

**OFFICE OF CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER**  
**Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items**  
**Consent Agenda**  
**May 21, 2020**

**OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**  
**Mississippi School of the Arts**

- D. Approval of the Mississippi School of the Arts Operations Policy Manual

**Executive Summary**

The document provides policies for the operation of MSA beginning July 1, 2020 in compliance with MS Code Ann. § 37-140-5 (6). Contents include human resources, instructional expectations, and financial operational guidelines.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

**mississippi****school**of the**arts**  
i m a g i n e c r e a t e R E A L I Z E



# Operations Policy Manual

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*The Phoenix—MSA’s mascot—is a thing of fire and light, the colors of passion and never- e n d i n g 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...*

## **Mississippi School of the Arts**

### **Mailing Address:**

**P.O. Box 229 Brookhaven, MS 39602-0229**

### **Street Address:**

**308 West Cherokee Street Brookhaven, MS 39601**

**Phone: (601) 823-1300**

**Toll Free: 1-866-672-7871**

**Fax: (601) 823-1555**

**Website: <http://www.msabrookhaven.org>**

### **Non-Discrimination and American with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

The Mississippi State Board of Education (SBE), the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), and the Mississippi School of the Arts (MSA) do not discriminate on the basis of 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:

The ADA covers employers with 15 or more employees and generally prohibits discrimination against “qualified individuals with disabilities”. A qualified individual with a disability is an applicant or employee who can perform the essential functions of the job in question with or without reasonable accommodation. Disability is defined as: a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; a record of such impairment; or being regarded as having such impairment.

The Mississippi SBE, Mississippi Department of Education, and the Mississippi School of the Arts will reasonably accommodate qualified applicants and employees with disabilities unless making the accommodation imposes an undue hardship on the school. MSA will reasonably accommodate known disabilities. Therefore, employees needing accommodation should speak directly with their supervisor. MSA expects the reasonable accommodation process to be a mutual process by which the School and employee search for a mutually acceptable reasonable accommodation. MSA is also committed to not discriminate against any qualified employees or applicants because they are related to or associated with a person with a disability.

All complaints of noncompliance with ADA, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or discrimination should be reported to:

School Finance Officer, MSA  
PO Box 229  
Brookhaven, MS 39602  
(601) 823-1300

## **State Board of Education**

Dr. Jason Dean, Chair  
Mr. Buddy Bailey, Vice-Chair  
Mrs. Rosemary Aultman  
Senator Nancy Collins  
Dr. Karen Elam  
Dr. John R. Kelly  
Mrs. Brittney Rye  
Mr. Sean Suggs

## **State Superintendent of Education**

Carey Wright, Ed.D.

## **Chief Academic Officer**

Nathan Oakley, Ph.D.

## **MSA Leadership**

Executive Director – Suzanne Hirsch  
Principal – Debra Henderson  
School Finance Officer – Nicholas Bridge  
Director of Advancement – Jennifer Jackson  
Director of Food Services – Cindy King  
Director of Residence Life – Lala Suzanne Noble  
Director of Safety, Maintenance, Transportation – Sandra “Sudie” Palomarez  
Technology Coordinator – Patrick Brown



## **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 joining the MSA workplace, you will become an important part of that heritage. You have chosen to work at a school where the educational environment focus is on creative expression, experimentation, and innovation within rigorous disciplines of study. 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.

This manual, as approved by the State Board of Education (SBE), is a publication of the Mississippi School of the Arts and governs all policies applicable to MSA as it is governed by the SBE. The information in the Mississippi School of the Arts (MSA) Operations Policy Manual has been assembled to serve as a guide in providing a safe and orderly environment that is supportive of successful teaching and learning. Use it as a reference and MSA will add other policy bulletins as they are released.

The administrative staff welcomes questions, suggestions, and discussion of policies and procedures. Please ask for information at any time.

## **History and Purpose**

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

- 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.
- The SBE shall govern the school.
- 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.
- To the extent possible, the SBE 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, 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 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.

## **SCHOOL COLORS AND MASCOT**

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

## **EXPECTATIONS FOR POLICY AND PROCEDURE COMPLIANCE**

All certified and non-certified personnel, both exempt and non-exempt are responsible for knowing and enforcing the policies and procedures set forth in this manual.

MSA employees are all expected to follow the Code of Ethics as established by the Mississippi Department of Education, which is available on the MDE website at:

[https://mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OA/OEM/mde\\_code\\_of\\_ethics.pdf](https://mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OA/OEM/mde_code_of_ethics.pdf)

## **DEFINITIONS**

MSA – Mississippi School of the Arts

SBE – State Board of Education

SBE Subcommittee – The authorized body by MS Code 37-140-5 (6) to approve and expedite approval needs for the MSA.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS**

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE** - A full-time employee is an individual whose employment is for no definite term and who is scheduled to work 40 hours per week on a regular basis. In order for an employee to be eligible for insurance benefits, he/she must work a minimum of 20 hours per week.

**CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE** – Classified non-instructional personnel are “at-will” employees whose duties do not require a certificate (or license) issued by the Mississippi Department of Education. Classified employees have no property rights in their employment, which may be terminated without notice at any time by either the employee or employer.

**CERTIFIED EMPLOYEE** – Certified employees are personnel who possess a license issued by the Mississippi Department of Education.

**PART-TIME EMPLOYEE** - A part-time employee is an individual whose employment is for no definite term and who is scheduled to work less than 20 hours per week on a regular basis. Part-time employees are not eligible for benefits.

**TEMPORARY EMPLOYEE** – On occasion, MSA may utilize the services of employees to temporarily supplement the workforce or help complete a specific project such as auditions. Temporary employees are not eligible for any benefits or comp time.

**NON-EXEMPT EMPLOYEES** – Employees who are required to document time worked are eligible for comp time and/or overtime (i.e. comp/or overtime are calculated time and one-half their regular rate of pay for hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek) in accordance with applicable state and federal law. All non-exempt employees must have prior approval by the superintendent for hours worked in excess of the normal work week. Only budgeted days will be worked.

**EXEMPT EMPLOYEES** – Employees who are not required to be paid overtime, in accordance with applicable federal and state wage and hour laws, for work performed beyond 40 hours in a work week. Administrators, managers, teachers, professional employees, and certain employees in administrative positions are exempt.

