitations of teachers or pupils by agents or salespersons will not be allowed.

No one will be allowed to travel the school campus during the academic day without a Visitor's Pass procured after completing the sign-in process. MSA reserves the right to refuse admittance to any person wishing to visit the school. Personal messages or gifts (e.g., balloons, flowers, and food) will not be forwarded to students during class except in the event of an emergency.

### **Guest Speakers, Artists-In-Residence, and Academic Visitors**

Any visitor to the academic school must inform the teacher who will notify the Principal and the scheduling secretary as to the day and time of the visit to avoid conflicts with school schedules. All academic campus visitors will report immediately to the Security Office in the Student Life Center, present and leave a valid picture identification card, sign in and receive a visitor's pass. The Security Office will notify the appropriate persons that the visitor has arrived on campus. At the end of the visit, the visitor must sign-out in the security office and leave the campus immediately.

### **Visitors to the Student Life Center**

Parents, family members, and friends of students are welcome to visit, but they must follow visitation guidelines. **Siblings, extended family members, and friends of students, must visit during nonacademic hours,** and should call ahead to be sure they are listed on the **Visitor Permission Form. Visitors to the Student Life Center are not allowed before 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.** Visitation is not allowed during study time or after curfew. **All visitors** must use the main north entrance of the Student Life Center from Monticello Street and check in at Security in the Student Life Center, present and leave a valid picture identification card, sign in and receive a visitor's pass. They must also check in with on-duty residence hall staff upon arrival. Visits are restricted to the common areas (i.e., cafeteria, patio, second floor lounge, and library (for tutoring purposes only) on the first and second floors unless granted special permission by the SLC staff. **All visitors must wear a Visitor's Pass while present on the MSA campus. Passes are procured after completing the check-in process and should be returned to Security when visitors sign out. Visitors need to leave campus by the time students report to their floors for the evening.**

### **Visitor Permission Forms**

Only those persons listed by parents on the **Visitor Permission Form** are authorized to visit students. Those listed must check in with the on-duty staff in the residence hall office upon arrival in the building. Visitors must furnish photo identification for verification. Any person not listed by parents will not be allowed to visit. At any time during the school year, parents may modify listings on the Visitor Permission Form by sending changes to the Director of Residential Life. Modifications may be made in writing via US mail, e-mail, or facsimile. Parents can make requests by phone with passcode and in person. Student hosts must ensure that visitors register and remain in their company at all times.

MSA reserves the right to deny access to its campus, activities, events, etc. Exclusion may include anyone not deemed suitable or appropriate, including students who have withdrawn or been dismissed. Exclusion may also apply to individuals listed on student **Visitor Permission Forms**.

### **Overnight Visitation**

For students to leave campus and spend the night with a friend or relative, the person(s) who will be transporting the student must be included on the Off Campus Overnight Permission Form that is signed by the parent or amended using appropriate procedures. Overnight off campus visitation is discouraged during the week when school is in session. In extenuating circumstances, the Director of Residential Life or a designee may grant permission on a weekday. To promote safety and to encourage students to be accountable for their whereabouts, parents should carefully consider permissions granted to their children for overnight off campus visitation. Written documentation is required when a student signs off campus for overnight, even to go home on the weekend unless the student is picked up and signed out by a parent or guardian.



Due to limited space resulting from increased enrollment, overnight visitation is not allowed in the dorm. In the event of dire circumstances (e.g., single parent must leave the state), the Director of Residential Life may grant exceptions to this policy.

Parents, siblings, and grandparents may visit in student rooms. However, to ensure the privacy of other students in the suite and on the hall, visitors and their hosts must abide by the following guidelines:

- Permission of the roommate,
- Permission of the staff member on duty and make an announcement on the hall; and
- Limit visits to 30 minutes or less before 12 p.m. (noon) and after 7 p.m., so that students may resume their day-to-day schedules. **Visits to student rooms will not be allowed after curfew.**

**Please direct all communications regarding student permissions to the Student Life Center, not the Y-Hut** since the administrative office is only open Monday—Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Do not send e-mail to individual accounts. Use the general residential life e-mail that can be accessed by all staff members.

**SLC Fax Number:** 601-823-1546  
**SLC E-Mail:** [msaresidential@msabrookhaven.org](mailto:msaresidential@msabrookhaven.org)

### **Alumni Visitation Policy**

MSA alumni who are in good standing (graduates or voluntarily withdrawn) are welcome to visit the school. Campus visits should be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance. Alumni must follow the check in procedures required of all other visitors. To prevent interruptions during instructional class periods, graduates must make appointments in order to visit with faculty and staff in their classrooms during regular school hours. Alumni can only visit the first and second floor of the Student Life Center. Alumni can attend public events as well. Meals may be purchased for a nominal cost, but overnight visits are prohibited. Decisions about whether specific alumni may visit are left to the professional discretion of the administration. Alumni are not allowed to check students out of school/dormitory unless they are family members with proper permissions.

### **Safety and Security**

Safety and security are universal responsibilities. The MSA Security Office is located on the first floor of the Student Life Center and officers and/or security staff members are on duty twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven days a week when students are on campus. Video camera surveillance is used to assist in monitoring activities throughout the campus. MSA security officers are certified police/security/deputized officers with full legal authority on campus. MSA students must show respect and cooperate with officials at all times.

### **Student Life Center (SLC)**

To help ensure student safety and to protect personal property in and around the SLC, students should:

1. Keep dormitory suite doors locked at all times;
2. Refrain from leaving large sums of money in their rooms or having on campus and do not leave loose change or paper money lying on desks or bureau surfaces;
3. Identify personal belongings, including clothing;
4. Protect room keys and do not lend them to anyone;
5. Wear Identification Badge visibly above the waist;
6. Lock valuable items in a locked suitcase or other secure storage;
7. Unplug and store electrical appliances properly after use (e.g., hair dryers, curling irons, and irons);
8. Memorize emergency evacuation routes and participate in practice drills;
9. Help secure the Student Life Center by keeping doors closed and locked;
10. Store bicycles in designated areas and secure them with chains and locks;
11. Lock vehicles left in the parking lot and make certain all valuables are out of sight in the trunk;
12. Never allow someone else to use their badge to access the building; and,
13. Never open the door for someone they don't know.

## On Campus

To ensure safety while on campus, students should:

1. Restrict themselves to common areas of the campus identified during orientation;
2. Refrain from loitering around nonfunctional buildings;
3. Seek guidance from MSA staff regarding access to appropriate areas;
4. Wear identification badges visible above the waist at all times and have them available to facilitate building entry;
5. Stay out of areas where there is no adult supervision;
6. Keep purses, backpacks, or other personal items in their possession, do not leave them unattended;
7. Exhibit good sportsmanship when participating in outdoor activities;
8. Walk with another MSA student at night;
9. Walk on sidewalks and stay in well-lit areas;
10. Be aware of surrounding activities when they are outdoors;
11. Report suspicious persons on campus to the staff or campus police;
12. Wear appropriate safety gear when rollerblading, skateboarding, and riding a bicycle or scooter (i.e., helmets, knee and elbow pads, and gloves);
13. Refrain from rollerblading, skateboarding, or riding bicycles on sidewalks when pedestrians are present; and,
14. Refrain from rollerblading, skateboarding, or riding bicycles inside buildings.

## Off Campus

To ensure safety while off campus, students should:

1. Be aware of all surroundings when using ATM's;
2. Stay in designated walkways illustrated in the MSA Walking Guide;
3. Restrict walking to daylight hours;
4. Walk in groups of two or more;
5. Restrict destinations and activities to those stated when signing out of the dorm;
6. Ensure that no students ride in a vehicle if the owner and their parents have not given permission to ride with the driver;
7. Refrain from getting in any vehicle if they signed out "walking";
8. Stay out of alleys, dumpsters, and areas behind public buildings;
9. Remember that they represent MSA within the community; and
10. Maintain control of the ID badge unless turned in to Residence Life staff.

## Identification Badges

The security procedures require that **all persons on campus must wear in plain sight an official identification card or visitor's badge issued by the school at all times**. This policy applies to all staff and students—full-time and part-time—as well as visitors to the campus.

Access to the Student Life Center, the Y-Hut, Enochs Hall, and Johnson Institute will be restricted at all times during the day and night. The MSA identification card is electronic and functions similar to a card swipe system. To enter a building during regular hours, all persons must use their electronic identification cards to open an exterior door. Outside of regular school hours, employees must use their keys in addition to the ID badge. Old MSA identification cards will not work with this system.

As a person enters the building, the system records entry by individual card number. Knowing that a system is only as effective as its users, the following actions by all students and staff will help prevent intrusions by unauthorized persons.

1. Make sure the door closes after entering a building. Some MSA buildings are old and the doors do not always close completely without pulling them shut. Be especially careful with the North double doors of Johnson Institute located near the bell tower.
2. NEVER prop a door open; this serves as an invitation to intruders.

3. Do not stand and hold the door open for straggling students. They have their own cards and are responsible for themselves. Do not open the door for a student who does not have a card. To do so is a policy violation.
4. Maintain control of the card by wearing it on your person visible and above the waist; do not loan it to another person. Keep in mind that students are responsible for what happens to their individual cards, and the system records identity each time someone uses the card.
5. NEVER allow a stranger to enter a building. For safety reasons, even visitors (including parents) must acquire an electronic badge from the Security Office before they can enter buildings across campus.
6. Notify security immediately upon loss of an ID badge. This includes leaving one at home.
7. Student policy violations may result in Level III consequences due to possible breach of security.

