

OFFICE OF CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
Consent Agenda
June 19-20, 2014

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
Mississippi School for the Blind
Mississippi School for the Deaf

- C. Approval of the Mississippi School for the Blind and the Mississippi School for the Deaf Staff Handbook

Executive Summary

This document contains specific procedures that staff members employed at the Mississippi School for the Blind and the Mississippi School for the Deaf should use to provide guidance and directions while employed. It contains the schools' mission, goals, and history. It also addresses professional matters, personnel matters, professional development, ethical policies, discipline and grievance policy, campus security, and public records. This document is not intended to usurp or replace the Mississippi Department of Education Staff Manual, but is used to supplement. This handbook contains procedures that are specifically related to the Mississippi School for the Blind and the Mississippi School for the Deaf. Staff Handbook changes are as follows:

- Consolidated the Mississippi School for the Deaf and the Mississippi School for the Blind Staff handbooks into one staff handbook for both schools.
- Removed some procedures from the staff handbook to incorporate into the operations manual.
- Updated the handbook to reflect current state statutes.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached



STAFF HANDBOOK



MISSISSIPPI BOARD OF EDUCATION

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MISSISSIPPI FOR THE DEAF

Dr. Sandra Edwards, Superintendent

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

Educational Amendments: 1964, 1972, Others

It is the policy of the Mississippi School for the Blind (MSB) and the Mississippi School for the Deaf (MSD) 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, and IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).

The State Board of Education directs that no person shall on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, age, or religion be discriminated against or excluded from or denied the benefits of any program or any opportunity or activity. This policy applies to all applicants for employment at the Mississippi School for the Blind (MSB), Mississippi School for the Deaf (MSD), present employees and students. The Mississippi School for the Blind (MSB) and the Mississippi School for the Deaf (MSD) also comply with all the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

The ADA Coordinator for the above is the Mississippi Department of Education Director of Human Resources.

(601) 359-3511

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a summary of policies to the staff of the Mississippi School for the Blind (MSB) and the staff of the Mississippi School for the Deaf (MSD). This document contains a description of the educational process at MSB and MSD and the roles of staff. The rules and regulations under which the school operates are presented along with the standards of evaluation for staff member behavior.

Each staff member is expected to read and understand the contents of this handbook. If a staff member has any question about any part of the document, he/she should ask his/her supervisor for assistance. MSB and MSD are small communities with vital missions. It is extremely important for each member of the team to understand his/her valuable contribution to the success of the group effort. This handbook should be used in conjunction with the Standard Operational Manual (SOM), which outlines the day-to-day operations of the school and is provided annually to staff members.

This handbook cannot possibly contain information to cover every conceivable issue or question that will arise in the course of performing job responsibilities. It provides a guide for our efforts as we work together to accomplish our mission: Quality Education for Blind, Low Vision, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children.

This handbook should be used in conjunction with the Mississippi State Employee Handbook, Mississippi Department of Education Policy Manual, MSB Student Handbook, MSD Student Handbook and the Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics. Employees will be required to sign an acknowledgement of receipt of all staff policies annually. It is our intention that there will be no policy conflicts among these manuals. If any conflicts exist, the Mississippi State Employee Handbook and the Mississippi Department of Education Employee Policies and Procedures Manual will prevail.

VISION STATEMENT

The Mississippi School for the Blind (MSB) and the Mississippi School for the Deaf (MSD) in collaboration with families and community, strive to promote a safe and caring learning environment that empowers students by providing opportunities that emphasize academic excellence and encourage critical thinking skills.

Our collective goal is for students to progress into responsible, productive individuals who are equipped to make positive contributions to an ever-changing global society.

MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Mississippi School for the Blind (MSB) is to promote a strong foundation for learning and independence by providing specialized adapted services and materials to enhance maximum potential for students with visual impairments or blindness.

MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF MISSION STATEMENT

The Mississippi School for the Deaf (MSD) is a comprehensive center providing education, resources, and services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children, their families, and educational partners. Empowered with a positive Deaf identity, students will possess the confidence, discipline, leadership, and productivity to become contributing citizens in their community

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STANDARD OPERATIONAL MANUAL (SOM)

Along with the MSB/MSD Staff Handbook, all employees are provided a Standard Operational Manual (SOM) for the day-to-day operations of classrooms, activities, and dormitories. This manual contains many operational and safety procedures, which all employees need to be made aware and must follow.

EMPLOYEE BACKGROUND CHECK

By state statute, all applicants recommended for employment with MSB/MSD must have a criminal records check performed by the FBI and the State CIC center. Fingerprints must be taken and submitted as part of the background check.

Criminal Records/Child Abuse Registry Check

The superintendent shall require that current criminal records, background checks, and current Child Abuse Registry checks are obtained and such information is kept on file for any applicant recommended for employment as either a licensed or non-licensed employee who was not employed by the District before July 1, 2000. All applicants shall be fingerprinted for such background checks. The superintendents of each school shall be responsible for ensuring that MSB and MSD comply with the requirements of Miss. Code Ann. § 37-19-17. Pursuant to this code, applicants recommended for employment at MSB/MSD must undergo a criminal background check, including fingerprinting, to determine suitability for employment. The applicant must pay the fingerprinting fee. Whenever possible, the results of the criminal background check should be received with no disqualifying information prior to an offer for employment. However, in extraordinary circumstances, an applicant may be allowed to begin work contingent on receiving no disqualifying information from the criminal background check.

Applicants recommended for employment at MSB/MSD must undergo a background check at the Child Abuse Central Registry of the Department of human Services to determine suitability for employment. There is no fee for this background check. The results of the background check should be received with no disqualifying information prior to an offer of employment.

If for any reason background check information is not provided before an employment contract is signed or at-will employment begins and the background check discloses information making the employee ineligible for employment, termination of employment will take place. It is the policy of MSB/MSD that pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-19-17, no waivers will be granted to new hires or to any person who has already been granted an employment contract or who has begun employment before the required background checks disclosures have been provided to MSB/MSD if such information discloses a felony conviction, guilty plea, or plea of *nolo contendere* to a felony of possession or sale of drugs, murder, manslaughter, armed robbery, burglary, rape, sexual battery, a sex offense listed in Miss. Code Ann § 45-33-23 (g), child abuse, arson, grand larceny, gratification of lust, or aggravated assault which has not been reversed on appeal or for which a pardon has not been granted.

ATTENDANCE

Employees are expected to be prompt and consistent in attendance. Personal appointments should be scheduled after normal workday hours whenever possible. Employee schedules differ according to job position, classification, and various business needs. Your administrator/supervisor will discuss your regular working hours with you prior to your first day of employment.

- Teachers, and all other staff members, are to report as scheduled by the principal or dorm director and are required to scan in using TimeStation.
- If you are going to be absent due to illness, you must notify the principal or person designated by him or her as soon as possible.
- If you are to be late for any reason, contact the principal's office so arrangements can be made until you arrive.
- Employees who sign in after the scheduled time or have problems relative to timely arrival for scheduled duties shall, on that day, provide the office with a written, dated explanation of reason for failure to arrive on time.
- No employee is to leave campus during duty hours without permission of immediate supervisor.
- All employees are expected to be present during statewide testing.