**EXEMPT CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES** - MSA recognizes that all professional employees work beyond regular school hours on a regular basis, and the school district acknowledges and appreciates the dedication of its professional employees. However, professional employees are exempt and are not eligible for overtime.

**NON-EXEMPT EMPLOYEES** - The workweek for full-time employees shall not exceed forty (40) hours. MSA encourages the completion of assigned tasks during the regular workday. Non-exempt employees are not to work overtime without prior approval from the Executive Director. Comp time must have prior approval from Executive Director/Immediate Supervisor, can be accumulated but must be used by the last working day in June of the current fiscal year and

can only be used when approved by Executive Director/Immediate Supervisor. Each supervisor shall maintain accurate records of all hours worked by each employee supervised and ensure that all comp time is taken by the last working day in June of the current fiscal year. Comp Time does not roll over from year to year.

### **TEACHER CERTIFICATION**[LA1]

[SH2]

MSA requires that all teachers be certified by the Mississippi Department of Education and “highly qualified.” For more information about mandated teacher qualifications, see MDE website or call the Office of Teacher Licensure. All teachers must ensure that their teaching certificates remain current.

Parents have a right to know the educational credentials and experience of their child’s teachers. Therefore, to provide this information in an easily accessible venue, an abbreviated résumé for each faculty and administrative staff member will be posted on the MSA website. The information should include degree(s), major and minor subject area(s), years of experience, awards, publications, and specific school assignments (e.g., Student Government Sponsor, Club Sponsor). A recent photograph should be included.

### **TEACHER CONTRACTS**[LA3]

The Executive Director shall enter into a contract with each licensed employee and person anticipating graduation from an approved teacher education program or the issuance of a proper license before October 15 or February 15, as the case may be, who is elected and approved for employment by the school board. Such contracts shall be in such form as shall be prescribed by the State Board of Education and shall be executed in duplicate with one (1) copy to be retained by the appropriate superintendent and one (1) copy to be retained by the principal, licensed employee or person recommended for a licensed position contracted with. The contract shall show the name of the district, the length of the school term, the position held (whether an assistant superintendent, principal or licensed employee), the scholastic years which it covers, the total amount of the annual salary and how same is payable. The amount of salary to be shown in such contract shall be the amount which shall have been fixed and determined by the school board, but, as to the licensed employees paid in whole or in part with adequate education program funds, such salary shall not be less than that required under the provisions of Chapter 19 of this title. Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, the contract shall include a provision allowing the school district to reduce the state minimum salary by a pro rata daily amount in order to comply with the school district employee furlough provisions of Section 37-7-308 , and shall include a provision which conditions the payment of such salary upon the availability of adequate education funds provided for salaries.

The contract entered into with any person recommended for a licensed position who is anticipating either graduation from an approved teacher education program before September 1 or December 31, as the case may be, or the issuance of a proper license before October 15 or February 15, as the case may be, shall be a conditional contract and shall include a provision stating that the contract will be null and void if, as specified in the contract, the contingency upon which the contract is conditioned has not occurred. If any superintendent, other than those elected, principal,

licensed employee or person recommended for a licensed position who has been elected and approved shall not execute and return the contract within ten (10) days after same has been tendered to him for execution, then, at the option of the school board, the election of the licensed employee and the contract tendered to him shall be void and of no effect.

*Miss. Code Ann. § 37-9-23*

#### **RELEASE FROM CONTRACT**

Any licensed employee at MSA who is under contract to teach or perform other duties and who desires to be released from such contract shall make application in writing to the Principal for release there from, in which application the reasons for such release shall be clearly stated. If this the Principal, Executive Director, and the SBE Subcommittee acts favorably upon such application for release, such licensed employee shall be released from his/her contract and said contract shall be null and void on the date specified in the SBE Subcommittee's order. It must be noted, no employee is considered for release from said contract before a suitable replacement has been found.

*Miss. Code Ann. § 37-9-55*

#### **BREACH OF CONTRACT**[LA4]

If any licensed employee in any public school of this state shall arbitrarily or willfully breach his or her contract and abandon his or her employment without being released there from as provided in Section 37- 9-55, the contract of such licensed employee shall be null and void. In addition, the license of such licensed employee may be suspended by the SBE for a period of one (1) year as provided in Section 37-3-2(8) upon written recommendation of the majority of the members of this SBE subcommittee assigned to MSA.

*Miss. Code Ann. § 37-9-57*

#### **NOTICE OF RENEWAL OF CONTRACT REEMPLOYMENT OF PRINCIPALS**

On or before March 1 of each year, principals shall be given notice of non-renewal of a contract for a successive year.

#### **REEMPLOYMENT OF TEACHERS**

On or before April 15, or within ten (10) days after the Governor approves the appropriation bill for funding K12 education (whichever date is later), teachers and other administrators shall be notified of non-renewal for a successive year. Licensed employees that do not have a valid license on or before April 15 for the successive year will not be offered a contract for a successive year.

#### **REEMPLOYMENT DENIAL (LICENSED EMPLOYEES ONLY)**

If a recommendation is made by the Mississippi School of the Arts not to offer a renewal contract to a licensed employee for a successive year, the employee is entitled to an

opportunity for a hearing (if requested in writing within ten (10) days of notice) as cited in the “Education Employment Procedures Law”.

*Miss. Code Ann. § 37-9-101 through Miss. Code Ann. § 37-9-113*

## **EXCLUDED EMPLOYEES**

Licensed employees who have not been with the Mississippi School of the Arts for two continuous years, or one year with the Brookhaven School District and two continuous years of employment in a Mississippi public school district are not entitled to the protections of this law.

*Miss. Code Ann. § 37-9-101; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-9-105; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-9-109*

*MSBA: Education Employment Procedures Law Handbook*

## **EMPLOYEE BACKGROUND CHECKS**[LA5]

[SH6]

According to state law, all new hire licensed and non-licensed employees must have (at the employees’ expense) a criminal record check performed by the FBI and the State CIC center. This bill requires that fingerprint cards be taken and submitted as part of the background check. The cost to process these cards and conduct the background check will not exceed \$50 per applicant. In addition, background checks for financial impropriety may be conducted per the policy of the MDE. Background checks will be reviewed by the Executive Director and School Finance Officer. They will be placed in the employees permanent file maintained in the administrative offices of the MSA.