All staff and students will receive an electronic identification card and a MSA lanyard. If the ID or lanyard is lost, students will have to pay a replacement cost. Keep in mind that the ID functions as a “key to home.” Therefore, it is critical that all members of the MSA family cooperate to help maintain a safe environment and be proactive in avoiding situations that could be detrimental to the well-being of everyone on campus. Students and staff are responsible for reporting lost or stolen badges. Students are not permitted to deface the identification badge in any way (stickers, covering the face, and etc.).

## Transportation

### Student Transportation To and From MSA

Students may be transported to and from campus by themselves, parent/guardians, or other authorized individual(s). Authorized individuals are defined as individuals having parental permission to transport the student on file with the administration or individuals with verbal authorization by a parent/guardian to school administration for transport of the student on a specific occasion.

On weekends and holidays, students should arrange to leave campus in advance of the day of departure. Specific times will be set for students to depart from campus. All students must go home during the weekends and holidays designated in the MSA calendar.

### Vehicles on Campus

When a student brings a vehicle to campus, all policies and procedures related to the use of private vehicles must be followed. Students must understand that bringing a vehicle to campus is a serious responsibility and a privilege, not a right. The MSA recognizes that there may be occasions when all students need transportation. To manage these activities, MSA uses the **Vehicle Permission Form**. This form shall be completed for all students regardless of whether they anticipate bringing a car to campus. The Vehicle Permission Form enables parents to determine their child’s limits in relation to transportation. The school reserves the final authority to restrict or deny use of student vehicles. Motorbikes are prohibited.

### Vehicle Registration

Students shall immediately register any vehicle brought to campus in the Campus Security Office. Registration includes providing photocopies of the following:

- Valid driver’s license
- Proof of liability insurance
- Proof of ownership (If the vehicle belongs to anyone other than a parent or legal guardian, students must provide a notarized statement that they have permission to use the car.)

In addition to the above documentation, MSA staff shall verify current license plate. A MSA parking permit shall be issued at the time of registration and must be displayed on the rearview mirror of the vehicle. If a student brings a different car to campus at any time during the school year, all registration requirements must be followed. All students who register vehicles must pay a registration fee. Students must park their vehicles at their own risk in designated areas. **Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of MSA students assume full legal and financial responsibility in matters related to their vehicles. Risks**

**involved are those of the owner and operator, MSA assumes no liability in relation to student vehicles.**

### **Vehicle Use during the School Week**

During the school week—Sunday 7:30 p.m. through Friday 4:30 p.m.—student use of vehicles will be significantly restricted in relation to privilege plan levels. In special situations with prior approval by a designated school official, students may receive permission to use their vehicles. However, failure to plan adequately may result in requests being denied. Use of personal vehicles on weekdays may be granted for destinations such as—but not limited to—medical appointments, community service, team practices, vocal lessons, or other educational activities. Transportation destinations should be specific and times for travel accurate. Loitering, unauthorized stops, transporting passengers, or allowing another driver to operate a vehicle may result in loss of vehicle privileges. Curfew and sign in/out regulations are always in effect.

### **Vehicle Use during the Weekend**

During the weekend—Friday after-school through Sunday 7:30 p.m.—parental permissions recorded on the **Vehicle Permission Form** govern the use of student vehicles. Students may not travel beyond the 25-mile radius of MSA without parental permission for each occasion unless they are signing out to go home, a medically related appointment, or some other destination on the student's **Overnight Visitor's List**.

### **Restrictions for Vehicle Use**

Due to limited parking, MSA students shall not drive their vehicles to Brookhaven High School except for extracurricular activities that have been approved in advance. All students shall ride the buses provided by MSA to Brookhaven High School except in extremely extenuating circumstances. Missing the bus and being late for class are not acceptable reasons for requesting that a private vehicle be used for transportation.

Vehicle use may be limited to those students who have clear discipline records and acceptable grades. These guidelines may be determined by the MSA administration. Student use of vehicles may be further restricted upon written requests from parents. Parents may restrict, or modify, vehicle permissions at any time during the school year by notifying the MSA Residence Life or Safety staff in writing.

A school official possessing reasonable suspicion that a student may be in violation of MSA policies and/or Mississippi law may search any vehicle owned or operated by a student.

Students who fail to maintain a high level of regard for vehicle rules and safety may be required to return their vehicles home, either for a designated period of time, or for the remainder of the school year. Vehicle privileges may be withdrawn if:

- The school considers a student's operation of the vehicle to be a danger to self, or *others*;
- The vehicle is improperly registered;
- The vehicle is determined to have unauthorized drivers or passengers;
- The student persistently violates MSA policies related to vehicles or state laws;
- The student has committed serious infractions and vehicle restrictions are imposed as part of disciplinary consequences; or
- The student allows unauthorized passengers to ride in the car.

After students have had sufficient time to unload and check into the Student Life Center, they must not return to a parked vehicle for any reason without special permission. Students are not permitted to sit for more than 10 minutes in cars on campus. Students should check in immediately upon returning to campus and depart immediately upon checking out with the staff. Students, or their guests, may not drive a vehicle belonging to someone else. When students check into the Student Life Center, they must turn in their car keys. Any extra keys must be filed with the Security Office staff for safekeeping.

## **Commuter Students**

Upon arrival at MSA, commuter students are required to park at the Student Life Center, lock their vehicles, sign in and deposit their keys in the Security Office until they sign out at the end of the day. Commuter students must not return to their vehicles during the school day, nor allow access by any other student. Student vehicles must be registered and the MSA parking permit clearly displayed. Vehicle registration requires the same documentation that residential students must provide.

All commuter students will ride the school bus to and from Brookhaven High School (BHS) and must report to the bus in a timely manner. Commuter students must not be tardy for their first block class. A commuter student missing the bus will have an unexcused absence for all classes missed at BHS. Commuter students are not allowed to transport themselves or fellow students to BHS except for extracurricular activities when prior approval has been granted. Violation of this policy will lead to disciplinary action.

On campus at MSA, commuters will continue with classes and evening rehearsals, use the library, or attend evening performances or exhibitions. A commuter student may stay on campus, with teacher and parent permission, for required practices, rehearsals, class assignments, or other educational purposes. Commuter students must leave campus by 9:00 p.m. unless properly authorized as an overnight visitor.

The commuter student must follow all rules and regulations of the residential facility, including the use of transportation and check-in/check-out policies and procedures. They may not return to their cars until they have signed out for the day, upon which time they must leave and return home immediately.

Students may only be considered for commuting if they reside within 25 miles of the MSA campus and have permission from their parent/guardian. Due to enrollment numbers and room availability, MSA reserves the right to require students to commute to campus until residence facilities become available.

## **Transportation to Brookhaven High School**

MSA transports students to Brookhaven High School for non-arts courses via Brookhaven School District buses. Students are responsible for meeting bus schedules when departing from MSA or BHS. Students who miss the bus to Brookhaven High School must see the Principal immediately for transportation to be arranged. Students who are late to BHS classes will serve detention.

Students who need to go to BHS to make up a test, see a teacher for additional help, or serve detention before school must sign up at the SLC front desk or with the Principal the day before transportation is needed.

## **Transportation Safety Procedures**

To ensure safety during transportation, students shall:

1. Report to the assigned bus pick-up on time.
2. Use extreme caution when loading and unloading from the bus.
3. Wait until the bus has come to a complete stop and the bus driver indicates it is safe to board or depart from the bus.
4. Talk in normal conversational tones.
5. Keep head, arms, legs, body, and personal possessions out of the aisle of the bus and inside the windows.
6. Always be courteous and respectful.
7. Follow the instructions of the driver.
8. Refrain from carrying food and beverages on the bus.

## **Student Conduct on Buses**

Recognizing that student misconduct can jeopardize the safety of others, the following procedures have been adopted for student discipline related to school bus transportation:

1. All bus drivers shall report student misconduct promptly to the Director of Residence Life.

2. A prompt due process investigation will ensue and based upon information, disciplinary actions deemed appropriate will be administered. Parents will be notified.
3. Students must not carry food and beverages on the bus except with prior arrangements during long extended trips out of town or food runs.
4. Students are subject to disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from the school if the student constitutes a threat to the safety of the other students on the bus, causes damage or destruction of property, distracts the bus driver, or in other ways interferes with the normal or safe operation of the bus.
5. All Brookhaven School District policies will be upheld when using their buses and are included in the BHS Handbook on their website.

### **AHERA Assurances**

The 1998 Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) requirements pertaining to asbestos have been reviewed, the results of which show compliance with federal regulations, and are on file in the Office of Maintenance, Transportation, and School Safety at the MSA.

# Services

## Residential Life

The residential life staff is comprised of caring people who are selected for their knowledge, experience, skills, and abilities. Each one is committed to providing guidance and support for MSA students. The staff oversees all areas of residential life including extracurricular activities and recreation when students are not in class. Residential staff members are always on duty during the week and on weekends when students are on campus. The staff includes the Director of Residential Life, Assistant Dorm Supervisor, and Residence Life Counselors.

The residential program at MSA provides a safe and secure homelike environment where students experience nurturing support. Therefore, the staff designs and maintains a living environment that will enable students to meet high expectations set by themselves, the staff, the school, and the state.