Attendance Expectations

Employees are expected to maintain an acceptable attendance record by reporting to work as scheduled and remaining at work until the end of the workday. Employees are expected to follow established departmental procedures for reporting absences, tardiness or early departure from work, requesting paid and unpaid time off, and returning to work upon authorization after approved leave of absence. For the purpose of determining tardiness, an employee is tardy if he/she reports to work any time after the designated start of the scheduled workday. In general, road construction, traffic congestions, personal issues, and “normal” weather conditions are not acceptable reasons for tardiness.

An employee’s attendance record may be considered unacceptable under the following circumstances:

- A pattern of absence(s), tardiness or early departures, which adversely impacts either school’s operations and/or an employee’s performance, as determined by an employee’s immediate supervisor.
- An employee has a history of not following established school or departmental procedures for reporting absence(s).
- An employee has exhausted his/her paid time off balance and continues to be absent without authorized approval.
- An employee is using sick leave for purposes not allowed.
- Unacceptable attendance records may result in disciplinary action or possible termination.

FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA)

The FMLA entitles eligible employees of covered employers to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons with continuation of group health insurance coverage under the same terms and conditions as if the employee had not taken leave. Eligible employees are entitled to twelve workweeks of leave in a 12-month period based on a 12-month period in a rolling calendar.

The office of Human Resources will provide all MSB and MSD employees with information regarding their rights to the FMLA.

There are formulas based on the employee's status with regard to length of time worked as well as whether the employee is a nine (9), ten (10), eleven (11), or twelve (12)-month employee.

Employees should contact the Office of Human Resources for information regarding use of the FMLA. The immediate supervisor should be informed of any intent to use the FMLA.

Application of Leave

An employee requesting leave must complete the "Certification of FMLA" form and return it to the payroll office. The completed Certification must state the reason for the leave, the duration of the leave, and the starting and ending dates of the leave.

Notice of Leave

An employee intending to take family or medical leave because of an expected birth or placement, or because of a planned medical treatment, must submit an application for leave at least thirty (30) days before the leave is to begin. IF leave is to begin within thirty (30) days, an employee must give notice to his or her principal and immediate supervisor.

An application for leave based on the serious health condition of the employee, the employee's spouse, child, or parent must also be accompanied by a "Medical Certification Statement" completed by the applicable health care provider. The certification must state the date on which the health condition commenced, the probable duration of the condition, and the appropriate medical facts regarding the condition.

LEAVE POLICIES

Employees are instructed to refer to the MEDICAL AND PERSONAL LEAVE policy, which is located in the State Personnel Board and Mississippi Department of Education Handbooks.

Leave Policy

Teachers and other nine-month employees are advised not to plan any personal leave during the first two weeks of the school year or final two weeks of the school year. School is in session until the last school day.

Use of Personal Leave

No personal leave may be taken without the prior approval of the individual's supervisor. Personal leave may be denied if the supervisor deems the leave not to be in the best interest of the students.

Personal leave is earned and accrued on a monthly basis. Personal leave will not be granted prior to the time it is earned. All personal leave must be requested and approved 7 working days in advance. If staff attempts to take personal leave without advance approval it will be denied and documented.

Medical Leave

The first 8 hours of medical leave will be personal leave as outlined in the State of Mississippi Employee Handbook. Personal leave or earned compensatory time, not requested 7 days in advance, will be considered emergency personal leave.

Medical Leave, Maternity Leave, and Family Medical Leave are addressed in the State Department of Education Policies and Procedures Manual, Section-8.0 and State Personnel Board Handbook Chapter 3.0.

Professional Activities

- Individual staff members may be asked to represent either MSB and/or MSD at professional seminars and/or other professional events.
- Other individual staff members, who wish to attend professional meetings, etc., may request to attend.

Supervisors may disapprove all such requests based upon the following:

- Availability of substitute.
- Timing of such requests does not conflict with other events of the school.

Note: Individuals requesting to attend professional activities must submit the Professional Development/Workshop Request form to their supervisors for approval one month in advance whenever possible. This timeframe will allow a substitute to be secured.

Professional Organizations

Staff members are encouraged to become active in professional organizations. Supervisors will try to accommodate this involvement when possible; however, teaching responsibilities always take priority.

Sick Leave

Sick leave is earned and accrued on a monthly basis. Sick leave is addressed in the State Department of Education Policies and Procedures Manual, Section-8.0 and State Personnel Board Handbook Chapter 3.0.

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT AND WORK RULES

To ensure safe and orderly operations in MSB/MSD and provide the best possible work environment, all employees will follow rules of conduct that will protect the interests and safety of everyone in the organization. It is not possible to list all the forms of behavior, which are considered unacceptable in the workplace; therefore, the following are examples of rules of conduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment:

- Negligence towards or endangerment of students.
- Intentional damage to school property or equipment.
- Violation or inappropriate removal or possession of school property.
- Falsification of records, including timekeeping records.
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on duty, or while operating school-owned vehicles or equipment.
- Violation of safety or health rules.
- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment, including bullying.
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the workplace.
- Unauthorized absence from workstation during the workday.
- Unauthorized use of telephone, mail system, or other employer-owned equipment.

- Failure to maintain classroom discipline or an appropriate educational environment.
- Violation of personnel policies.
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct.
- Failure to interact courteously and tactfully with supervisors/administrators, co-workers, students, and vendors to the point that productivity or morale suffers.
- Inappropriate contact with students via texting, social media, etc.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

PLCs are established both vertically and horizontally. The purpose is to assist teachers in determining instructional strategies, interventions for students with learning problems, and classroom management.

Addresses/Telephone Numbers

Students - A current address, telephone number, and the name and telephone number of emergency contacts for each student should be kept on file in PowerSchool. Changes should be reported within two days.

Teachers - Name and address changes should be reported within two days to the school office, and name and address changes should be reported to the office of Human Resources.

All Staff - should have emergency numbers on file in the school office.

For employee protection, under no circumstances should an employee contact a student by text message or call a student's cell phone.

Cell Phones

Cell phones are to be silenced and not used during instruction.

Under absolutely no circumstances should a teacher exchange cell phone numbers with a student.

Outside Employment

Prior to seeking or accepting outside employment, full-time regular employees must discuss a secondary job with management to determine whether or not the job is a conflict of interest. A request for approval must be submitted. See the State Personal Board Handbook Chapter 5, Section 14.

Employees choosing to work outside their position may do so as long as it does not create a conflict of interest or interfere with their work schedule or job performance. Outside employment that affects an employee's attendance, work performance, productivity, or conduct, either directly or indirectly, or that creates a conflict of interest of any kind, is strictly prohibited.

Professional Development (Re-certification of License)

License renewal is a personal responsibility. All licensed employees must renew their license by meeting specific requirements of the Mississippi Department of Education.

License renewal requirements can be found at:
www.mde.k12.ms.us/ed_licensure/index.html.

Teachers and Staff are required to attend and participate in all designated professional development days and training opportunities.

Property/Equipment

Teachers are responsible for all school property and equipment issued to them and shall use public property with care and consideration. Any maintenance problem or malfunction of equipment should be reported to the principal promptly.

Teachers should at all times require students to exercise care in use of school property and equipment. Any damages sustained to property or equipment must be assessed and paid for no matter how minor. These occurrences must also be reported to the principal promptly.

DRESS AND PERSONAL APPEARANCE POLICY

Employees are expected to reflect favorably on MSB and MSD through their demonstrated personal integrity, job demeanor and personal appearance, including their community relations and the avoidance of behavior, which is offensive, or infringes on the rights of others.