## **GRIEVANCE/DUE PROCESS**

### **NON-CERTIFIED PERSONNEL**

Non-certified Mississippi School of the Arts full time and part time employees serve at the will and pleasure of the SBE and the MSA Executive Director. Therefore, these MSA employees have no property rights in terms of employment. All complaints should be addressed to the School Finance Officer[LA7][SH8], further appeals or grievances will be reported to the Executive Director at the Mississippi School of the Arts. Any grievances against the Executive Director will be reported to School Finance Officer who will submit to the Mississippi Department of Education Chief Academic Officer for review.

All supervisors are responsible for monitoring hourly part time employees and submitting timesheets on a bi-weekly basis. Directors must check each employee's time sheet for accuracy in number of hours worked and rate of pay. Initial the form before submitting it to the Administrative Assistant who submits to the Executive Director for processing and approval. It is the Director’s responsibility to ensure that part-time employees work no more than 39 hours in a single week and that the total number of hours worked does not exceed the total budgeted amount and will maintain a spreadsheet to ensure that employee time is accurately reflected in all documentation.

MSA part-time workers who return in a new fiscal year must submit a new PERS form. If

any personal contact information has changed (e.g., address, name change), new tax forms must be submitted before a contract can be issued. All part-time employees must have a full criminal background check through fingerprinting upon hire. There can be no break in service without requiring a new criminal background check.

### **Licensed Personnel Suspension/Dismissal Due Process**

The Executive Director/Superintendent may dismiss or suspend any licensed employee for incompetence, neglect of duty, immoral conduct, intemperance, brutal treatment of a pupil or other good cause. Before being dismissed or suspended, any licensed employee shall be notified of the charges against him/her and advised that he/she is entitled to a public hearing upon said charges. Notification of charges and hearing procedures shall follow the procedure as prescribed by law.

Provided; however, that the Executive Director/Superintendent whose employment has been terminated under this section shall not have the right to request a hearing before the State Board of Education. Provided, however, that a licensed employee in a conservator school district whose employment has been terminated under this section for good cause as determined by a conservator appointed by the State Board of Education shall not have a right to request a hearing. The conservator has the right to immediately terminate a licensed employee under this section.

In the event the continued presence of said employee on school premises poses a potential threat or danger to the health, safety or general welfare of the students, or, in the discretion of the Executive Director/Superintendent, may interfere with or cause a disruption of normal school operations, the Executive Director/Superintendent may immediately release said employee of all duties pending a hearing if one is requested by the employee.

In the event a licensed employee is arrested, indicted or otherwise charged with a felony by a recognized law enforcement official, the continued presence of the licensed employee on school premises shall be deemed to constitute a disruption of normal school operations.

The State Board of Education or hearing officer or designee, upon a request for a hearing by the person so suspended or removed shall set a date, time and place of such hearing and notify the employee in writing of the same. The hearing date shall be not sooner than five (5) days nor later than thirty (30) days from the date of the request unless otherwise agreed. The procedure for such hearing before the State Board of Education or hearing officer are prescribed in accordance with Section 37-9-111 and included in this policy. From the decision made at said hearing, any licensed employee shall be allowed an appeal to the chancery court in the same manner as appeals are authorized in Section 37-9-113 which is also included in this policy. Any party aggrieved by action of the chancery court may appeal to the Mississippi Supreme Court as provided by law. In the event that a licensed employee is immediately relieved of duties pending a hearing, as provided in this section, said employee shall be entitled to compensation for a period up to and including the date that the initial hearing is set by the State Board of Education, in the event that there is a request for such a hearing by the employee. In the event that an employee does not request a hearing within five (5) calendar days of the date of the notice of discharge or suspension, it shall constitute a waiver of all rights by said employee and such discharge or suspension shall be effective on the date set out in the notice to the employee.

The State Board of Education is hereby prohibited from denying employment or reemployment to

any person as a superintendent, principal or licensed employee, as defined in Section 37-19-1, or as a noninstructional personnel, as defined in Section 37-9-1, for the single reason that any eligible child of such person does not attend MSA in which such superintendent, principal, licensed employee or noninstructional personnel is employed.

The provisions of this section shall be fully applicable to any administrator or employee of the Mississippi School of the Arts (MSA).

### **Hearing, Notice, Procedures, and Evidence**

The State Board of Education, or its designee, upon request for a hearing under Section 37-9-59 or Sections 37-9-101 through Section 37-9-113 shall set the time, place and date of such hearing and notify the employee in writing of same. The date shall be set not sooner than five (5) days nor later than thirty (30) days from the date of the request, unless otherwise agreed. The hearing may be held before the State Board of Education or before a hearing officer appointed for such purpose by the State Board of Education, either from among its own membership, from the staff of the MSA or some other qualified and impartial person, but in no event shall the hearing officer be the staff member responsible for the initial recommendation of nonreemployment. No hearing officer may have an interest in the outcome of a hearing, nor may a hearing officer be related to a State Board of Education member, any administrator making the recommendations of nonreemployment or the employee. Once a hearing officer is appointed, no ex parte communications may be made regarding any substantive provisions of the hearing.

The hearing must be held in executive session unless the employee elects to have a public hearing. If an employee makes this election, however, the State Board of Education or the hearing officer, as the case may be, may order any part of the hearing to be held in executive session, if, in the opinion of the State Board of Education or the hearing officer, the testimony to be elicited deals with matters involving the reputation or character of another person. Notwithstanding the election by an employee for a public hearing, any testimony by minor witnesses must be held in executive session and considered confidential personnel records and confidential student records, subject to an expectation of reasonable privacy and confidentiality. Public disclosure of these records may be by court order only.

MSA shall present evidence, either in written or oral form, at the hearing in support of its recommendation for nonreemployment.

The employee shall be afforded an opportunity to present matters at the hearing relevant to the reasons given for the proposed nonreemployment determination and to the reasons the employee alleges to be the reasons for nonreemployment and to be represented by counsel at such a hearing. Such hearing shall be conducted in such a manner as to afford the parties a fair and reasonable opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence pertinent to the issues and to cross-examine witnesses presented at the hearing. The State Board of Education or the hearing officer may require any portion of the evidence to be submitted in the form of depositions or affidavits, and in case affidavits are received, an opportunity to present counter-affidavits shall be provided.