## Philosophy

Having an opportunity to reside on campus enhances the educational experiences students receive at MSA. The residential life program reflects the school goals. MSA encourages individual expression, but students must understand that they must maintain self-discipline, responsibility, and effective decision-making skills. The enhancement of student character is a key component in achieving a positive residential environment. Residential guidelines are based on the premise that living on campus is a privilege that carries with it an expected level of individual responsibility.

## Terminology

**Residence Hall Meetings**—Mandatory monthly meetings held on each floor at a designated date and time. All residents must be present and on time. These meetings will provide opportunities for students to receive new information and updates regarding activities, voice concerns, and discuss life in the dorm. Residential Life Counselors will coordinate these meetings.

**Study Hours**—A predetermined period of time when designated students are accounted for and required to be focused only on schoolwork. Hours are Monday through Thursday 8:00 until 9:00 p.m. Individual privilege plans and grades affect study hours. Rehearsals (individual and group) and studio work are viable educational experiences during study hours, but students must not disturb others who may be studying quietly in the dorm. Prior written approval from MSA administration must be given in order to be excused from study hours at any time.

**Curfew**—A specific time when all students are accounted for and are required to be inside their rooms. At this time, hallway exit door alarms are activated and students should not leave that floor for the remainder of the night. They may go to another floor after 6:30 a.m. weekdays. All students must be on their assigned floors by 10:00 p.m. on Sunday through Thursday nights. Students must be in their rooms by 10:30 p.m. for room checks Sunday through Thursday nights. On Friday and Saturday nights, students must be on their assigned floors by 12:00 a.m. Students are not allowed to leave their rooms after curfew unless it is an emergency. Students on the blue privilege plan are allowed to watch TV in the lounge on their floor until lights out for the night.

**Lights Out**—A specific time when students are required to turn out the lights and go to bed. Lights out on Sunday through Thursday is 11:00 p.m. On Friday and Saturday, lights out is 1:00 a.m. "Lights Out" applies to the use of desk lights, computers, computer and handheld games, DVD players, etc., not merely turning off dorm room and bathroom lights.

**Floor Duty**—All students will be required to do specific tasks to help maintain the common areas on the floors where they live. The Resident Counselor on each floor shall schedule, assign, and monitor work needed. Campus Work Service hours shall not be awarded for these duties that are required in return for special opportunities provided on a state residential high school campus.

## Residential Life Schedules

### School Week Schedule—Sunday through Thursday Evenings

8:00 until 9:00 p.m.	Study Hours (Monday—Thursday)
10:00 p.m.	Curfew, students must be on their floor
10:30 p.m.	Room Check
10:00 p.m.—11:00 p.m.	Halls quiet
11:00 p.m.	Lights out

### Weekend Schedule—Friday and Saturday Evenings

12:00 a.m.	Curfew, Room Check
10:30 p.m.—12:00 a.m.	Halls quiet
1:00 a.m.	Lights out

## Residence Hall Living

Living in a residence hall is an exciting opportunity that requires self-discipline, independence, a high degree of responsibility, compatibility with students from diverse backgrounds, and the ability to follow rules and established guidelines. Students who demonstrate these characteristics should adapt successfully to living in a residence hall with minimal adjustments. While students are making transitions from living at home to those of residential life, the residence hall staff is constantly available for assistance and support. They help students adjust to the residential setting, and provide guidance as needed. Such a support system enhances the likelihood that all students will have successful and meaningful educational experiences. An important part of this adjustment is student understanding of the hall rules and standards of conduct. An orderly, clean, comfortable living area supports and enhances the learning atmosphere and, therefore, benefits the entire school community. **When students cannot fulfill the requirements of living in the dormitory, MSA reserves the right to require a student to become a commuter.**

Since learning and study styles differ among students, mutual respect must be the cornerstone of a harmonious community. Students must channel their behaviors to create an orderly, responsible atmosphere. Student self-monitoring builds and sustains positive relationships with peers and with residential staff members.

## Roommates

Students are restricted to specific floors in the dorms. Violation of this policy is a severe offense. If students are found to be on the wrong floor at any time or for any reason without prior permission, they will be subject to disciplinary action.

The residential life staff makes room assignments in accordance with student requests and honors them when possible. Students who are involved in a romantic relationship are not permitted to be roommates or suitemates and are subject to all room visitation guidelines among couples. Likewise, students who are involved in a romantic relationship may not live on the same dorm floor, when possible.

The Executive Director reserves the right to change room assignments to promote or preserve the public peace, order or tranquility of the school, or the health, morals, or education of the students, where the student's presence would serve to adversely affect, or hinder, the academic development of other students and for safety, repairs, disciplinary actions, and irreconcilable incompatibility of roommates. (Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-3) Staff may also consolidate vacancies by requiring a resident to move from a single occupancy to double accommodations.



Sharing a room with someone who has similar interests and characteristics is important. To facilitate this process, students will receive a Student Profile Form during the registration process. Residential life staff will analyze data provided on the form to help identify compatible roommates.

Students may request a roommate change if deemed necessary. However, no request for change will be honored until students have demonstrated a good faith effort to resolve their differences. No roommate changes will be considered until after the first three weeks of each school year. A student wishing to change roommates must discuss the situation with the Director of Residential Life. Students will not be permitted a requested room change more than one time per semester. School officials may move a student temporarily or permanently due to documented medical conditions, or if it is deemed helpful to the student, roommate, and/or suitemates.

The Director of Residential Life will make all final decisions regarding room assignments. At the end of the spring semester, juniors who will return for their senior year may select the room and roommate for the following year. The Director of Residential Life will design the process for roommate selection.

## Residential Suites

The Student Life Center features five suites with two rooms per floor with a shared bath (Floors 3-8). The bath area features a private shower and toilet with a separate mirrored dressing area with double sinks, storage shelves, and drawers. Each floor has one suite that is handicapped accessible.

MSA provides basic furniture for each room including two bunk beds and a single loft bed with an attached desk, two additional desks, chairs, wardrobes (a built-in unit with drawers and hanging space, one lockable section, mirrors, and shelves). Room furnishings include blinds. Students may be given permission to rearrange their furniture under warranted circumstances, but all MSA furniture must remain in the room. Upon move out, furniture must be returned to its original location. For safety reasons, bed must not be debunked without paying a fine for reassembly. Students may not move furniture from other areas of the residence hall into suites. Due to increased enrollment and limited space, students may not bring additional furniture for their rooms. Students must not place objects on the windows that are visible from the outside.

Students may decorate their rooms according to their own good judgment providing that they do not make structural alterations, damage facilities in any way, and follow current fire and safety guidelines.

Students **are required** to provide the following items for their own use: towels, washcloths, and bathmats; sheets, pillowcases, blankets, mattress covers, and pillows; hangers; an alarm clock – separate from a cell phone; laundry products; cleaning products; personal care items (including toilet paper); shower curtain; garbage can; a surge protector and school supplies.

The following items are optional: bed spread or comforter; under-the-bed storage boxes; umbrella; clothes iron with automatic shut-off; ironing board; laundry bag or basket; desk lamp; posters or pictures for the wall; radio/CD/tape player; personal one-cup coffee makers without a hotplate; personal computer; and printer.

To ensure the safety of students, the MSA reserves the right to prohibit specific items. The following list is not intended to be exhaustive. Students may not possess the following in residential suites or anywhere on campus:

1. Cast-off furniture and other items, materials, and/or clothing retrieved from the trash, off the street, or in public dumpsters. For health and safety reasons, dumpster diving is forbidden.
2. Motorized scooters;
3. Cooking appliances including, but not limited to: microwave oven, popcorn popper, hot plate, toaster, toaster oven, coffeemakers with a hot plate, or heating coils;
4. Dangerous scientific equipment;
5. Spray paint, fixatives, or other harmful aerosols;
6. Solvents or other flammable liquids (e.g., turpentine, mineral spirits, or denatured alcohol), lighter fluid;

7. Toxic glues, cements, or other adhesives;
8. Darts, dartboards, and dart guns;
9. Shot glasses, empty alcohol containers used as decorations, alcoholic drink mixers and/or bottles;
10. Exercise weights such as dumbbells;
11. Halogen lights;
12. Ice chests or coolers;
13. Incense, incense burners or open flame items such as matches, cigarette lighters, fireworks, candles, or candle warmers;
14. Extension cords without surge protection;
15. String lights;
16. Martial arts equipment, boxing bags, toy guns, and toy knives;
17. Pets of any kind;
18. Public signs including, but not limited to, highway, traffic, business, or parking; and
19. Weapons including knives with serrated or sharpened edges, razor blades, straight edge razors, box cutters, X-acto knives, multipurpose tools, tattoo equipment, piercing equipment, and novelty advertising tools/items with sharp blades.

Since visual and performing arts students may have projects that require the use of tool items listed above, special permission may be granted when properly used under the supervision of an adult. **However, if items such as those detailed in the last section of the list above will be treated as weapons when they are found in a student's room or in their possession.**

## Personal Property

**The MSA assumes no responsibility for any personal property brought to the school campus by students.** Extremely valuable items, family keepsakes, or substantial amounts of cash should not be brought to campus. Lost, damaged, or stolen property may result from failure to secure items properly in a locked space, lock bathroom and hallway doors to the dorm room, or leaving personal items in common areas, in classrooms, or on the campus grounds. Students must assume responsibility for caring for their own property. See "Lost and Found" section below.