All employees are expected to be neat and well-groomed at all times while at work. Immodest clothing is considered inappropriate attire and should not be worn. As a general rule, employees should adhere to the “Dress and Personal Appearance” section of the handbook. Administrators reserve the right to make a determination as to the appropriateness of employee appearance and will do so in a non-discriminatory manner.

Administrators/supervisors may ask an inappropriately dressed employee to leave work and return with proper attire. Violation of this policy may subject an employee to discipline.

Work Attire

Staff members are expected to set a positive example for students. Clothing should be appropriately suited to the activities in which the employee will be engaged and should be neat and clean. Attire may not have holes or tattered material.

Academic Staff Attire

Monday – Thursday

Academic staff may choose to wear a staff polo and khaki pants or may choose professional dress attire. Tennis shoes may be worn with the polo/khaki option.

Exception: PE Teachers may utilize physical education attire when teaching a PE class in the gymnasium.

Friday School Spirit Day

MSB or MSD staff shirt (ordered through the school), blue jeans and tennis shoes.

Residential Parent Attire

Sunday – Wednesday

Dormitory staff will adhere to appropriate attire for a residential setting.

Thursday School Spirit Day

Staff Members may wear MSB or MSD staff shirt (ordered through the school), blue jeans and tennis shoes.

Unacceptable Clothing

The following is a list of clothing items that generally do not fall within the concept of a positive, professional image.

- Sweat suits, wind suits, warm-up suits, and other athletic attire
- Running shoes, walking shoes, cross trainers, and other athletic shoes
- House shoes, slippers, shower shoes, plastic sandals and flip-flops
- Headwear (ex. caps, hats or skull or watch caps)
- Shorts
- Tights, spandex or leotards except under clothing
- Tee Shirts

Note: All doctor's excuses for orthopedic shoes should be submitted at the beginning of the academic year or as soon as received and must be renewed annually.

PERSONNEL EVALUATIONS

Mississippi Statewide Teacher Appraisal Rubric (MSTAR) and Mississippi Principal Evaluation System (MPES)

MSB and MSD utilize both formative and summative evaluation of licensed employees. Formative evaluations may be viewed as growth-oriented supervision and are designed to help teachers and other licensed personnel improve their instructional skills; its purpose is primarily developmental. Summative evaluations, on the other hand, assesses competency and are used for accountability purposes.

Certified teaching staff members are evaluated through the state mandated Mississippi Statewide Teacher Assessment Rubric (MSTAR).

Certified administrative staff members are evaluated through the state mandated Mississippi Principal Evaluation System (MPES).

Non-certified staff members are evaluated through the State Personnel Board's Performance Development System (PDS).

ACADEMIC RELATIONSHIPS

Teacher-Principal and Director of Instruction (DOI): Exchanges of ideas in any area such as curriculum, discipline, instruction, facilities, services, etc. are encouraged and appreciated. Democratic practices are the goal. The principal and DOI through class visitation, assist the teacher in every possible way to ensure the most effective learning for each student. Each responsible party must continuously keep each other informed. In dealing with the office of the superintendent, the proper channel is through the principal or immediate supervisor.

Teacher-Student: Each student request or problem is important and should be treated with respect. The principal is the final authority in matters pertaining to students. For this reason, teachers are responsible for preliminary work in the realm of problem solving before the principal can act.

Teacher-Parent/Guardian: Teachers have the responsibility and authority to discuss an individual student's problems directly with the student's parent/guardian. This may be done directly, keeping the principal informed beforehand as to the problem, and afterward, as to the result. To know the parent/guardian is to know the child better. Consult the principal when you are not sure. Teachers shall not discuss the student's performance with anyone other than the student, his/her parent/guardian or with legitimate authorized personnel. **Report all evidence of child abuse to proper authorities and to the principal.**

Teacher-Teacher: Teachers are encouraged and urged to cooperate directly on matters of mutual constructive nature. Teachers should keep the principal and DOI informed.

Teacher-Administrative Staff: The administrative staff members coordinate, support and supervise the entire operation of the school. Concerns are best dealt directly with the administrator. If concerns arise between a teacher and administrative staff member, the teacher should bring this problem to the principal's attention. Deal directly with any member of the school's administrative staff.

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

All employees of the Mississippi School for the Blind and the Mississippi School for the Deaf, both certified and non-certified, are expected to conform to high standards of ethical behavior in the performance of their duties. A code of ethics, developed by the Mississippi Department of Education, is included in this staff handbook as a guide to ethical conduct. This code is designed to protect the health, safety, and general well-being of students and employees. **See MDE Code of Ethics/Standards of Conduct in the back of this handbook.**

- Personnel should abide by federal, state, and local laws as well as the policies approved by the State Board of Education.
- Personnel should maintain an appropriate relationship with students at all times both in and outside the classroom.
- Personnel should make the well-being of students their primary consideration in decision-making and actions.
- Personnel should exemplify honesty and integrity in the fulfillment of their duties and responsibilities.
- Personnel should refrain from the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs while on school district property during school hours or at any time while at any school- related activities involving students.
- Personnel should not use their positions in the school district for personal gain.
- Personnel entrusted with public funds and/or school district property should honor that trust with a high level of honesty, integrity, accuracy, responsibility, and accountability.

- Personnel should comply with state and federal laws and the policies approved by the State Board of Education regarding the confidentiality of student records unless disclosure is required and permitted by law.
- Personnel should exhibit conduct that follows accepted standards of behavior for the community.
- Failure to interact courteously and tactfully with supervisors/administrators, co-workers, and students to the point that productivity or morale suffers may be grounds for discipline.

DRUG ABUSE POLICY

In accordance with Public Law 100-690, Public Law 101-647, the Drug-Free Schools and Community Act of 1986, and the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the workplace. Pursuant to this law, all MSB and MSD employees must notify the Superintendent of Education if any employee is convicted for violation of any criminal drug statutes should said violation occur in the workplace, no later than five (5) days after such conviction.

SMOKING POLICY

MSB and MSD require a smoke-free environment. Smoking and all other uses of tobacco by employees, students, and visitors in school buildings, on school grounds and property, and on or in buildings and vehicles, shall be prohibited at all times. This ban includes all employees, students, and patrons attending school sponsored athletic events and meetings.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Employees have access to a variety of forms of electronic media and services including computers, networks, electronic mail, fax machines, printers, and the Internet. These services are made available to employees in order to help them perform their jobs as efficiently and effectively as possible, and should not be misused.

All employees should remember that electronic media and services provided are the property of MSB and MSD and the purpose is to facilitate and support the schools' missions. **No right of privacy exists with respect to information placed on the electronic media systems by such employee.** All electronic media systems, including but not limited to desktops, laptops, networks, electronic mail, telephone and fax records, printed documents, Internet activity, computer disks and CDs are the property of MSB and MSD.

Furthermore, the agency has the right to use software that makes it possible to identify and block access to Internet sites containing sexually explicit or other material deemed inappropriate for the workplace.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

MSB and MSD recognize the value of computer and other electronic resources to improve student learning, teaching, instruction, research and communication to enhance the administration and operation of its schools. To this end, MSB and MSD provide Intranet (internal) and Internet (external) connections for staff, students, and faculty. The responsible use of computers, computer networks, including the Internet, e-mail, and other electronic resources in support of the mission and goals of the schools is required.