The State Board of Education shall cause to be made stenographic notes of the proceedings. In

the event of a judicial appeal of the State Board of Education's decision, the entire expense of the transcript and notes shall be assessed as court costs.

The State Board of Education shall review the matters presented before it, or, if the hearing is conducted by a hearing officer, the report of the hearing officer, if any, the record of the proceedings and, based solely thereon, conclude whether the proposed nonreemployment is a proper employment decision, is based upon a valid educational reason or noncompliance with MSA personnel policies and is based solely upon the evidence presented at the hearing, and shall notify the employee in writing of its final decision and reasons therefor. Such notification shall be within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the hearing if the hearing is conducted by a hearing officer and within ten (10) days of the conclusion of the hearing if the hearing is initially conducted by the State Board of Education. If the matter is heard before a hearing officer, the State Board of Education shall also grant the employee the opportunity to appear before the Board to present a statement in his own behalf, either in person or by his attorney, prior to a final decision by the Board.

In conducting a hearing, the State Board of Education or hearing officer shall not be bound by common law or by statutory rules of evidence or by technical or formal rules of procedure except as provided in Sections 37-9-101 through 37-9-113 , but may conduct such hearing in such manner as best to ascertain the rights of the parties; however, hearsay evidence, if admitted, shall not be the sole basis for the determination of facts by the State Board of Education or hearing officer.

In the event the decision of the State Board of Education is in favor of the employee, the State Board of Education shall have the authority to order the execution of a contract with the employee for an additional period of one (1) year.

For purposes of conducting hearings under Sections 37-9-101 through 37-9-113 , the State Board of Education or hearing officer shall have the authority to issue subpoenas for witnesses and to compel their attendance and the giving of evidence. Any expense connected therewith shall be borne by the party requesting the subpoenas, which shall include an appearance fee for each witness so subpoenaed not inconsistent with state laws governing payments to witnesses. In the event it is necessary to enforce or to quash a subpoena issued to compel the attendance of a witness, application shall be made with the chancery court of the county where the State Board of Education is located.

This section shall not be applicable to a superintendent whose employment has been terminated by the Board under Section 37-9-59 , or whose employment contract has not been renewed by the State Board of Education.

### **Appeal Rights**

Any employee aggrieved by a final decision of the State Board of Education is entitled to judicial review thereof, as hereinafter provided.

An appeal may be taken by such employee to the chancery court of the judicial district in which the State Board of Education is located, by filing a petition with the clerk of that court and

executing and filing bond payable to the State Board of Education with sufficient sureties, in the penalty of not less than Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00), conditioned upon the payment of all of the costs of appeal, within twenty (20) days of the receipt of the final decision of the State Board of Education.

The scope of review of the chancery court in such cases shall be limited to a review of the record made before the State Board of Education or hearing officer to determine if the action of the State Board of Education is unlawful for the reason that it was:

- (a) Not supported by any substantial evidence;
- (b) Arbitrary or capricious; or
- (c) In violation of some statutory or constitutional right of the employee.

No relief shall be granted based upon a court's finding of harmless error by the State Board of Education in complying with the procedural requirements of [Sections 37-9-101](#) through [37-9-113](#). However, in the event that there is a finding of prejudicial error in the proceedings, the cause shall be remanded for a rehearing consistent with the findings of the court.

Any party aggrieved by action of the chancery court may appeal to the Supreme Court in the manner provided by law.

**References:** Miss. Code Ann. § 37-9-59  
Miss. Code Ann. § 37-9-111  
Miss. Code Ann. § 37-9-113

## **EMPLOYEE APPRAISALS**[LA9][SH10]

Using an internal performance appraisal Instruments, full-time non-certified employees will be formally evaluated at least once per year. The statewide evaluation systems for teachers, librarians, counselors and principals will be used for the certified academic staff. Evaluation will be based on observations at primary job posts and as part of the school wide team. Supervisors will meet with all employees in accordance with deadlines mandated for the appraisal systems for review of prior performance and goal setting for the upcoming year. The appraisal instruments are job related to performance in a residential school and departmental context. Appraisals will be utilized to assist supervisors in better serving employees through professional development, improvement plans, or continuation of employment. Habitual disregard for policies, processes and procedures established by the MSA may result in written reprimands and further consequences as outlined by the MSA Standard Operating Procedures Manual. At the beginning of each academic year, procedures, policies, and processes are reviewed with employees. Consistent paperwork, timeliness, or behavior problems will be reprimanded appropriately.

## **ATTENDANCE OF EMPLOYEES**

The following guidelines and procedures should be followed by all administrative and supervisory

personnel regarding the attendance of MSA employees throughout the year. In addition, the guidelines should be reviewed during the evaluation process and incorporated into employee evaluations.

1. All employees of the MSA are expected to be at work, on time, every scheduled workday. Employees contribute to achieving the mission and the education of the student body. The success of the MSA depends upon each employee doing what is expected, including maintaining an acceptable attendance record.
2. It is important that all employees be treated equitably with respect to the monitoring of attendance.
3. Excessive absenteeism adversely affects overall operations by placing added pressure or burdens on employees who are at work on a regular basis, and by requiring administrative time and cost to cover for employees who are absent.

### **CATEGORIES OF ABSENCES**

All absences will be classified into two categories as follows:

1. Excused - Absences that do not count against an employee's attendance record include any pre- approved vacation, personal leave, bereavement leave, military or uniformed services leave, family and medical leave (as designated under our FMLA policy), jury duty, disability accommodation leaves of absence, or worker's compensation leave.
2. Unexcused. All remaining absences are classified as counting against an employee's attendance record.

### **TARDINESS**

Promptness in arriving at work is expected from all employees. Tardiness has a negative effect on operations, just as absenteeism does. Not returning promptly from breaks or lunch is considered an instance of tardiness. Excessive tardiness may result in disciplinary action, action plans, and/or termination.

### **ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES**

1. All employees are to report as scheduled by their supervising Director/Principal and/or the Executive Director.
2. Employees who are going to be absent due to illness must notify their supervising Director/Principal, the Executive Director, or a designee as soon as possible.
3. Employees who will be late for any reason must contact their supervisor or Executive Director so arrangements can be made for a substitute until the employee arrives on

campus. Employees must speak directly to a Director/Principal/Executive Director.