## Posters, Pictures, and Advertisements

Advertisements for alcoholic beverages or tobacco products are prohibited, including images that entice one to use them. No poster, picture, advertisement, or other image shall encourage illegal drug use, profanity, or pornography. Images may not depict nude or partially nude individuals. All persons in images must be clothed in nontransparent material. Images and/or wording must not contain double entendres. Decorations are allowed. However, since lounges, and hallways are common areas, decorative items must not express personal opinions that are political, religious, or controversial. Decorations in rooms must not belittle, offend, or denigrate any individual or group as outlined in the section on harassment. Life-size displays are prohibited. The residential life staff shall determine whether an item will remain on display. Students must hang posters or other decorations with a product approved by MSA. Tape or adhesives that damage walls, floors, or ceilings shall not be used. Staples, masking tape, or glue shall not be used on the door or walls. Ceiling tiles shall not be adjusted or moved to hang posters and other objects from the ceiling. Pictures, objects, or posters shall not be placed on windows for outside display.

## Refrigerators

The following regulations govern the use of refrigerators in the dorm:

- a) Each room may opt to bring a refrigerator. Roommates or suitemates may share a refrigerator and should mutually agree on whether they will financially share the cost of the item or if one person will pay for it and allow others to use it.
- b) The maximum size of the refrigerator must not exceed 3.1 cubic feet. Students must keep refrigerators clean and free of spoiled food; regular inspections will occur during weekly room checks.
- c) MSA staff may examine all items in refrigerators without notice.

## Bed Bugs

Any student concerned about his or her residence having bed bugs should contact the school immediately. **Students should not clean their room or belongings until an inspector can determine if there are any signs of bed bugs. If possible, students should try to retrieve a sample bug with clear tape for the exterminator to examine.**

1. Exterminator should inspect the residence.
  - While not required, students are encouraged to be present during the inspection by the exterminator.
  - Students who report suspected bed bugs on a workday when the exterminator can be dispatched within 24 hours may be asked not to relocate to or visit any other room until their room can be inspected by the exterminator. This is CRUCIAL so that we can prevent the spread of bed bugs if they are found to be in a student's room and belongings.
  - Students may not, at any time, deny the exterminator or staff access to their living spaces (including bedrooms, common area, kitchen, bathroom, and etc.)
  - Since bedbugs are treatable, the school will not facilitate permanent room changes for these situations.
2. If the exterminator cannot find any evidence of bed bugs, the room will not be chemically treated; a glue board may be installed to monitor activity. The student will be asked to continue monitoring their living space, and to notify staff immediately if there are further concerns.

If the exterminator confirms the presence of bed bugs, the school will contact the parents and will provide the affected student(s) and their family with a detailed list of instructions for the removal and laundering of their personal items. Bed bugs are a serious community issue, and ALL students are expected to comply with instructions given to them within 24 hours once bed bugs have been confirmed within their living space.

## Common Areas

**Common Areas** are defined as shared spaces that may be located within a dorm room, a suite, on a dormitory floor, or in areas on the first and second non-residential floors. Common areas may also include dining areas, hallways, lounges on each floor, fitness center, library, laundry room, classrooms, and other areas of the campus.

**Common Areas in a Suite:** All roommates are responsible for items found or damage done in their individual dorm rooms unless it is clearly substantiated that only one person is liable. In the common bathroom area, all residents of the suite may be held accountable. Fines may be issued during the semester for student damage to MSA facilities. Payment must be made within 30 days of issuance in the Y-Hut.

**Common Areas on a Dorm Floor:** Publicly shared spaces on the dormitory floors are the elevator lobbies, hallways, and lounges on each residential level.

**Common Areas—Passageways and Restrooms:** Stairwells to dorm floors, hallways, and restrooms outside suites are considered commonly shared spaces that may be gender specific. Students must refrain from leaving personal possessions in any of these areas. Students are also not permitted to loiter or sit in hallways and stairwells.

**Common Areas—First and Second Floors of the SLC:** Common areas of the non-residential floors of the dorm are (1) First Floor—Entrance lobby, cafeteria serving and dining areas, lounge (TV and pool table area), laundry room; and (2) Second Floor—the lobby, lounge (TV area), Library, the Fitness Center, and post office box area outside the Technology Office. Visitors are not allowed in the Fitness Center or in the Laundry Room without permission from Residence Life Staff.

**Common Areas—Educational Spaces:** Common areas that are educational in nature include all instructional areas of Johnson Institute, the Library, and Lampton Auditorium. Visitors are allowed in these areas for tours by appointment, exhibits, performances, tutoring, and/or open house events.

**Common Areas—Campus Grounds:** The patio outside the cafeteria, seating areas in front of the SLC and throughout the campus are considered common areas. Students shall remain in lighted areas that are supervised by adults when visitors are on campus. Students shall not remain in vehicles or loiter in parking areas.

## **Laundry Room**

For the convenience of residents, washers and dryers are provided but students must provide their own laundry products and quarters for use. Students who use the laundry room are responsible for keeping it clean. Items brought to the laundry room should not remain in the laundry room beyond the time it takes to complete the wash and dry cycle. If clothes are left in the machines, the clothes may be taken out, placed in a plastic bag, and taken to the Residential Life Office. If the same student leaves clothes in the laundry room habitually, disciplinary actions will occur. Students should not start laundry within 30 minutes of room check. If so, the machine may continue, but the clothes will have to be retrieved the next morning. The MSA accepts no responsibility for clothing, laundry products, or other personal items left unattended in the laundry room. **Clothing left in the laundry room longer than 24 hours will be moved to lost and found and donated to charity if not claimed in a timely manner. Laundry Room hours are Sunday through Thursday 6:30 a.m. until 9:30 p.m. and Saturday from 6:30 a.m. until 11:30 p.m. The laundry room is not a place where students visit, study, or hang out. The door must remain open and the lights on while the room is in use.**

## **Fitness Center**

For the convenience of residents, cardiovascular and free weight equipment is available for student use in the fitness center only. Exercise equipment, videos, mats, and other items are available in the fitness center as part of the student wellness plan. Visitors are not allowed in the fitness center. Students must use equipment only for exercise and are not allowed to sit on equipment. Food or drink is not allowed in the fitness center except for water.

## **Visual Art Room – SLC**

A room has been designated on the second floor of the Student Life Center for students to make art. This room is available to avoid damages to the campus or living areas. Any student who has a need to make artwork can request use of the space. This is not to be used as a congregation area and students must remain on task. Students are required to clean their area prior to departure. The privilege to use the space can be revoked for failure to clean or use the space for which it was intended.

## **Lost and Found**

The common areas of the campus—including classrooms and studios—must be shared by all persons on campus and therefore must be kept clean and free of debris and clutter. Student possessions (e.g., clothing, books, supplies, projects, music, games, and CDs/DVDs) left unattended on campus will be placed in Lost and Found—a storage area designated by the Student Life Center staff. **After 30 days, items that are not claimed may be donated to a charity or discarded. Common areas are not storage spaces for student belongings.**

## **Televisions and Video Equipment**

There is a television and a DVD player in each lounge on floors 3-8 in the Student Life Center. A wide-screen television is also located in the first-floor dining/commons area. All televisions are connected to the local cable network and offer expanded cable channels. Televisions are also located in the library, classroom, and administrative buildings.

Students who bring personal or rented videotapes or DVDs for use in the public areas of the residence hall must obtain approval from the Director of Residential Life, Assistant Dorm Supervisor, or a Resident

Counselor **before** viewing. Staff members have the authority to prohibit viewing specific videotapes or DVDs, and television programs or channels if the content is deemed offensive or inappropriate. Students who store personal items such as CDs, DVDs, videotapes, and electronic games and equipment in the dormitory lounges do so at their own risk. Because the primary function of the MSA is educational, television, video, and DVD watching and video games are prohibited on the first and second floors of the Student Life Center between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. including meal times on school days. Exceptions will be made for morning news broadcasts played at a very low volume.

### **Standard Telephone and Internet Access in Dorm Rooms**

Each suite in the Student Life Center is wired for telephone and Internet access. One (1) phone outlet per room is provided in each room of the suite. Guidelines for phone and Internet usage are as follows:

1. MSA provides one phone for dorm rooms. Landline phones are necessary to facilitate timely communication with faculty, staff, administration, and families. Answering machines are not allowed.
2. MSA provides local access only.
3. ***Incoming Phone service will be discontinued after lights out.*** At that time, all calls will be forwarded to the Security Office. In case of emergencies after lights out, parents may contact students by calling campus security (601-823-1350). During the school day, call the SLC desk, 601-823-1356 or Main Office, (601) 823-1300.
4. MSA reserves the right to charge students for expenses incurred due to damaged telephone wiring, phone jacks, or misuse of telephone privileges and access. If unauthorized phone charges are made to MSA accounts, a \$25.00 handling charge will be assessed in addition to the amount for billed services.
5. All persons, including parents, should refrain from calling students during academic class time, scheduled activities, and study hours, or after lights out.

### **Musical Instruments and Speakers**

To accommodate study in the performing arts, clavinos are in the elevator lobby areas of the multiple residential floors for practice. Care must be taken to ensure that the instruments remain in good repair. Students who own instruments must observe guidelines for study hours and quiet times in relation to noise. No instrument may be played after room check unless earphones can be used to prevent noise that can be heard by others. Playing instruments in the common areas on the first and second floors is subject to approval by the residential life staff. Students must not take musical instruments into the library and instructional areas. Only with advance written approval from the instructor will exceptions be made.