In order to access district services such as the Intranet and Internet via the MDE Network, each user must sign a Statement of Assurance (SOA) to acknowledge agreement with this Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) stating that they are aware of and acknowledge agreement with all the sections below.

Monitoring of Network Use

All data transferred and/or transmitted over the MDE network can be monitored and recorded at any time. All data transferred or transmitted over the network can be tracked and identified, and originating users can be held liable if their use of the network violates any established policy, regulation, or law. Any data stored on district-owned equipment may be archived and preserved by MSB/MSD for an indefinite period. Such data includes, but is not limited to E-mail, text documents, digital photographs, music and other digital or electronic files.

The use of the MSB/MSD Network is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges. Any student or district staff member, who violates any policy, regulation or law regarding use of the MDE Network will be identified and corrective and/or disciplinary actions will be taken.

Filtering

MDE Network uses an aggressive Content Filter and SPAM filter. MSB and MSD comply with the regulations of CIPA, the *Children's Internet Protection Act* [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)], to provide Internet content filtering services for staff and students. Filtering services are a means of protection from objectionable sites but cannot provide a 100% guarantee. MSB and MSD provide no guarantees, but will diligently attempt to protect staff and students from accessing such objectionable Internet sites. In the event that inappropriate material is accessible, MSB and MSD will not be held liable.

Prohibited Technology Actions

The following actions on the MDE Network are specifically prohibited, but are not limited to:

- Installing software, software application, utility, plug-in or other such operations without the approval of the office of Management Information Systems.
- Creating, downloading, storing, sending, or displaying offensive messages or pictures including but not limited to pornographic or other sexually explicit material.
- Inserting, using, or attaching non-approved disks, CD-ROMs, or other media storage devices into or with computers.
- Using obscene, profane, or vulgar language.
- Harassing, insulting, intimidating, or attacking others.
- Giving out personal information about another person, including home address or phone number.
- Engaging in any practice(s) that threaten the network and other technological tools.
- Violating copyright laws.

STAFF ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY USER AGREEMENT FORM

In consideration for the privilege of using the network and in consideration for having access to the public networks, I hereby release Mississippi Department of Education and the Mississippi School for the Blind (MSB) and the Mississippi School for the Deaf (MSD) from any and all claims and damages of any nature arising from my use, or inability to use, the K-12 Network including, without limitation the type of damages identified in the MSB/ MSD Acceptable Use Policies and Procedures.

I have reviewed and understand, and I acknowledge that failure to comply with the policy and procedures may result in revocation of network use privileges as well as further disciplinary action as may be deemed appropriate. I acknowledge and agree that the Mississippi School for the Blind or the Mississippi School for the Deaf has the right to review, edit, or remove any materials installed, used, stored or distributed on or through the network or the K12's system including e-mail or other electronic messages and attached documents and I hereby waive any right to privacy which I may otherwise have to such material.

Fill in ALL information.

Last Name (print clearly)

First Name (print clearly)

Position

Office Location

Signature of Employee

Signature of Administrator

For Official Use Only / Do Not Write in This Box

Account name: _____

Approved by: _____

SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

- Teachers must remain in their classrooms at all times while students are present.
- If there is an emergency or some other reason that requires the staff member to leave, a substitute must be obtained.
- Staff members are responsible for all students assigned to them regardless of the special circumstances i.e. school assemblies etc.
- The first violation of lack of supervision will result in a warning letter. The second violation will result in a written reprimand.
- Every staff member on campus is responsible for each student. Should any inappropriate or unsafe actions be observed, all staff members are expected to intervene immediately.
- All behavioral misconduct or injuries will prompt an immediate investigation by the appropriate school's administrative staff.
- Written reports of witnessing staff members must be submitted to the immediate supervisor before leaving your shift.
- Staff members are obligated to report any staff member not in compliance with these student safety guidelines.

Restraining a Student

Staff is encouraged to use caution when attempting to restrain, catch or calm an unruly or out-of-control student. Instead of attempting to physically control a student, it is preferable to move yourself and other students away from the unruly student. Only if the unruly student presents an imminent threat to self or others should staff intervene with physical restraint. Do not chase students who are running away. Instead, try to keep them in sight and get help. Always attempt to avoid any kind of physical confrontation with a student. The student will receive consequences once they are calm.

The Mandt System is an integrated approach to preventing, de-escalating, and if necessary, intervening when the behavior of a student poses a threat of harm to themselves and/or others. Staff trained in the Mandt system can utilize the program when restraining a student. All staff will have the opportunity to be trained in the Mandt process.

ACCIDENTS

Teachers and Staff are responsible for the safety of all students under their supervision. Any injury to a student must be given immediate attention. No procedure can be pre-formulated and completely applicable in all situations. The following is a general guideline and may be modified as individual situations occur.

- Follow the emergency plan for your school.
- Remain calm and promptly decide what needs to be done to prevent the situation from worsening.
- Act decisively and take charge.
- If an accident is serious, send someone to the office or notify the office to ask for help.
- Resume normal activities as soon as possible.
- Prior to leaving your shift, submit a written report to the office.

Teacher and Staff are legally responsible to act in a reasonable and prudent manner at all times. Specifically, the teacher and staff must do the following:

- Never leave students unsupervised.
- Require students to conduct themselves in an orderly and safe manner and administer such disciplinary actions as are reasonable and proper in any situation involving student misconduct.
- **THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AT MSB and MSD.**
Any staff violating this policy will be subject to disciplinary actions.
- Report any unsafe condition in the school plan or on campus to the principal or Dorm Director so that it may be corrected.
- Strictly adhere to all stated policies of MSB/MSD.

Failure by teachers and staff to meet their responsibilities may have severe consequences; teachers and staff may be held legally liable for negligence in the performance of their duties.

POLICY PROHIBITING HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE

It is the policy of MSB and MSD to maintain a working environment that is free from religious, racial, or sexual harassment and violence. The school prohibits any form of religious, racial, or sexual harassment and violence.

Staff members are expected to maintain professional relationships with students. Any contact of a sexual nature between a student and staff member is grounds for dismissal.

Reporting Procedures

Employees may file alleged harassment and/or violence grievances in accordance with grievance procedures outlined in the MDE Employee Policy and Procedures Manual and the State Of Mississippi Employee Handbook.

School Action

Upon receipt of a report, MSB/MSD will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but not be limited to, warning, suspension, change of or termination. Actions taken by the school for violations of this policy will be consistent with requirements of applicable federal and state laws, and State Department of Education policies.

Reprisal

MSB/MSD will discipline or take appropriate action against any pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel who retaliates against any person who reports alleged religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence or any person who testifies, assists or participates in an investigation, or who testifies, assists or participates in a proceeding or hearing related to such harassment or violence. Retaliation includes but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment.

Right to Alternative Compliant Procedures

The procedures do not deny the right of any individual or the school to pursue other avenues of recourse, which may include filing charges with the State Department of Human Services, initiating civil action or seeking redress under state criminal statutes and/or federal law.

Harassment or Violence as Abuse

Under certain circumstances, alleged harassment or violence may also be possible abuse under state law. If so, the duties of mandatory reporting under such statutes are applicable pursuant to *See Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-29*

Nothing in this policy will prohibit MSB or MSD from taking immediate action to protect victims of alleged harassment, violence or abuse.