4. Employees who arrive 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.
5. Employees may not leave campus during duty hours without permission of their supervising Director/Principal, Executive Director, or a designee.
6. Employees should refrain from taking leave for vacations when it directly impacts the functionality of MSA.
7. Excessive absences may be denied in accordance with the MSA policies. If employee is deemed to be using medical leave to circumvent vacation day policy, a medical excuse may be required by the administration.

All employees may be expected to be present during registration, open house events, graduation, state testing, and other special activities that may be assigned.[LA11]

## **FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA)**

### **A. DEFINITIONS**

1. An “eligible employee” is an employee of a covered employer who: (a) has been employed for at least 12 months and (b) has been employed for at least 1,250 hours of service during the 12-month period immediately preceding the commencement of leave, and (c) is employed at a worksite at which the employer employs at least 50 employees within 75 miles of the worksite.
2. “Employee’s spouse” means husband or wife as defined by Mississippi Law.
3. “Employee’s son or daughter” means biological child, adopted child or foster child, a step child, legal ward, or the child for whom the employee is standing in loco parentis, who is either under the age of 18, or age 18 or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability.
4. “Employee’s parent” means biological parent, adoptive, step or foster father or mother, or any other individual who stood (or now stands) in loco parentis to an employee when the employee was a child (not to include parents-in-law).
5. “Employee’s immediate family member” means spouse, son or daughter, grandchild, or parent as defined herein above.
6. For the purposes of FMLA “serious health condition” means an illness, injury,

impairment or physical or mental condition that involves either inpatient care (overnight stay) in a hospital, hospice or residential medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a healthcare provider.

7. "Healthcare provider" means a licensed medical physician, nurse practitioner, dentist, psychologist, and chiropractor.

## **B. LEAVE PROVISIONS**

An eligible employee is entitled to 12 unpaid work weeks (60 workdays) during any 12-month period for any one or more of the following reasons:

1. The birth of a son or daughter, and to care for the newborn child (within 12 months of birth).
2. The placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care (within 12 months of the placement).
3. To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition (not "parent-in-law").
4. The employee's own serious health condition which makes the employee unable to perform the function of his/her job.
5. The district encourages any person taking FMLA leave to utilize all paid leave benefits as part of the 12 weeks of leave. This use of paid leave does not extend the 12 weeks of FMLA leave.
6. The 12-month period is defined as a "rolling" year, that is, that the 12-month eligibility period begins on the date leave is first taken.

## **C. NOTICE REQUIREMENTS**

1. Employees must provide MSA at least thirty (30) days advance notice before FMLA leave is to begin if the need for the leave is foreseeable, based on an expected birth, placement for adoption or foster care, or planned medical treatment for a serious health condition of the employee or family member.
2. Due to lack of knowledge or a medical emergency, notice must be given as soon as practicable, which means as soon as both practical and possible or at least verbally within one or two working days when the need for leave becomes known to the employee. This verbal notice is to be followed by written notice.
3. Failure to give 30 days' notice for foreseeable leave may result in the denial of the taking of FMLA leave until at least 30 days after the date the employee provides notice.

## **D. REQUIRED CERTIFICATION**

Eligible employees shall provide the district certification of a serious health condition for himself/herself or a family member. The certification, to be signed by the health care provider, shall be attached to the required written notice or submitted in a timely manner which shall be no more than fifteen (15) working days after providing written notice. No leave period may begin without the approval of the Executive Director or designee. No approval shall be granted by the Executive Director or designee without the required written notice and certificate.

**E. THE CERTIFICATION IS TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:**

1. The date on which the serious health condition in question began.
2. The probable duration of the condition.
3. Appropriate medical facts regarding the condition.
4. A statement that the employee is needed to care for a spouse, parent or child (along with an estimate of the time required), or that the employee is unable to perform his/her functions, and, in the case of intermittent leave, the duration of treatment to be given.
5. Signature (not stamped) of healthcare provider. MSA may require that a second opinion be obtained at the MSA's expense. The second opinion may not be provided by a healthcare provider employed by MSA. In the event of conflicting opinions, MSA may pay for a third and final provider to offer a binding decision. MSA may require subsequent written re-certification on a reasonable basis.

**F. EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS PROTECTION**

1. An employee who completes a period of leave and has complied fully with the terms of this policy shall be returned either to the same position he/she had before the taking of leave or to a position which is genuinely equivalent (as compared to comparable or similar job) in pay, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment.
2. Taking of leave shall not result in the loss of any previously accrued seniority or employment benefits. Except for health benefits, no other benefits will accrue during the leave period.
3. Health benefits shall continue through an employee's 12-week leave period. The district may recover health coverage premiums paid for an employee who fails to return from leave, except no recovery will be made from an employee who fails to return from leave if the reason is the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition or something else beyond the employee's control.
4. Special rules for taking leave by an instructional employee exist for leave taken near the end of a semester. In general, MSA may require that more leave be taken than desired,

depending on the length of leave sought and the timing in proximity to the end of a semester. If this situation occurs, the Executive Director or designee will advise as to these requirements. The reason for this is that a contract would be required for a long-term substitute.

## **G. MILITARY FAMILY LEAVE**

A “covered military member” means the employee’s spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or call to active duty status.

A “son or daughter on active duty or call to active duty status” means the employee’s biological, adopted, or foster child, stepchild, legal ward, or a child for whom the employee stood in loco parentis, who is on active duty or call to active duty status, and who is of any age.

“Active duty or call to active duty status” means duty under a call or order to active duty (or notification of an impending call or order to active duty) in support of a contingency operation pursuant to: Section 688 of Title 10 of the United States Code or any other provision of law during a war or during a national emergency declared by the President or Congress so long as it is in support of a contingency operation.

A “serious injury or illness” means an injury or illness incurred by a covered servicemember in the line of duty on active duty that may render the servicemember medically unfit to perform the duties of his or her office, grade, rank or rating.

“Outpatient status,” with respect to a covered servicemember, means the status of a member of the Armed Forces assigned to either a military medical treatment facility as an outpatient; or a unit established for the purpose of providing command and control of members of the Armed Forces receiving medical care as outpatients. In order to care for a covered servicemember, an eligible employee must be the spouse, son, daughter, or parent, or next of kin of a covered servicemember.

A “son or daughter of a covered servicemember” means the covered servicemember’s biological, adopted, or foster child, stepchild, legal ward, or a child for whom the covered servicemember stood in loco parentis, and who is of any age.