Speakers are permitted with computer equipment in the student rooms. Amplifiers for musical instruments and speakers may be used on a case-by-case basis with approval by the staff and the roommates. If noise/music can be heard in the hallway with the door closed, it is too loud. Noise complaints may result in disciplinary action or removal of the speakers from the room.

### **Moving in and Out of the Student Life Center**

#### **Moving In**

Upon arrival in the Student Life Center, the residential life staff will accompany each student to inspect the assigned room in order to record existing damage on a Room Condition Form. Within the first week, students may inform the Residential Life Office if additional damage should be added to the form. After the first week, damage to the room or furniture will be charged to the room occupant(s). Students must report others who cause damage to the residence hall. At the end of the semester, staff will inspect the room with the student(s) to assess damages that might have occurred. MSA will determine charges and communicate them to students and their parents in writing prior to leaving for the semester break or the end of the year.

Upon arrival, each student receives a room key. Students must keep room doors locked at all times and keep their keys in their possession at all times. To ensure safety, MSA staff may conduct random checks to secure unlocked doors. Students whose doors are found unlocked may receive disciplinary

action. If students lose their keys, they must pay to replace the lock cylinder and key immediately. Residence hall keys are MSA property; duplication is prohibited.

## **Moving Out**

Students must remove their belongings and check out of the Student Life Center on the last day of final exams. The room must be clean, the Room Condition Form completed by the Resident Counselor, and the key returned. (There will be a fine for the loss of keys.) During checkout, the Resident Counselor will assess fines for room or furniture damages. If a parent or guardian does not accompany a student who is moving out of the dorm for the summer or withdrawing from enrollment at MSA, written permission must be provided.

## **Housekeeping in Suites and Student Life Center Common Areas**

Students are responsible for cleaning their rooms. A weekly inspection will occur. If deemed necessary, the Resident Counselor may inspect rooms more frequently to maintain a healthy living environment for everyone. **Failure to pass room inspection will result in issuance of a disciplinary referral and early curfew until the room is clean.** Although inspections occur weekly, basic cleanliness is expected at all times. Suitemates must use the **Weekly Restroom Cleaning Checklist** for distribution of duties in shared areas. All rooms will undergo a full inspection after students leave the building for holidays and extended weekends. Room inspections include, but are not limited to:

1. Cleaning and straightening all areas of student rooms. These areas include beds (under the beds), wardrobes (top surfaces and inside drawers and hanging spaces), desks, chairs, refrigerators, vents, windows, blinds, floors, woodwork, and other items a student has brought into the room;
2. Ensuring that there are no unauthorized items in the room or bath and that trash has been removed; unauthorized items will be confiscated and disciplinary action referred to the Principal or Executive Director;
3. Checking to make certain that the shared bathroom areas are clean and free from dirty laundry and trash. Floors, sinks, toilets, showers, and countertops must be clean and orderly. The room should smell fresh and clean;
4. Being ready for random room checks that may be held by any administrator without notice. Disciplinary referrals may be issued when random checks are made and the condition of the room or suite is unacceptable.
5. Cleaning equipment is available on each floor. Students should provide their own cleaning and personal hygiene supplies that may be kept in individual suites for student rooms. MSA will provide supplies for common areas only. MSA does not provide soap, shampoo, or other personal hygiene items. All personal items must be removed from shower stall after each use. All who live in the Student Life Center must assist with general housekeeping by cleaning up after themselves and reporting problems. In order to fulfill all or part of assigned campus work service obligations, students may have to clean the common areas of the residence hall.

## **Energy Conservation and Recycling**

Since students pay no tuition and limited room and board expenses while enrolled at the MSA, they are responsible for being good stewards of school, state, and natural resources. The dormitory and instructional buildings are climate controlled and maintained at a healthy year-round temperature from a central location. Students may assist in conserving energy by making certain that all lights, radios, stereos, computers, and bathroom heaters are turned off when they leave the room each day and on weekends when they go home. **When random room checks occur, students may be charged a fine when equipment is left on after residents have vacated the premises for the day or weekend. All roommates and/or suitemates will be charged for offenses that occur in common areas.**

In a concerted effort to recycle as many resources as possible, all students are encouraged to conserve the following items that are collected for delivery to area vendors who work in partnership with school staff in receiving items for recycling. MSA recycles the following items: plastic drink bottles, soft drink and juice cans, white office paper, cardboard, and plastic grocery bags. All students and staff members

are responsible for helping keep MSA “green.” Students are expected to use the containers provided for depositing these reusable resources.

## **Food Deliveries to the Dorm**

Food deliveries to the dormitory are prohibited after 9:30 p.m. Sunday through Thursday nights and after 11:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights. It is recommended that students should be prepared to tip delivery drivers a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) above the cost of the food.

## **Off Campus—Permission and Sign Out**

Going off campus to shop or participate in community events is permitted and sometimes necessary. Leaving campus entails getting permission and signing out in the residence hall office. When signing out, staff members review with the student the destination and duration of the occasion. Students should allow themselves enough time to complete their business off campus but should not overestimate the duration to the point of excessiveness. Students must have a legitimate purpose and destination when seeking permission to leave campus. To promote student safety, generally off campus trips are limited to less than four hours. MSA staff reserves the right to permit or deny requests to leave campus. **All students must present their student identification cards when they check in and out of the dorm. Students may not sign out of the dorm before 8:00 a.m. without prior written permission, from the Executive Director, Director of Residential Life, or Assistant Dorm Supervisor.**

On weekends when all students must be off campus, they may return to the dorm no earlier than 5:00 p.m. Since the next day after an away weekend is a school day, it is recommended that students return no later than 7:00. **However, students must return to the dorm in time to be on their dorm floors before curfew.** Students who will not return to campus by 9:00 p.m. must have a parent contact the Student Life Center staff to make them aware. Calls will be made to parents if students do not return to campus by 9:00 p.m. Upon returning to campus students must sign in immediately. MSA allows students broad privileges regarding signing out. Basic integrity and honesty of students will determine the extent of off campus privileges.

There are several ways of going off campus including walking with a guest and with staff on school-sponsored trips. For each occasion the student must sign out. Many stores, banks, and restaurants are located within a short walk from the MSA campus. Students may walk off campus anytime during the school week or on weekends during daylight hours by properly signing out but are expected to stay on designated walkways. Due to safety considerations, guidelines have been developed and are to be closely followed. All students walking should be in groups of two or more. The designated walking areas are as illustrated in the **MSA Walking Guide** which students will receive at orientation. Other walking locations may be approved as specific needs arise. Time limits are dictated by the student’s privilege plan designation.

Signing out to an authorized destination entails specific responsibilities. If a student who has signed out overnight wishes to change the approved destination, the student must notify the Director of Residential Life for approval.

To ensure student safety and well-being, if a student wishes to leave campus overnight during on-campus weekends—even to travel home—written parental permission is required in advance.

**Please direct all communications regarding student permissions to the Student Life Center, not the Y-Hut,** since the administrative office is only open Monday—Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Do not send e-mail to individual accounts. Use the general residential life e-mail that can be accessed by all staff members.

**SLC Fax Number: 601-823-1546**  
**SLC E-Mail: msaresidential@msabrookhaven.org**

To communicate frequently with parents and to help ensure student safety, the Residential Life Staff will mail a copy of student sign out cards at the end of each month. Parents are encouraged to make certain that their child is fulfilling their expectations in relation to leaving campus. Special events, such as Prom, may have different sign in/out procedures.

## **Food Services**

The MSA provides meals at no cost to all students. MSA participates in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, which requires specific guidelines to be followed for meals served. To maximize available resources,, parents/guardians of all students should complete **Free/Reduced Meal Application** for students who may qualify. MSA will then receive reimbursement from USDA based on the student's meal status. It can provide MSA with federal school lunch funds and donated commodities as well as information for other grant opportunities.

Students are encouraged to make healthy food choices at meals that follow USDA guidance. They must present their ID cards at each meal and conduct themselves appropriately in the dining room. Students should be dressed according to MSA dress code when in the Food Service/Cafeteria area. Weekday and weekend mealtimes will be posted. The schedule for cafeteria service may vary in accordance with class schedules and special events.

## **U.S. Postal Services**

The downtown branch of the Brookhaven Post Office is located directly across Cherokee Street from Mary Jane Lampton Auditorium. Regular postal services are available at this site. Mail on the MSA campus is provided for in locked U.S. Postal Service mailboxes on the second floor of the Student Life Center. Mailbox numbers and keys will be distributed at registration. Lost keys or those that are not returned will result in a fine. Packages received may be picked up in the Residential Life office. Outgoing mail should be deposited in the designated location in the Residential Life Office. Mail should be addressed as follows:

(Name of Student)  
MSA Student Life Center  
355 West Monticello Street  
Box (Student's Box Number)  
Brookhaven, MS 39601

## **Religious Services**

MSA recognizes that students may wish to attend religious services. Students may arrange to attend a religious institution of their choice. Many are within walking distance of the campus. Students are allowed, with parental permission, to attend religious activities throughout the week so long as it does not interfere with required MSA activities.

## **Financial Services**

**Students should not carry large sums of cash.** Several banks are within walking distance where students may open a checking or savings account.

Students may wish to bring traveler's checks to establish a local account. Many of the Brookhaven banks have statewide branches and if a student's family is already associated with one, it may be possible to arrange through that bank.