REPORTING ABUSE/NEGLECT

Reporting Abuse/Neglect to the Department of Human Services:

Miss. Code Ann. § 43-21-353 provides, in part, the following:

Any public or private school employee or any other person having reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a neglected or an abused child, shall cause an oral report to be made immediately by telephone or otherwise and followed as soon thereafter as possible by a report in writing to the Department of Human Services, and immediately a referral shall be made by the Department of Human Services to the youth court intake unit. Any report to the Department of Human Services shall contain the name and addresses of the child and his parents or other persons responsible for his care, if known, the child's age, the nature and extent of the child's injuries, including any evidence of previous injuries and any other information that might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injury and the identity of the perpetrator.

MSB and MSD will not tolerate verbal, emotional or physical abuse or neglect of any student at any time on or off the campus.

Any staff member witnessing student abuse or neglect will make an immediate verbal report of the incident to his/her immediate supervisor. A written report should be made within eight hours. The supervisor will inform the superintendent of the situation immediately.

This includes:

- Staff to staff abuse
- Staff to student abuse
- Student to student abuse

The following will be considered verbal or mental abuse or bullying:

- Name-calling
- Belittling
- Maliciously teasing or demeaning a student in any way
- Treating a student in a manner that damages his or her self-esteem.

Alleged Abuse Occurring at MSB/MSD

- Any staff member witnessing or suspecting student abuse or neglect by a staff member will make an immediate verbal report of the incident to the superintendent or a member of the administrative team.
- A written report should be made by the close of the staff member's shift.
- On weekends, the staff member will immediately contact the Residence Education Director on duty or on call.
- The staff supervisor will follow up with a written report, which will be completed within 24 hours following the occurrence and submitted to the superintendent.
- The report will be submitted to the program director investigating the incident, and will be transmitted to the superintendent immediately.
- The superintendent will notify Human Resources during the investigation process.
- The superintendent or his/her designee shall immediately report to DHS in accord with Miss. Code Ann. § 43-21-353.
- Unless the superintendent directs otherwise, the unit director or department director will begin an immediate investigation. The accused staff member will be asked to write his statement of what occurred.

- If the allegation of abuse cannot be reasonably disproved at that time, the staff member will be immediately suspended.
- Human Resources will determine if the suspension will be with or without pay pending the completion of an investigation.
- The investigating staff members will submit a preliminary written report within eight (8) hours of the initial report of abuse, and will file a final report within sixteen (16) hours. The final report will include recommendations to the superintendent.

Staff found guilty of student abuse will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. The supervisor, the superintendent, and the Human Resources Director will evaluate neglect on the part of a staff member and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. Staff members who have knowledge of abuse but fail to report such information within established timelines are also subject to disciplinary action.

Alleged Abuse Occurring at MSB and/or MSD with No Witness

If a student reports abuse by a staff member and there are no witnesses, the following steps will occur:

- The staff member to whom the abuse is reported will report the incident immediately to his/her immediate supervisor. A written report will be submitted by the end of that working day.
- If the superintendent has reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect, a report will be made to the Department of Human Services. The special education director, the superintendent, or the designee of the superintendent will make notification to DHS. The supervisor of the person committing the alleged abuse will be informed.
- The superintendent will make a report to the Human Resource Officer, who will interview the staff member. If the allegation cannot be reasonably disproved at this time the individual will be placed on leave until the investigation is completed.
- Once the investigation is complete, appropriate disciplinary action, if necessary, will be taken.
- A report will be made law enforcement if warranted by the investigation.

Alleged Abuse Outside of MSB / MSD

If a student reports abuse that occurred outside of MSB/MSD, the following steps will occur:

- The staff member will make an immediate report to his or her supervisor.
- The superintendent or the superintendent's designee will interview the student prior to making a report to the Department of Human Services.
- A counselor or other qualified staff will be assigned to meet with the student to attempt to determine what may have occurred, and will provide the superintendent with a full written report by the close of shift.
- It is not the intent of MSB or MSD administration to attempt an independent investigation. The referral to a counselor is intended to ensure that there are no communication barriers between the student and staff so the report to DHS is accurate.
- Following receipt of the counselor's report, the superintendent or designee will make a report to the Department of Human Services. An update of action taken will be provided to the supervisor making the initial report.

REPORTING UNLAWFUL ACTIVITY OR VIOLENT ACT

Miss Code Ann. § 37-11-29 provides in pertinent part as follows:

(1) Any school employee who has knowledge of any unlawful activity, which occurred on educational property or during a school-related activity or which may have occurred shall report such activity to the superintendent of the school district or his designee who shall notify the appropriate law enforcement officials as required by this section. In the event of an emergency or if the superintendent or his designee is unavailable, any principal may make a report required under this subsection.

(2) Whenever any person who shall be an enrolled student in any school or educational institution in this state supported in whole or in part by public funds, or who shall be an enrolled student in any private school or educational institution, is arrested for, and lawfully charged with, the commission of any crime and convicted upon the charge for which he was arrested, or convicted of any crime charged against him after his arrest and before trial, the office or law enforcement department of which the arresting officer is a member, and the justice court judge and any circuit judge or court before whom such student is

tried upon said charge or charges, shall make or cause to be made a report thereof to the superintendent or the president or chancellor, as the case may be, of the school district or other educational institution in which such student is enrolled.

If the charge upon which such student was arrested, or any other charges preferred against him are dismissed or nol prossed, or if upon trial he is either convicted or acquitted of such charge or charges, same shall be reported to said respective superintendent or president, or chancellor, as the case may be. A copy of said report shall be sent to the Secretary of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning of the State of Mississippi, at Jackson, Mississippi.

Said report shall be made within one (1) week after the arrest of such student and within one (1) week after any charge placed against him is dismissed or nol prossed, and within one (1) week after he shall have pled guilty, been convicted, or have been acquitted by trial upon any charge placed against him. This section shall not apply to ordinary traffic violations involving a penalty of less than Fifty Dollars (\$50.00) and costs.

(3) When the superintendent or his designee has a reasonable belief that an act has occurred on educational property or during a school related activity involving any of the offenses set forth in subsection (6) of this section, the superintendent or his designee shall immediately report the act to the appropriate local law enforcement agency. For purposes of this subsection, "school property" shall include any public school building, bus, public school campus, grounds, recreational area or athletic field in the charge of the superintendent. The State Board of Education shall prescribe a form for making reports required under this subsection. Any superintendent or his designee who fails to make a report required by this section shall be subject to the penalties provided in Section 37-11-35.

(4) The law enforcement authority shall immediately dispatch an officer to the educational institution and with probable cause the officer is authorized to make an arrest if necessary as provided in Section 99-3-7.

(5) Any superintendent, principal, teacher or other school personnel participating in the making of a required report pursuant to this section or participating in any

judicial proceeding resulting there from shall be presumed to be acting in good faith. Any person reporting in good faith shall be immune from any civil liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed.

- (6) For purposes of this section, “unlawful activity” means any of the following:
- (a) Possession or use of a deadly weapon, as defined in Section 97-37-1;
 - (b) Possession, sale or use of any controlled substance;
 - (c) Aggravated assault, as defined in Section 97-3-7;
 - (d) Simple assault, as defined in Section 97-3-7, upon any school employee;
 - (e) Rape, as defined under Mississippi law;
 - (f) Sexual battery, as defined under Mississippi law;
 - (g) Murder, as defined under Mississippi law;
 - (h) Kidnapping, as defined under Mississippi law; or
 - (i) Fondling, touching, handling, etc., a child for lustful purposes, as defined in Section 97-5-23.