A “parent of a covered servicemember” means a covered servicemember’s biological, adoptive, step or foster father or mother, or any other individual who stood in loco parentis to the covered servicemember. This term does not include parents “in law.” The “next of kin of a covered servicemember” is the nearest blood relative, other than the covered servicemember’s spouse, parent, son, or daughter, in the following order of priority: blood relatives who have been granted legal custody of the servicemember by court decree or statutory provisions, brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and first cousins, unless the covered servicemember has specifically designated in writing another blood relative as his or her nearest blood relative for purposes of military caregiver leave under the FMLA. When no such designation is made, and there are multiple family members with the same

level of relationship to the covered servicemember, all such family members shall be considered the covered servicemember's next of kin and may take FMLA leave to provide care to the covered servicemember, either consecutively or simultaneously. When such designation has been made, the designated individual shall be deemed to be the covered servicemember's only next of kin. For example, if a covered servicemember has three siblings and has not designated a blood relative to provide care, all three siblings would be considered the covered servicemember's next of kin. Alternatively, where a covered servicemember has a sibling(s) and designates a cousin as his or her next of kin for FMLA purposes, then only the designated cousin is eligible as the covered servicemember's next of kin. An employer is permitted to require an employee to provide confirmation of covered family relationship to the covered servicemember.

Employees are eligible to take FMLA leave because of a qualifying exigency when the covered military member is on active duty or call to active duty status in support of a contingency operation pursuant to one of the provisions of law identified above. An employee whose family member is on active duty or call to active duty status in support of a contingency operation as a member of the Regular Armed Forces is not eligible to take leave because of a qualifying exigency.

A call to active duty for purposes of leave taken because of a qualifying exigency refers to a Federal call to active duty. State calls to active duty are not covered unless under order of the President of the United States pursuant to one of the provisions of law identified in support of a contingency operation.

The active duty orders of a covered military member will generally specify if the servicemember is serving in support of a contingency operation by citation to the relevant section of United States Code and/or by reference to the specific name of the contingency operation.

An eligible employee is entitled to 26 work weeks of leave to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness during a "single 12-month period."

The "single 12-month period" described above begins on the first day the eligible employee takes FMLA leave to care for a covered servicemember and ends 12 months after that date, regardless of the method used by the employer to determine the employee's 12 workweeks of leave entitlement for other FMLA-qualifying reasons. If an eligible employee does not take all of his or her 26 workweeks of leave entitlement to care for a covered servicemember during this "single 12-month period," the remaining part of his or her 26 work weeks of leave entitlement to care for the covered servicemember is forfeited.

The leave entitlement described above is to be applied on a per-covered-servicemember, per-injury basis such that an eligible employee may be entitled to take more than one period of 26 workweeks of leave if the leave is to care for different covered servicemembers or to care for the same servicemember with a subsequent serious injury or illness, except that no more than 26 work weeks of leave may be taken within any "single 12-month period." An eligible employee may take more than one period of 26 work weeks of leave to care for a covered

servicemember with more than one serious injury or illness only when the serious injury or illness is a subsequent serious injury or illness. When an eligible employee takes leave to care for more than one covered servicemember or for a subsequent serious injury or illness of the same covered servicemember, and the “single 12-month periods” corresponding to the different military caregiver leave entitlements overlap, the employee is limited to taking no more than 26 work weeks of leave in each “single 12-month period.”

An eligible employee is entitled to a combined total of 26 work weeks of leave for any FMLA-qualifying reason during the “single 12-month period,” provided that the employee is entitled to no more than 12 weeks of leave for one or more of the following: because of the birth of a son or daughter of the employee and in order to care for such son or daughter; because of the placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care; in order to care for the spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition; because of the employee’s own serious health condition; or because of a qualifying exigency. Thus, for example, an eligible employee may, during the “single 12-month period,” take 16 weeks of FMLA leave to care for a covered service member and 10 weeks of FMLA leave to care for a newborn child. However, the employee may not take more than 12 weeks of FMLA leave to care for the newborn child during the “single 12-month period,” even if the employee takes fewer than 14 weeks of FMLA leave to care for a covered service member.

In all circumstances, including for leave taken to care for a covered servicemember, the employer is responsible for designating leave, paid or unpaid, as FMLA-qualifying, and for giving notice of the designation to the employee. In the case of leave that qualifies as both leave to care for a covered servicemember and leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition during the “single 12-month period,” the employer must designate such leave as leave to care for a covered service member in the first instance. Leave that qualifies as both leave to care for a covered service member and leave taken to care for a family member with a serious health condition during the “single 12-month period” must not be designated and counted as both leave to care for a covered service member and leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition. As is the case with leave taken for other qualifying reasons, employers may retroactively designate leave as leave to care for a covered service member.

A husband and wife who are eligible for FMLA leave and are employed by the same covered employer may be limited to a combined total of 26 work weeks of leave during the “single 12-month period” if the leave is taken for birth of the employee’s son or daughter or to care for the child after birth, for placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care, or to care for the child after placement, to care for the employee’s parent with a serious health condition, or to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness. This limitation on the total weeks of leave applies to leave taken for the reasons specified as long as a husband and wife are employed by the “same employer.” It would apply, for example, even though the spouses are employed at two different worksites of an employer located more than 75 miles from each other, or by two different operating divisions of the same company. On the other hand, if one spouse is ineligible for FMLA leave, the other spouse would be entitled to a full 26 work weeks of FMLA leave.

## **NON-QUALIFYING FMLA LEAVE REQUEST**

An employee who does not qualify for leave based on the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 may take a leave of absence up to 20 business days. The employee may be responsible for timely payments of all insurance premiums while on approved leave of absence.

**GENERAL PROVISIONS:** In order to qualify for temporary medical leave of absence the following must apply:

1. An employee anticipating an absence of five days or more must apply for leave of absence with the administration prior to the absence or within seven (7) business days of the first day of absence.
2. New employees reported to work on the first day of employment.
3. The employee does not qualify for FMLA based on the following criteria:
  - a. Employee has not been employed with MSA for at least 12 months;
  - b. Employee has not worked for MSA at least 1250 hours.
4. Qualifying for the leave of absence follows the same criteria and procedure as described in FMLA regulations.
  - a. Birth of a child and/or to care for a newborn child of the employee.
  - b. Placement with the employee of a child through adoption.
  - c. Care for the employee's spouse, dependent child, or parent of the employee who has a serious health condition.
  - d. A serious health condition that renders the employee unable to perform the function of his/her job.
5. All leave of absences require final approval of the Executive Director.
6. Failure to return to work on the determined return-to-work day will be considered as a resignation by the employee.
7. The employee must use any available accrued paid leave concurrently with the leave of absence. Otherwise, compensation will not be paid during leave.
8. The leave of absence must be used continuously and can only be used once per fiscal year. It will not be available for intermittent use.