MSA does not assume responsibility for monitoring student financial practices. Students must handle personal finances in accordance with parental wishes and using good judgment. MSA policy stipulates that staff members shall not cosign, manage, or monitor student bank accounts.

Students will need cash for use in coin-operated washers and dryers in the laundry room. **MSA has a change machine for students use in the laundry or vending machines.**



## Student Activities

The Office of Residential Life schedules a range of activities. Board and table games, intramurals, dances, parties, movie nights, concerts, shows and plays are examples of activities available to students. Intramural competitions such as pool, ping-pong, basketball, and volleyball occur throughout the year. Trips out of town and/or out of state will be possible for shopping, entertainment, concerts, performances, or museum visits.

Many of the activities offered by MSA are free of charge. When the number of participants is limited, students may be asked to sign up and pay a small fee. The fee may be forfeited if the student fails to go on the trip. Occasionally, students will be asked to pay the price of admission to special events. Any student needing help to pay for a ticket should talk with the Director of Residential Life. Suggestions for activities from students are sought and encouraged through various committees or by simply passing on the suggestion to one of the staff.

All activities that will be held on the MSA campus require approval by the Executive Director before planning and implementation. Persons interested in suggesting an activity must complete an **Activity Proposal Form** that includes a description of what will occur and the signature of an adult who has agreed to sponsor the event. Seeking approval in advance and scheduling activities on the master calendar prevents double booking and conflicts with rehearsals, performances, or other mandatory school experiences. **To ensure and maintain artistic excellence at MSA, a staff member with arts expertise and experience must sponsor all arts-related activities.**

## Dances and Prom

Dances are held often at MSA. All dances are scheduled on campus at the Student Life Center or in Lampton Auditorium. As a special privilege, students may invite outside guests unless the event is designated as “MSA Only.” An MSA student who is currently enrolled must accompany any outside guest(s). MSA students must make his or her guests aware of the rules and regulations. Violation of school rules may result in the guest’s removal and prohibition from campus. Written permission for outside guest(s) must be received from the MSA student’s parent/guardian and be on file in the Residential Life Office at least 24 hours prior to the dance.

Prom is a formal event celebrated every spring. Guests must follow the rules for school dances. Because of the unique nature of prom, additional policies may be in effect. No outside guest will be allowed to stay overnight. Alumni are not allowed to attend the prom unless they are the date of a current MSA student. Students must be present at least 63% of the school day prior to or the day of any school function, including prom.

## Campus Service

**All MSA students will contribute to the school through required hall cleaning duties on their dorm floors as specified in the section entitled “Floor Duty” of this handbook.** While duties may vary widely depending on human resources needed at MSA and duties appropriate for students—both residential and commuting—juniors and seniors who receive disciplinary referrals must fulfill campus work service hours and tasks assigned. Assignments may include office or studio assistance, cleaning common areas of the campus, gardening, or general yard work, working in the library, and etc. Those students who volunteer to perform campus work service are rewarded with bonus points on their Privilege Plans.

Each nine-week grading period and interim reporting period, staff will determine the total amount of campus work service performed by the student. Failure to complete campus work service will impact privilege plans.

## Community Service

In addition to campus work service, community service offers opportunities that extend beyond the school campus to build partnerships within the Brookhaven/Lincoln County area. Some club memberships and the MS Scholars Program require a minimum number of community service hours.

Community service will occur during nonacademic hours. This service can be important to the overall reputation of the school, and the quality of the work done by the students exemplifies pride in MSA. All students are encouraged to participate in community service activities. However, community service is optional. Duties may range from being a mentor for a local junior high or elementary school student to working with a civic club or organization. Students who commit to community service must fulfill their obligations and are responsible for making alternate arrangements when on a field trip, sick, or on extended weekends by rescheduling commitments. Students must fulfill their obligations personally, punctually, and adequately.

## **Counseling Program**

***The MSA counseling program supports the mission of the Mississippi School of the Arts by providing excellent academic, college admissions, and career counseling.*** The MSA professional school counselor works cooperatively with the MSA faculty, administration, and staff to support and enhance the holistic growth of MSA students.

The MSA counseling framework is based on a wellness philosophy, which emphasizes a developmental approach to working with the whole (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, and social) student. Self-responsibility is at the core of wellness, and logical and natural consequences are considered to be strong motivations for behavioral change and maintenance.

Confidentiality is an essential requirement in a counseling relationship. Confidentiality will be maintained except as required under State and Federal law. MSA does not have a licensed mental health professional on campus. Students experiencing mental health concerns that require more than school-based counseling support will need to seek outside mental health professionals for assistance at the parent/guardian(s) expense.

## **Location & Hours**

The office of the MSA counselor is in the Helen Furlow Scruggs Y-Hut building. The MSA Counseling Center is open from 8 AM to 4:00 PM and at other times by appointment or in the event of an emergency. The MSA counselor is available to students, parents and MSA faculty and staff.

## **Adjustment Efforts**

Making the transition to the MSA involves adjustments. Students face the challenges of living away of home, homesickness, dealing with a more intense and difficult academic schedule, living with a roommate in a residential environment, and forming new relationships. Most of these adjustments are positive but change always brings a degree of stress. Orientation programs at the beginning of the year, group meetings, and individual assistance are provided to help students make a successful transition. The MSA counselor works with the residential life staff, teachers, and administrators to address student concerns in a supportive and solution-focused team approach.

## **Academic Counseling**

At the beginning of the school year, the MSA counselor offers workshops in time management and study skills development. Individual and group academic counseling is available to help students refine skills. Teachers may refer students, or students may refer themselves. MSA has a network of peer tutors and professional tutors who work individually with students having problems in specific courses. MSA is committed to serving students who have documented special needs. Parents/guardians of students with special needs should request services as soon as possible after admission and notify MSA of any existing Section 504 Plan and/or Individualized Education Program (IEP) for the student.

## **College Admissions & Career**

All students at the MSA are considered to be college bound. Students attend workshops and individual meetings for college admissions and career guidance and to receive scholarship and financial aid information. ACT prep workshops are offered regularly; some are free, and some require a fee. All juniors are given the opportunity to take the PSAT in October of each year at the student's expense to participate in the National Merit/Achievement Scholarship Programs. All juniors are given the

opportunity to take the ACT in spring each year at the expense of the State of Mississippi as long as funding allows. Admissions representatives from many in-state and out-of-state colleges and universities coordinate their visits to campus each year through the MSA counselor.

### **Personal & Mental Health Counseling**

Creatively gifted students sometimes experience intense feelings and need to talk about them. Moreover, unexpected events happen in life. Students experience loss or other adverse contingencies that may knock them off balance or turn their world upside-down. Students can also seek support individually from the MSA Counselor as needed. If further psychological assessment or services are needed, parents/guardians are expected to seek support for their students from mental health professionals. MSA can provide referrals for local professionals to consult at the parent's expense. MSA has an agreement with Region 8 for crisis counseling as needed.

The safety and wellbeing of students are of the utmost importance to MSA. In addition to physical maladies, MSA recognizes that students may also have mental health concerns. Some of these concerns may be normal, transitional issues to the academic rigors and residential environment. Others may be of a more severe and long-term nature. Regardless of the specific concerns, MSA always attempts to make reasonable and appropriate measures to accommodate students on an individual basis in the least restrictive environment. For example, a junior may be struggling with homesickness during the first nine weeks of the year, so this student might only need a few sessions with his/her school counselor to adjust to being a part of the MSA community. Another student may be involved in a serious automobile accident, and he/she may need a referral to an outside mental health counselor and a physician for medication to cope successfully with the traumatic event.

Under any circumstance, MSA will seek to act in the best interest of the affected student and the general student population. Decisions will not be made in isolation, and parents/guardians, school counselors, and outside mental health professionals may all be consulted along with the student in determining the most reasonable and appropriate action according to the circumstances.

Every effort will be made to maintain the student's enrollment at MSA, but there are situations in which the evidence suggests MSA may not be the best environment for a particular student. These situations are usually related to the student's capacity to perform successfully, to remain safe, and to function independently in both the academic and residential settings of MSA. In summary, MSA values the mental wellbeing of all its students, and its officials will do their best to help students make the most of this "opportunity for excellence."

### **Suicide Prevention**

Students experiencing suicidal ideation are required to seek immediate assistance from staff to ensure safety in a residential environment. All staff are trained on suicide prevention. Additionally, reports should be made to staff if students have information that others are or have been experiencing suicidal ideation. MSA Crisis Manual provides protocols for suicide ideations, attempts, and action to guide the staff in their response to a need. For more information about services or if you or a loved one needs help, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), Department of Mental Health Helpline at 1-877-210-8513, or visit [www.dmh.ms.gov/shatter-the-silence/](http://www.dmh.ms.gov/shatter-the-silence/)

### **Technology**

#### **Acceptable Use Policy**

The School is pleased to offer to its students, faculty, and staff access to the Internet in accordance with the terms and conditions of this policy. All users of the internet access must comply with the school's Acceptable Use Policy. It is important that all users understand the terms, conditions, and responsibilities associated with the use of the internet access. All users and parents of all users under the age of 18 are required to sign the Handbook Contract stating they carefully read and understand the terms and conditions of the Acceptable Use Policy and will comply with the policy while using the

school's computer network resources. The Handbook Contract is a legally binding document and must be signed prior to the User accessing the Internet.