Miss Code Ann. § 37-11-35 provides in pertinent part as follows:

If any person charged by Section 37-11-29(2) or (3) to make the reports therein provided for shall willfully fail, refuse or neglect to file any such report, he shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not more than One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) or be imprisoned not exceeding six (6) months, or both.

ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES

Collected Monies

The following guidelines should be followed:

- Any collection of money must receive prior approval of the principal or Dorm Director.
- Receipt all money collected when it is collected.
- Deposit receipted money to the Business Office located in the Administration Building on Campus. The Business Office accountant will provide you a receipt for funds deposited.

Purchases

- No purchases may be made or obligated without a signed Purchase Request form from the superintendent and approved by the immediate supervisor.
- The superintendent, MDE Deputy Superintendent and the Office of Procurement must approve all contractual services.

AHERA MANAGEMENT PLAN NOTIFICATION

In compliance with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) of 1987, buildings on the campus of the Mississippi Schools for the Blind and the Deaf (MSB/D) have been inspected for asbestos-containing materials. Roosevelt Yarbrough, Accredited Management Planner and Building Inspector performed the original inspections for MSB and MSD, on March 21, 1989, and February 1, 1989, respectively.

In accordance with Federal Law, 40 CFR Section 763.93(e)(10), the Asbestos Management Plan (AMP) for the MSB/MSD is located in the Administrative Office of the MSD and is available for on-site review on school days during normal school hours. Please call 601/984-8000 to make an appointment for an onsite review.

The Asbestos Management Plan contains information regarding:

- 1) Location, amounts, and types of asbestos-containing materials in MSB/MSD buildings.
- 2) Response actions to the asbestos-containing materials.
- 3) Plans for re-inspection, periodic surveillance, and maintenance and operations programs.
- 4) Public Notification procedures.

As a reminder, this notification is required by law and should not be construed to indicate the existence of any hazardous conditions in MSB/MSD school buildings.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

MSB and MSD will protect the confidentiality of all students both previously or currently enrolled with regard to 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. They are:

- The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the district receives a request for access.
 - Parents or eligible students should submit to the Superintendent (or the Superintendent’s designee) written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Superintendent will make arrangements for access and notify the parent of 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 or misleading.
 - Parents or eligible students may ask the staff of MSB or MSD to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the superintendent, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.
 - If MSB or MSD decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, MSB or MSD will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them 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, MSB or MSD 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 consent to disclosures of 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 Mississippi Department of Education as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the Mississippi Board of Education; a person or company with whom the Mississippi Department of Education has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving 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 to officials of another school district or college in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, MSB/MSD discloses educational records without consent. Any disciplinary actions affecting attendance is included in the student's permanent record and cumulative folder. MSB/MSD will forward education records, including disciplinary records, to other schools or colleges in which the student seeks or intends to enroll.

MSB/MSD discloses directory information regarding its students unless the parent has opted out. 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, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height or members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended.

A school is required to provide military recruiters names, addresses, and telephone listings of secondary students, unless the parent has opted-out of the disclosure as provided below.

The parent or eligible student has the right to refuse to let MSB/MSD designate any or all types of information about the student as directory information.

The parent or eligible student must notify the superintendent (or designee of the superintendent) in writing within 14 days or 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.

MSB/MSD may disclose directory information about former students without meeting these conditions.

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

MSB/MSD respects the privacy rights of all its constituents. This policy does not apply when disclosure is required to prevent clear and imminent danger to an individual or the MSB/MSD 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, 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.

IDEA requires that schools permit parents to inspect and review any education records relating to their children that are collected, maintained, or used by the agency. The agency must comply with a request without unnecessary delay and before any meeting regarding an IEP, any IDEA due process or expedited due process hearing, an appeal of a due process hearing, or resolution session and in no case more than forty-five (45) days after the request has been made.

IDEA provides in 34 C.F.R. § 300.614 and SBP 7219 § 300.614 that “each participating agency must keep a record of parties obtaining access to education records collected, maintained, or used under Part B of IDEA (except access by parents and authorized employees of the participating agency), including the name of the party, the date access was given and the purpose for which the party is authorized to use the records.”

SUICIDE PREVENTION POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to assist the MSB/MSD in preventing and responding to situations in which students make suicide threats or attempts. The MSB/MSD strive to maintain a safe environment for students and to promote healthy human relationships.

Suicidal Attempt

- The student will be taken to the health clinic if the student is able, otherwise the nurse will go to the student.
- The staff member who is calling should give specific information on the location of the student.
- The nurse will measure and assess blood pressure, pulse, respiration, and begin cardiopulmonary resuscitation/first aid and indicated.
- A staff member should remain with the student at all times and other staff members and students should move out of the area.
- Contact with the superintendent occurs at this time and give directive to the contact of the parent or responsible party.
- The nurse will determine if a life-threatening situation exists and delegate a staff member to activate the medical response system (EMS-9-1-1) and meet the emergency vehicle.
- The nurse will continue to monitor vital signs every 5 minutes until the arrival of rescue personnel.
- Detain student, getting assistance, if student is acting out or presents risk to self/others.
- Don't touch the student if touch increases agitation.
- Don't allow the student become between you and the door.
- Don't remain alone with a student who becomes aggressive.

- The nurse will contact POISON CONTROL at MS Poison Control at the University Medical Center, 800-222-1222 for assistance with any drug overdose/chemical ingestion.
- Obtain name/description of medication/chemical, amount taken, and time taken. If possible provide the health care provider the container.
- Save all vomitus and send to the health care provider.
- If a mental health counselor employed by is onsite he/she will respond immediately for student support. The nurse will remain with the student to monitor medical status if deemed necessary. Counselor may assume responsibility for remaining mental health intervention.

Reports to the Parent (or responsible party) for Medical/Mental Health Issues

- The nurse will give EMS personnel all health related information and where to transport the student for medical care.
- A copy of the “Permission to Treat” and “Health Care Provider Medical Record” is to be sent with the student to the health care facility. The nurse will complete this if she has time, otherwise another staff member will be assigned this task.
- Advise ER/mental health provider with the current observations and assessments.
- Keep student under direct surveillance until dismissed directly to the responsible party or EMS response personnel.

Imminent Suicide Plan

- Specificity-consider high risk if there is a detailed plan.
- Lethality-consider high risk when a student perceives action to be lethal.
- Availability-consider high risk if implement is readily accessible.
- Proximity-consider as higher risk with increased distance from rescuers.
- Mental Health counselor should complete a mental health intervention. Superintendent will be notified when a threat is made and policy will be set into motion.

Otherwise

- Staff members should encourage student to communicate feelings and concerns using a non-judgmental manner to maintain student dignity.
- Actively listen to student and acknowledge student's feelings.
- Speak in calm, steady voice as well as sign in a calming nature.
- Try to maintain eye contact with the student.
- Reflect student's feelings back to him/her.
- Use touch, if appropriate and do so in a gradual way.
- Ask directly about suicidal intent.
- DO NOT collude with the student; concerns need to be shared with pertinent persons in the student's life.
- Provide as much privacy as possible and discourage onlookers.
- Introduce concepts of hope.
- Acknowledge student's feelings.
- Remind student of the temporary nature of crisis.
- Reinforce desire that student stay alive and that it is absolutely OK to stay alive.
- Refer for immediate medical/mental health assessments.
- Mental health counselor will follow-up on mental health services.
- Nursing staff will work with medical personnel on medical/physical concerns.
- Advise parent or responsible party immediately.
- Mental health counselor will make contact with the parent of responsible party of observations noted and recommendations for future interventions.
- Assist, as needed in facilitating a mental health evaluation.
- If the Responsible Party is inaccessible, work with designated school officials.
- Keep students with imminent suicidal plans under direct surveillance until dismissed directly to the responsible party or appropriate surrogate.