## **PROCEDURES:**

1. A request for leave of absence must be made on the Request for Leave of Absence Form having the approval of the Principal/Supervisor and the Executive Director.
2. Medical documentation supporting the request must be provided to the Executive Director's Office within five (5) days of the request for leave.
3. The Request for Leave of Absence form must be filed in the employee's personnel file.
4. The Principal/Supervisor must be notified of the expected date the employee returns. The employee must provide documentation from the physician stating the employee's return to work date before returning to work.

## **BENEFITS INSURANCE AND RETIREMENT**

MSA is interested in the health and well-being of both employees and their families. This section briefly describes each district-sponsored employee benefit program. Employees receive summary plan descriptions, which describe certain benefit programs in greater detail. The plan description and official plan documents (such as insurance master contracts) contain information regarding eligibility requirements, coverage limits, deductibles, premiums, and fees. Employees are expected to read the plan descriptions carefully to understand rights and responsibilities. Should a conflict exist between the official benefit plan documents and this manual or the plan descriptions, the official plan documents will control in all cases.

MSA reserves the right, at its sole and absolute discretion, to rescind or amend benefits, to change insurance carriers, or to require a change in employee contributions toward premium costs, deductibles, or co-payments. MSA may make such changes at any time, for any reason; financial necessity is not required. Employees will be promptly notified of any such changes. While MSA's intent is to continue offering the sponsored benefit programs, it cannot guarantee that such benefits will always be available. MSA offers the following benefits to regular full-time employees. Part-time employees may or may not be eligible for these benefits based on the individual plan requirements:

MEDICAL INSURANCE - MSA participates in the State of Mississippi health insurance plan for school employees. Information regarding the options available to school employees may be obtained by contacting the Benefits Specialist in the administrative office.

CAFETERIA PLAN - MSA participates in the Section 125 Flexible Benefit Plan, commonly known as the cafeteria plan. Participation by employees in the cafeteria plan is optional. Additional information regarding the cafeteria plan is available in the administrative office.

RETIREMENT PLAN - All regular full-time employees must participate in the Mississippi Public Employees' Retirement System. Current Mississippi law requires eight (8) years of service as of July 1, 2007 for vested interest. Twenty-five (25) years are required for less than sixty (60) years of age for full retirement benefits without penalty. If hired after July 1, 2011, thirty (30) years are required for less than sixty (60) years of age for full retirement benefits.

Employees desiring more specific information regarding their retirement should contact the Mississippi Public Employees' Retirement System.

COBRA - If the employee, the employee's spouse, or the employee's dependents lose group health insurance coverage due to employment termination or any other "qualifying event," any and all may be eligible to elect continuation of group health coverage in accordance with the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA). COBRA entitles employees and their dependents to elect or decline continued group health insurance coverage upon a "qualifying event." Under federal law, a qualifying event is an event that would ordinarily cause an employee, spouse, or dependent to lose group health insurance coverage. Qualifying events include termination of employment, retirement, discharge for poor performance, reduction of work hours, death of a covered employee, divorce or legal separation from a covered employee, losing "dependent child" status, or Medicare eligibility. Employees discharged for gross misconduct may not be eligible for continuation benefits. Employees and dependents are responsible for notifying the MSA Administrative Office immediately following any qualifying event and upon any change in address of the employee and/or dependents. Employees and dependents who elect continued coverage following a qualifying event will be required to pay 100% of the applicable premium coverage cost plus any applicable administration fees. The covered individual has sixty (60) days to elect coverage from the date of notification. If the covered individual chooses to continue coverage and pays all premiums, benefits will be continued for 18 months. A covered employee, spouse, or dependent who is disabled (according to the Social Security Administration) at the time of the qualifying event may be eligible to continue coverage for up to 29 months. An employee's covered spouse or dependent may be able to continue coverage up to 36 months in the event the covered employee dies, becomes entitled to Medicare, divorces or legally separates from the spouse, or the dependent child ceases to qualify as a dependent under the District's insurance plan provisions. In the event of a second qualifying event occurring during the period of coverage for an original event, the period of coverage will be extended to 36 months from the date of the original qualifying event. Employees may obtain additional information about COBRA from MSA Administrative Office.

## **PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS**

The law requires payroll deductions to cover federal, state, and local income taxes and Social Security/Medicare (FICA) and retirement. These deductions are made automatically. Other deductions for other programs will be made upon a written authorization by the employee and with the approval of the MSA.

Deductions can be made for health, life and salary protection insurance. All requests for changes in deductions must be submitted, in writing, prior to the 1st of each month. Deductions may also stem from garnishments. When a garnishment is imposed, the administration of MSA complies by withholding a percentage of the employee's salary, as mandated by law. It is our policy to comply with the salary basis requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Therefore, we prohibit any improper deductions from the salaries of exempt employees. We want employees to be aware of this policy and that the MSA does not allow deductions that violate the FLSA. Deductions from exempt employees' salaries are prohibited, except as allowed by applicable law.

## COMPENSATION[LA12]

[SH13]

Employees of MSA are paid on the last working day of the calendar month. Each employee is responsible for reviewing their pay and notifying their supervisor if any errors are noted. Teachers are paid based upon an approved salary scale and are contracted for specified days each year, with payment distribution over twelve months. No payment will be made to any contracted personnel without an executed contract in place. All salaries are within the scale as deemed appropriate for the job descriptions aligned with the Mississippi State Personnel Board and are subject to final approval by the SBE Subcommittee.[LA14][SH15]

WORKER'S COMPENSATION [LA16][SH17]- It is MSA's goal to provide a safe work environment. Each employee shall comply with all occupational safety, health policies and standards. Should an accident occur, the employee must report any injury or illness, no matter how minor it may seem, immediately to the Supervisor. The supervisor must report the incident to the Workers' Compensation Coordinator. Failure to do so may jeopardize eligibility for workers' compensation. Employees are covered against certain loss of earnings due to injuries on the job by a workers' compensation insurance policy furnished by MSA.