This policy governs the use of all computers, computer-based communication networks and all related information technology equipment administered by MSA. A user is defined as any person employed by MSA, which includes full-time, part-time, temporary, or contract employees; persons who are employed by contractors or subcontractors of MSA; and any other individuals who are authorized to access or use agency information systems including students, parents, prospective students, and project volunteers. The electronic communications and facilities of MSA are the property of the State and by using these facilities the user acknowledges consent to abide by this policy. These facilities and resources are to be used for School business purposes.

MSA has taken available precautions to eliminate controversial material. However, it is impossible for MSA to restrict access to all controversial materials. Parents/Guardians agree not to hold MSA responsible for materials acquired by students on the network. Parents/Guardians accept full responsibility for supervision of each child's Internet access when their use is not in a school setting. Further, Parents/Guardians full responsibility for their child's use of property of MSA. Parents give their permission for MSA to provide computer network and Internet access to each child and consent to the monitoring of each child's computer and Internet activities by MSA. All conditions of the Acceptable Use Policy also apply to the use of the dormitory network, DormNet.

## **CIPA**

In December 2000, Congress enacted the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). For any school or library that receives discounts for Internet access or for internal connections, CIPA imposes certain requirements. The CIPA requires that schools restrict employee and student access to the Internet. Under the CIPA, covered schools must have an Internet safety program which filters both adult and student access to visual depictions that are obscene or constitute child pornography. The program must also prevent students from accessing materials that are harmful to minors.

The school receives these discounts for Internet Access through the E-Rate program and is therefore in compliance with the CIPA. Key terms for this policy are defined by the Children's Internet Protection Act.

**In compliance with CIPA 2008 updates, all students at the MSA are educated about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, and in cyberbullying awareness and response.**

## **COPPA**

The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), effective April 21, 2000, applies to online collection of personal information from children under the age of 13, such as full name, home address, email address, telephone number or any other information that would allow someone to identify or contact the child. The Final Rule issued by the Federal Trade Commission spells out what a Web site operator must include in a privacy policy, when and how to seek verifiable consent from a parent, and what responsibilities an operator has to protect children privacy and safety online.

## **Education, Supervision and Monitoring**

Technology is utilized extensively at MSA. Formal communication to students will be done via e-mail to student MSA e-mail accounts, assigned to each student upon entrance to MSA. Visits from college admissions representatives, scholarship and summer program opportunities, and college entrance test deadlines are announced electronically. Students who do not check their e-mail daily may miss important opportunities. Student and parent resources can be found on the MSA counseling website.

It shall be the responsibility of all members of the **MSA'** staff to educate, supervise and monitor appropriate usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy, the Children's Internet Protection Act, the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act, and

the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act.

Procedures for the disabling or otherwise modifying any technology protection measures shall be the responsibility of The Technology Coordinator or designated representatives. The **MSA** or designated representatives will provide age-appropriate training for students who use the **MSA** Internet facilities. The training provided will be designed to promote the **MSA's** commitment to:

- I. The standards and acceptable use of Internet services as set forth in **MSA's** Acceptable Use Policy;
- II. Student safety regarding:
  - a. the Internet;
  - b. appropriate behavior while on online, on social networking web sites, and in chat rooms; and,
  - c. cyber bullying awareness and response (see also the Anti-Bullying policy regarding expectations of electronic usage); and
- III. Compliance with the E-rate requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act ("CIPA").

Following receipt of this training, the student will acknowledge that he/she received the training, understood it, and will follow the provisions of the District's acceptable use policies.

## **Network and Computer Usage on Campus**

The MSA campus computer network is referred to as MSANet. The optional network service in dorm rooms is referred to as DormNet.

The MSANet usage policies are designed to provide an environment that is consistent with the MSA mission and vision, Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) requirements, and federal/state laws. MSANet refers to devices attached to the entire computer network system at the MSA. MSANet includes but is not limited to the Local Area Network (LAN on campus), all MSA file servers, and access to the Internet.

MSANet facilities and network connections are for providing educational computing support to students, faculty, and staff. Under federal statutes and the sections of the Mississippi Code, which govern the use of these resources, all users must use the MSANet resources properly and for the purpose designated by the legislature. Students, faculty, and staff must follow all existing federal and state laws and MSA regulations and policies that apply, including those specific to computers, networks, and websites, and those that may apply generally to personal conduct.

MSA reserves the right to monitor the system for signs of illegal or unauthorized activity. Even though the MSA **Acceptable Use** Policy may not expressly prohibit an activity, such behavior may not be permissible. The Technology Coordinator may delete files deemed necessary. For questions related to appropriate use, contact the Technology Coordinator.

### **Inappropriate Network Usage**

To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the **MSA** online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications.

Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: (a) unauthorized access, including so-called 'hacking,' and other unlawful activities; and (b) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

### **Student Responsibilities**

As MSANet account holders, students should:

1. Be owners of their data and keep account information confidential;

2. Provide a personal USB flash memory device for school use in storing personal files and moving them from one computer to another. Other marketing terms used for these devices are “thumb drive” or “jump drive;”
3. Be responsible for ensuring that their data is adequately backed up and protected against unauthorized access;
4. Notify the Office of Technology to change their personal password when they suspect it has been compromised;
5. Report suspected violations of technology guidelines to the Technology Coordinator.
6. **Remember**, no information stored, produced, or transmitted in any way on devices that contact the MSANet or DormNet networks is to be considered confidential or private in any way. **ALL** information is subject to monitoring and examination for appropriate content at any time. This **INCLUDES** personally owned disks or devices used in conjunction with the MSANet or DormNet networks. Any such item must be surrendered on demand to any school official that requests it for examination. This specifically includes the personal flash drives required by each student.
7. Remain in good standing as a student at the MSA. When students are suspended, or otherwise no longer in regular routine attendance, permission to use school resources may be removed, and access to the school and its systems may be denied until the student returns to school in good standing. Students who are dismissed or expelled automatically forfeit all access to school technological resources.

## Personal Computers and Peripheral Devices

In general, students may not connect their own computers, peripherals, or technological devices to the MSA network. This includes such devices as external drives, iPods, cell phones, smart phones, digitizing tablets, etc. However, students may connect thumb drives to the system for purposes of storing and retrieving their own personal data.

If a student has a special school project that requires connection of non-MSA equipment or devices to the school network, the **Technology Coordinator** will aid on an individual basis. A student who needs such accommodations should meet with the technology coordinator well in advance of deadlines to seek permission and arrange for connection. The **Technology Coordinator** has the final authority to decide permissions on a case-by-case basis and set specifications and timelines for network access.

Students who choose to have their own computers in a dorm room must:

1. Provide the computer and all necessary accessories to allow it to function and ensure that it is configured by the student and/or parent in compliance with safety protocols;
2. Understand that the resources of the MSA technology staff are for official school purposes only and cannot install or repair equipment, hardware, or software on student computers;
3. Understand that it is a privilege NOT a right for a student to have a personal computer on the MSA campus;
4. Recognize that violations of MSANet policy may result in personal computers being sent home, loss of some or all computer privileges, and/or other disciplinary actions;
5. Ensure that real time antivirus software is installed, active, and kept up to date on all machines (Level III Violation);
6. Agree that MSA reserves the right to modify the system configuration to insure compatibility with network systems;
7. Agree to keep the operating system of the computer up to date by automatically applying all manufacturer’s security updates as they are released (Level II Violation); and
8. Seek permission from the Technology Coordinator before connecting any computer equipment to any location on either DormNet or MSANet, or before moving anything to a different location (Level I Violation).

## **DormNet—Dorm Room Internet Access**

**MSA provides free Internet access for educational purposes in academic areas throughout the campus, including the library that is in the Student Life Center.** The same rules for student usage and conduct apply to this service as do the MSANet network.

Parents and students must agree to the following stipulations:

1. **MSA strongly advises that parents purchase and install a content filter like NetNanny or CiberSitter to help prevent access to inappropriate content. It is the sole responsibility of parents to ensure that their child does not use a personal computer to access inappropriate content.** Parents and students must comply with school policy, local, state, and federal laws.
2. The owner of the computer will be held liable for all activity that occurs on their device, even if it is by another person.

## **MSANet Policy Enforcement**

To protect the MSANet resources and monitor proper usage of computer resources for educational purposes, the Technology Coordinator shall:

1. Investigate alleged abuses of computer resources;
2. Access the electronic files of its users as part of that investigation if there are indications that computer privileges have been violated;
3. Limit the access of users found to be using any computer systems improperly;
4. Administer disciplinary actions as directed by school administration for violations of MSA policies that may include the loss of some or all computer privileges and/or other disciplinary actions;
5. Act as a technical advisor to school administrators when they hear all cases involving student misuse of computer privileges;
6. Deny student access temporarily pending review when there is a reasonable suspicion that student use may harm or do damage in the interim; and
7. Administer the technical aspects of all penalties for computer violations assigned by school administration.