Non-Imminent Suicidal Ideation

- Refer to the mental health counselor.
- Encourage student to verbalize feelings and concerns using non-judgmental communication to allow student to maintain dignity.

- Clarify / Reflect / Summarize feelings. Never say you understand feelings when you do not.
- Reassure that feelings are important.
- DO NOT collude with the student as to confidentiality; concerns need to be shared with pertinent persons in the student's life.
- Introduce concepts of hope.
- Acknowledge student's feelings.
- Remind student of the temporary nature of crisis.
- Reinforce desire that student stay alive and that it is absolutely OK to stay alive.
- Refer for immediate medical/mental health assessment.
- Advise parent or responsible party immediately.
- Mental health counselor will contact with the parent of responsible party of observations noted and recommendations for future interventions.
- Keep students with imminent suicidal plans under direct surveillance until dismissed directly to the responsible party or appropriate surrogate.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The purpose of this policy is to assist the MSB/MSD in preventing and responding to acts of bullying, harassment, intimidation, violence, and other similar disruptive behavior. The MSB/MSD strive to maintain a safe and civil learning environment for students to attain high academic and artistic achievement and to promote healthy human relationships. As residential schools, it is imperative to do everything possible to prevent bullying and harassment and take action to investigate, respond, remediate, and discipline those acts of bullying which have not been successfully prevented.

Policy

Definition - 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.

BULLYING includes, but is not limited to; conduct by a student/employee/parent/other person against a Special State School student that one can reasonably believe has the effect of:

- Harming a student.
- Damaging a student's property.
- Placing a student in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or property.
- Creating a hostile environment for a student.

“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.

An act of bullying or harassing, by an individual student, a group of students, parents, employee or other person is expressly prohibited on school property, online, at school-related functions, or on a school bus. This policy applies not only to those directly engaged in an act of bullying but also to anyone who, by his or her indirect behavior, condones or supports an act of bullying.

A student has a fundamental right 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 pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-69.

No employee of the MSB/MSD shall permit, condone, or tolerate bullying. Retaliation against a victim, good faith reporter, or a witness of bullying is prohibited. False accusations or reports of bullying are prohibited.

Reporting

Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of bullying or anyone with knowledge that a student or school employee has been subjected to bullying or harassing behavior shall report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate school official. A student may report bullying anonymously. However, the school district's ability to take action based solely on an anonymous report may be limited.

All school employees shall be alert to possible situations, circumstances, or events that might include bullying.

Reports of bullying are classified as private educational and/or personnel data and/or confidential investigative data and will not be disclosed except as permitted by law.

Submission of a good faith complaint or report of bullying will not affect the complainant's or reporter's future employment, grades, or work assignments, or educational or work environment.

The Special State Schools will annually provide education and information to students regarding bullying or harassing, including this policy, the harmful effects of bullying, and other applicable initiatives to prevent bullying.

Action

Upon receipt of a complaint or report of bullying, Special State School officials or a designated third party will act to investigate all complaints of bullying within 24 hours of the report and will discipline or take appropriate action against anyone who is found to have violated this policy.

Investigation and action taken will be consistent with the school's policy on harassment, violence, or other action causing harm to another.

Consequences of students may include suspension and/or dismissal.

Consequences for employees who permit, condone, or tolerate bullying or intentional false reporting of bullying may result in disciplinary action up to termination or discharge.

Consequences for other individuals engaging in prohibited acts of bullying may include, but not be limited to, exclusion from school district property and events.

COMMUNICATION POLICY (MSD ONLY)

Philosophy

Mississippi School for the Deaf is an accessible American Sign Language/English bilingual community in which people who are deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing learn and work together without language and communication barriers.

Policy

In support of the accessible bilingual philosophy of the Mississippi School for the Deaf, the separation of ASL and English when communicating to/with others is expected. This helps ensure optimal accessibility and benefits all students.

Expectations

The strategic use of ASL and English separately is expected for everyone to:

- Demonstrate respect for both languages, ASL and English
- Be a consistent ASL and English bilingual role model
- Be considerate when using spoken English around deaf people, especially students
- Use ASL as the language of communication during all MSD related activities, from student meal times in the dining room, to field trips and other student activities
- Foster a deaf friendly visual environment through the use of captioning, glare free lighting, and unobstructed views and by minimizing visual distractions
- Use an interpreter for group meetings unless presented in ASL only
- Practice strategies of clarifying information to assist all participants when no interpreter is available
- Manage your meetings
- Know participants' language and communication skills
- Give expectations at the beginning of each meeting
- Report in ASL
- Provide written English notes to participants
- ID speakers by pointing to the person who is communicating so that all may look at the person making comments

- Use deliberate language planning, giving attention to expressive and receptive oracy, literacy and signacy.

MSD believes in offering opportunities for ASL development. Suggestions for improvement should always be respectful, constructive, and made in private.

CELLULAR PHONES/PAGERS/ELECTRONIC DEVICE (iPad, etc.) Policy

Employees shall refrain from personal cellular phone and pager use when instructing and supervising students except for emergency contact of supervisor.

All personal phones and pagers shall be set to the silent mode. All school issued phones and pagers should be on the proper mode.

Bluetooth or similar devices are prohibited during work hours. Infractions may result in disciplinary actions.

Use of personal cell phones during instructional or supervision time are infractions of this directives and could result in disciplinary action.

Personal iPads are not permitted for personal use during the instructional day or during the dormitory workday.

CORRESPONDENCE POLICY

The superintendent or immediate supervisor must approve all correspondence, which includes phone calls, videophone calls, emails, and other contacts with parties outside MSB or MSD, such as any contact with the media.

Correspondence to parents on student progress by the teacher is acceptable and encouraged.

In addition, the principal and/ or the Director of Residence Education must approve all requests to parents for money.

Universal Precautions

Universal Precautions shall always be used at the Mississippi School for the Blind and the Mississippi School for the Deaf when coming in contact with any bodily fluids.

MISSISSIPPI EDUCATOR CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Each educator, upon entering the teaching profession, assumes a number of obligations, one of which is to adhere to a set of principles, which defines professional conduct. These principles are reflected in the following code of ethics, which sets forth to the education profession and the public it serves standards of professional conduct and procedures for implementation.

This code shall apply to all persons licensed according to the rules established by the Mississippi State Board of Education and protects the health, safety and general welfare of students and educators.

Ethical conduct is any conduct, which promotes the health, safety, welfare, discipline and morals of students and colleagues.

Unethical conduct is any conduct that impairs the license holder's ability to function in his/her employment position or a pattern of behavior that is detrimental to the health, safety, welfare, discipline, or morals of students and colleagues.

Any educator or administrator license may be revoked or suspended for engaging in unethical conduct relating to an educator/student relationship (Standard 4). Superintendents shall report to the Mississippi Department of Education license holders who engage in unethical conduct relating to an educator/student relationship (Standard 4).

Code of Ethics Standards

Standard 1: Professional Conduct

An educator should demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards.