## **Hardware**

1. All personal computers (PCs), servers, workstations, printers, network switches, and other associated equipment are the property of the State of Mississippi and should not be used for purposes other than school business. All such equipment is by default considered to be under the authority and supervision of the MSA Office of Technology unless it is specifically excluded in a written agreement between the MSA Office of Technology (MSAOT) and the appropriate substitute designee. No hardware changes, modifications, additions to, deletions from, or removal of any equipment may be done to any such style equipment without notification to the MSAOT in writing, including all units as described above. Additionally, no person other than Office of Technology personnel may make such hardware changes to any unit under its supervision unless an MSAOT representative authorizes such action in writing in advance.
2. No personal devices are to be connected to the MSANet network without special permission for the MSAOT. The only routine exception to this rule is that personal USB Flash Memory devices (jump drives or thumb drives) may be used for storing or moving user data files.
3. The transfer of any information system equipment from one user to another, or to vendor for repair, must be recorded using appropriate MDE Property Office procedures.
4. Except for notebook PCs used daily in offsite work, no information systems equipment should be removed from the MSA premises without the prior permission of both the individual's immediate supervisor and the MSAOT. In the event equipment is to be off premises for some time, the user responsible for the equipment must file a written notification with the Office of Technology.

## Software

1. Software owned or licensed by MSA may not be copied to alternate media, distributed by e-mail, transmitted electronically, or used in its original form on other than MSA computers without express prior written permission from the MSAOT. Users will adhere to all applicable licensing agreements and copyright provisions.
2. Software licensed to MSA is to be used for its intended purpose according to the license agreement. Users are responsible for using software in a manner consistent with the licensing agreements of the manufacturer. License agreements are to be maintained by the MSAOT staff, or the machine's official substitute designee. Copies of all license agreements are to be kept on file in the MSA Technology office regardless of official supervisory authority.
3. Without prior written approval, software, including but not limited to Internet downloads, utilities, add-ons, programs (including shareware, freeware, and Internet access software), patches, or upgrades, shall not be installed on any school owned equipment by anyone other than a representative of the MSAOT.
4. All software obtained for use on MSA equipment must be approved in writing by the MSAOT staff prior to acquisition. Any software obtained for systems that have a substitute supervisory designee must have a copy kept on file in the MSAOT Department along with the proof of the licensing certification.
5. Standard software is to be used for all internal functions. When required, approved non-standard software is to be used only to interface with customer/vendor organizations and other governmental agencies. Any non-standard software needed to perform a specific job function should be approved by the MSAOT.

## Practices

1. System identification codes and passwords are for the use of the specifically assigned user and are to be protected from abuse and/or use by unauthorized individuals. Users are to use their individually assigned system access codes at all times and are not to share codes. Any use of another user's code must be reported immediately to the MSAOT staff.
2. All e-mail attachments and executable e-mail messages are automatically scanned for viruses using the virus detection software installed on all MSA computer workstations. In the event of any configuration changes to the workstation, even with the approval of the MSAOT Staff, it is the responsibility of the user to ensure virus protection is active prior to opening/executing any file, regardless of the method by which it was obtained. In addition, users are expected to exercise good judgment and safe computing practices to protect agency systems against the threat of potential virus exposure.
3. Like all MSA information systems resources, Internet access and e-mail are for work-related use. Access to e-mail and Internet sites visited can be monitored at the specific individual level.
4. All Internet use facilitated by the MSANet system must conform to all regulatory statutes as governed by the Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA).
5. Users may not use MSA information systems resources for soliciting, personal financial gain, partisan political activities, or further disseminating "junk" e-mail such as chain letters, spam, or etc.
6. Information contained on any school system is strictly proprietary to the State of Mississippi and MSA. Copying or disseminating any of this information for any purpose other than state business is strictly prohibited.
7. It is highly recommended that all faculty and staff users store data files (word documents, spreadsheets, databases, etc.) in their various directories on the network file servers. The MSAOT Department is responsible for backing up data on the network servers. The individual users are responsible for backing up any files not stored in the appropriate areas of the network servers.



## **Prohibited Communications**

Electronic media cannot at any time be used for transmitting, retrieving, storing or disseminating any communication that is:

1. Discriminatory or harassing;
2. Derogatory to any individual or group;
3. Obscene or sexually explicit;
4. Defamatory or threatening; or
5. Engaged in for any purpose that is illegal, (including but not limited to file sharing of copyrighted materials with unauthorized users); or
6. Engaged in for any purpose that is contrary to MSA's policies or interests.

Furthermore, users are prohibited from:

1. Visiting obscene web sites;
2. Participating in any obscene "chat room" communications;
3. Unauthorized monitoring or intercepting the files or electronic communications of other users;
4. Attempting to bypass any Internet filtering, traffic regulating, or such automated systems designed to control the access level and functionality of the MSA network as required by CIPA (Child Internet Protection Act);
5. Hacking or obtaining access to systems or files they are not authorized to use; or
6. Using someone else's login or password.

## **Mandatory Reporting**

MSA is committed to protecting the safety and welfare of its students. Mandatory reporting laws require persons to report to various agencies, including, but not limited to, Child Protection Services and/or law enforcement, when there is reason to suspect abuse, neglect, exploitation, human trafficking, sexual involvement of a student and teacher, sex crimes against a minor, unlawful activity which occurs on educational property or during a school related activity, and/or other violations of state and/or federal law which are required to be reported. Suspected violations shall/will be reported as required by law and in accordance with the applicable reporting procedures.

In addition to the above, MSA may contact law enforcement regarding other suspected violations of municipal, state, and/or federal law.

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## **Appendix**

### **MSA FORMS**

**Prescription Medicine Form**

**Note: This section must be filled out whenever a new medication is prescribed. All students must report all prescriptions to be stored and administered through self-administration except asthma inhalers.**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

**To Be Completed by Physician (if medicine is prescribed below):**

I request that my patient (named and identified above) receive the following medication while in residence at the Mississippi School of the Arts.

Diagnosis: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Medication: \_\_\_\_\_

Prescribed dosage and means of administration:

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

Time(s) to be administered: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected duration of treatment: \_\_\_\_\_

Possible side effects/adverse

reactions: \_\_\_\_\_

**Physician's Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Technology and Instructional Device Use Policy**

**SIGNATURE VERIFICATION**

Print Parent/Guardian Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Student Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**I have reviewed the Mississippi School of the Arts Technology policies and understand the rules and guidelines for the following:**

\_\_\_\_\_ (initial) Acceptable Use Policy in the 2020-2021 Mississippi School of the Arts Student Handbook. This includes policies related to account use, network monitoring and adherence to the Children's Internet Protection Act.

\_\_\_\_\_ (initial) Damages – I am subject to a \$75.00 charge for the first report of damage. I am subject to the full replacement cost of subsequent damage / first loss / first theft.

***For office use only below this line -----***

State Fixed Asset \_\_\_\_\_ Description \_\_\_\_\_  
Intended Use \_\_\_\_\_  
Property Contact \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Parent and Student Handbook Contract

*(This is a legally binding document.)*

*All Mississippi School of the Arts (MSA) students—residential and commuters—and their parents or legal guardians must read and sign this contract. Signature is required at the beginning of each new school year since all MSA handbooks must be updated annually and approved by the State Board of Education.*

As a student (or parent/guardian of a student) who is enrolled at the Mississippi School of the Arts, we hereby acknowledge that we have received and/or have access to a copy of the following documents that contain the official policies and procedures that affect MSA students:

1. *MSA Student Handbook (Available on the Internet, print copies distributed on campus.)*
2. *Prohibited items (MSA Student Handbook)*
3. *Residential Life definitions, policies, and expectations (MSA Student Handbook)*
4. *Security Policy governing safety (MSA Student Handbook)*
5. *Technology Contracts and Policies (MSA Student Handbook) - Cell Phone Policy, Portable Listening Device, and Acceptable Usage*
6. *Student Code of Conduct (MSA Student Handbook)*
7. *Attendance Policy (Enclosed in registration packet)*
8. *Brookhaven High School Handbook and Focus Book (Available on Internet)*
9. *Bullying Policy (MSA Student Handbook)*

We understand that an electronic copy of these policies and publications can be found online at the Mississippi School of the Arts website <http://www.msabrookhaven.org>. MSA students can use school computers to access these resources using their MSA user account identification. If electronic access is not convenient, we acknowledge that we also have received one print copy for our family. We understand that all students are responsible for adhering to the policies and procedures of these documents while at school or on school activities. Because of an interlocal partnership with the Brookhaven School District, all BHS policies apply to MSA students attending classes there.

As a student (or parent/guardian of a student) who is enrolled at the Mississippi School of the Arts, I hereby acknowledge that I am issued a *Student Identification Card and MSA Lanyard/Clip* and will adhere to official policies and procedures that affect MSA safety.

In addition, we understand that the Mississippi School of the Arts is a special state residential public high school. Attendance at the Mississippi School of the Arts is a privilege, not a right. Students have neither constitutional nor statutory rights to public education in a state special school. Student educational rights exist only in the local school district in which the individual resides. While enrolled at MSA since it is a residential school, parental permission and signatures are required regardless of the age of the student.

Furthermore, we recognize that this is a legally binding contract and that violation(s) of the terms, conditions, and/or guidelines of school or state policies may result in disciplinary action, loss of privileges, probation, suspension, dismissal to the student's home school district, or expulsion dependent upon the nature of student actions. We understand that MSA will fully cooperate with local and state officials in any investigation related to student actions while at school.

We understand that the administrative staff of the Mississippi School of the Arts welcomes suggestions that could help improve the educational environment for Mississippi children while in residence on the MSA campus. Following a request for an appointment, the Executive Director will arrange a conference with the appropriate MSA staff to discuss issues and concerns related to students enrolled in the school.

**Student Name** (Please print.): → \_\_\_\_\_  
→ \_\_\_\_\_  
**Student Signature** **Date**

**Parent Name** (Please print.): → \_\_\_\_\_  
→ \_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent Signature** **Date**