- 1.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Encouraging and supporting colleagues in developing and maintaining high standards
 2. Respecting fellow educators and participating in the development of a professional teaching environment
 3. Engaging in a variety of individual and collaborative learning experiences essential to professional development designed to promote student learning
 4. Providing professional education services in a nondiscriminatory manner
 5. Maintaining competence regarding skills, knowledge, and dispositions relating to his/her organizational position, subject matter and pedagogical practices
 6. Maintaining a professional relationship with parents and establish appropriate communication related to the welfare of their children
- 1.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Harassment of colleagues
 2. Misuse or mismanagement of tests or test materials
 3. Inappropriate language on school grounds or any school-related activity
 4. Physical altercations
 5. Failure to provide appropriate supervision of students and reasonable disciplinary actions

Standard 2. Trustworthiness

An educator should exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice and does not knowingly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district or educational institution.

- 2.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Properly representing facts concerning an educational matter in direct or indirect public expression
 2. Advocating for fair and equitable opportunities for all children

3. Embodying for students the characteristics of honesty, diplomacy, tact, and fairness.
- 2.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting any of the following:
 1. employment history, professional qualifications, criminal history, certification/recertification
 2. information submitted to local, state, federal, and/or other governmental agencies
 3. information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel
 4. reasons for absences or leave
 5. information submitted in the course of an official inquiry or investigation
 2. Falsifying records or directing or coercing others to do so

Standard 3. Unlawful Acts

An educator shall abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes and local school board policies.

3. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the commission or conviction of a felony or sexual offense. As used herein, conviction includes a finding or verdict of guilty, or a plea of *nolo contendere*, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought or situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted.

Standard 4. Educator/Student Relationship

An educator should always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom.

- 4.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Fulfilling the roles of mentor and advocate for students in a professional relationship. A professional relationship is one where the educator maintains a position of teacher/student authority while expressing concern, empathy, and encouragement for students
 2. Nurturing the intellectual, physical, emotional, social and civic potential of all students

3. Providing an environment that does not needlessly expose students to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement
4. Creating, supporting, and maintaining a challenging learning environment for all students
- 4.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to the following:
 1. Committing any act of child abuse
 2. Committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment
 3. Committing or soliciting any unlawful sexual act
 4. Engaging in harassing behavior on the basis of race, gender, national origin, religion or disability
 5. Furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student or allowing a student to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs
 6. Soliciting, encouraging, participating or initiating inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, physical or romantic relationship with a student.
Examples of these acts may include but not be limited to:
 1. sexual jokes
 2. sexual remarks
 3. sexual kidding or teasing
 4. sexual innuendo
 5. pressure for dates or sexual favors
 6. inappropriate touching, fondling, kissing or grabbing
 7. rape
 8. threats of physical harm
 9. sexual assault
 10. electronic communication such as texting
 11. invitation to social networking
 12. remarks about a student's body
 13. consensual sex

Standard 5. Educator Collegial Relationships

An educator should always maintain a professional relationship with colleagues, both in and outside the classroom

- 5.1 Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to the following:
 - 1. Revealing confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law
 - 2. Harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system
 - 3. Interfering with a colleague's exercise of political, professional, or citizenship rights and responsibilities
 - 4. Discriminating against or coercing a colleague on the basis of race, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability, or family status
 - 5. Using coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to influence professional decisions of colleagues

Standard 6. Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco Use or Possession

An educator should refrain from the use of alcohol and/or tobacco during the course of professional practice and should never use illegal or unauthorized drugs

- 6.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - 1. Factually representing the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and illegal drug use and abuse to students during the course of professional practice
- 6.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - 1. Being under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs
 - 2. Being on school premises or at a school-related activity involving students while documented as being under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcoholic beverages. A school-related activity includes but is not limited to, any activity that is sponsored by a school or a school system or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum such as club trips, etc. which involve students.
 - 3. Being on school premises or at a school-related activity involving students while documented using tobacco.

Standard 7. Public Funds and Property

An educator shall not knowingly misappropriate, divert, or use funds, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.

- 7.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - 1. Maximizing the positive effect of school funds through judicious use of said funds
 - 2. Modeling for students and colleagues the responsible use of public property
- 7.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - 1. Knowingly misappropriating, diverting or using funds, personnel, property or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain
 - 2. Failing to account for funds collected from students, parents or any school-related function
 - 3. Submitting fraudulent requests for reimbursement of expenses or for pay
 - 4. Co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts
 - 5. Using school property without the approval of the local board of education/governing body

Standard 8. Remunerative Conduct

An educator should maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation.

- 8.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - 1. Insuring that institutional privileges are not used for personal gain
 - 2. Insuring that school policies or procedures are not impacted by gifts or gratuities from any person or organization
- 8.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - 1. Soliciting students or parents of students to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local governing body.

2. Tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local school board
3. The educator shall neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or to obtain special advantage. *(This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service)*

Standard 9. Maintenance of Confidentiality

An educator shall comply with state and federal laws and local school board policies relating to confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material, and other information covered by confidentiality agreements.

- 9.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Keeping in confidence information about students that has been obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a legitimate purpose or is required by law
 2. Maintaining diligently the security of standardized test supplies and resources
- 9.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Sharing confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information family status/income and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law
 2. Violating confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, and violating local school board or state directions for the use of tests
 3. Violating other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy

Standard 10. Breach of Contract or Abandonment of Employment

An educator should fulfill all of the terms and obligations detailed in the contract with the local school board or educational agency for the duration of the contract.

10. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - Abandoning the contract for professional services without prior release from the contract by the school board
 - Refusing to perform services required by the contract

MISSISSIPPI STATE LAWS

The State Legislature has passed a number of laws in an effort 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.

Miss. Code Ann. § 37-3-2	Certification of teachers and administrators
Miss. Code Ann. § 37-3-51	Notification of 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 Manage Program; quick response teams; toll free telephone service for reporting school violence
Miss. Code Ann. § 37-7-323	Application and enforcement of general criminal 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 checks 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	Expulsion of student possessing controlled substance or weapon or committing violent act on school property.
Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-18.1	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 or custodian
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. § 37-11-29	Reporting of unlawful activity or violent act on educational property or during school related activity; authority of law enforcement officers; reporting of disposition of charges against student; liability of school personnel participating in reporting
Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-35	Penalties for failure to file reports pursuant to Mississippi Code 37-11-29 or 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;

Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-43	membership or participating in activities Public high school fraternity, sorority or secret society; duties of boards 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 laboratory courses of instruction
Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-53	Distribution of school district's discipline plan; content of plan; appearance by parents, guardians or custodians at discipline conferences; recovery from parents for damage or destruction of property.
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. § 37-13-91	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. § 43-21-151	Requirement to Notify Youth Court of Expulsions
Miss. Code Ann. § 93-5-26	Rights of non-custodial parents
Miss. Code Ann. § 97-44-1 <i>et seq.</i>	Mississippi Street Gang Act
Miss. Code Ann § 37-3-2	Certification of teachers and administrators

All staff members must sign and return page 20 (AUP Policy) and the certification of acknowledgement below.

CERTIFICATION OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I have read the Mississippi School for the Blind (MSB) and the Mississippi School for the Deaf (MSD) Handbook and understand that I am required to follow all policies and procedures outlined herein.

I understand that if any policy is violated disciplinary measures will be taken based upon the type of violation outlined in the handbook.

Staff Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