No compensation will be allowed for an injury, illness or death due to willful misconduct, intentional self-inflicted injury, intoxication, or willful failure or refusal to use safety devices or lack of compliance with prescribed safety procedures. The payment of medical bills and compensation payments will be in accordance with all applicable workers' compensation laws.

If an employee suffers an occupational injury or illness, the following steps should be taken:

1. Any necessary first-aid treatment should be administered.
2. When physically able, the employee should immediately report the injury or illness to his or her Supervisor or Principal.
3. Both the employee and supervisor must complete a Report of Accident/Injury form within the first hour of the accident. If medical attention is required, the employee may be seen by a medical doctor or facility approved by MSA, unless in an emergency.
4. Medical facilities will need a claim number in order to administer treatment. The insurance company will not provide a claim number without the Accident/Injury form. These forms are available from the employee's supervisor or on the district website under "Staff Documents." Both forms must be signed and dated by the supervisor and forwarded to the Workers' Compensation Coordinator in the Business Office as soon as possible.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION - Employees are not eligible for unemployment benefits in the summer months between school terms. An employee hired during the school term that has reasonable assurance of employment for the same or similar work for the following school term will be denied. Substitutes may receive unemployment compensation if they are only

working part-time and not earning more than their allowed benefit for the week. Substitute logs are to be sent to the Benefits Specialist each month documenting who was called and whether or not they accepted the work. This information is provided to the Miss Dept of Employment Security for those substitutes that file unemployment claims.

## **REDUCTION IN FORCE**

MSA has the responsibility for providing and maintaining a quality school. In order to carry out its responsibility, the SBE Subcommittee may: (1) abolish or combine job positions, (2) reduce the length of the work year with a concomitant reduction in salary (the same to be in no event less than 187 days per contract year), (3) reduce employee salaries, and/or (4) reduce the number of employees. Initially, staff reduction will be accomplished by attrition.

When reducing the number of licensed employees, the SBE Subcommittee will take into account the following reasons for such reduction in force:

1. Enrollment declines,
2. Financial decline/reduction,
3. Educational program(s) elimination, and/or
4. Other good and/or just cause as defined by the SBE Subcommittee.

The primary objective of the MSA when reducing the work force will be the maintenance of a fair and balanced educational program consistent with the needs of the students and the functions and responsibilities of the school. When deciding reduction in force, the SBE Subcommittee will consider the following factors, not necessarily in the order listed:

1. Importance of the position to the mission, goals, and objectives of the MSA.
2. Area(s) and level(s) of competence indicated by certification.
3. Experience, professional training, length of service within the district and work assignment.
4. Quality of performance including character, teaching capacity, and/or executive ability.
5. Skills in area(s) where the district has instructional and/or supervisory needs.

**References: Miss. Code Ann. § 37-9-101 through 37-9-113 and 37-9-59**

## **OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

Employees choosing to work outside MSA 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. If employees choose to seek outside employment, they first must discuss this matter with the Principal or primary supervisor and receive written approval of their plans from the Executive Director. Schedules will not be adjusted and special considerations will not be made for employees who have outside employment.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

An employee of the MSA shall not have a financial interest, directly or indirectly, in any activity that conflicts or raises a reasonable question of conflict with duties and responsibilities. No staff member shall engage in any type of private business during school time and on school property.

Employees shall not engage in work of any type where the source of information concerning customer, client, or employer originates from any information obtained through the school. No gifts from any person or group desiring or doing business with the MSA shall be solicited by a school employee except for nominally valued instructional products or advertising items that are widely distributed.

### **CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

All employees in the MSA shall comply with the Mississippi Professional Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct as outlined in MDE policy 14.10; 14.10 A,B,C,D,E; 14.17; and 14.18. The Executive Director or his or her designee shall establish procedures to assure that all MSA employees comply with this policy. The procedures shall include, but are not limited to:

1. Providing all employees with a copy of the Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct.
2. Maintaining a signed statement in each employee's personnel file verifying that he or she has been given notice of the Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct.
3. Advising all employees that his or her contract with the MSA is subject to the Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct; and may be revoked or suspended pursuant to its terms.
4. Providing annual in-service training for all employees on the Mississippi Professional Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct.

The Executive Director shall report to the MDE all license holders who engage in unethical conduct relating to an educator/student relationship (Standard 4).

### **VIOLATIONS**

Violations of this policy shall be reported and discussed in a conference between the employee

and the school principal/supervisor (or executive director and principal if a principal is in violation of this policy). If the principal/supervisor or executive director finds the complaint to be factual, he or she shall issue a written reprimand to the employee(s) involved. This reprimand shall become a part of the employee's personnel file. Severe violations or continuous violation of this policy may lead to an employee being suspended, dismissed or non-renewed. Employees shall have the right to appeal any disciplinary action taken against them by following the proper chain of command as specified in the district's "Employee Grievance Procedure" policy.

## **ARREST OF EMPLOYEE**

Employees arrested for any reason must notify their supervisor within 24 hours. Supervisors will inform the Executive Director who will contact the SBE Subcommittee.

## **REPORTING ABUSE OR NEGLECT[LA18]**

### **REPORTING AUTHORITY**

According to Mississippi Code (1972 annotated), the following people are required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect:

1. Attorneys
2. Child's Caregiver
3. Dentists
4. Doctors
5. Interns
6. Law Enforcement Officers
7. Ministers
8. Nurses
9. Psychologists
10. Residents
11. School Principals
12. Social Workers
13. Teachers
14. Or any other person having reasonable cause to suspect a child has been neglected or abused.

### **IMMUNITY**

The law protects individuals who make reports of suspected child abuse or neglect from civil liability if they act in good faith. Absolute proof is not necessary before a report is filed. Child Protective Services is responsible for conducting its own investigation.

### **STEPS TO FOLLOW AFTER SUSPECTING ABUSE.**

1. Take the student to a private place and let the student tell you about the above.
2. **DO NOT** interrogate the student.

3. Encourage the student to express his/her feelings about the abuse.
4. Avoid leading questions.
5. Ask open-ended questions (e.g., What happened next?).
6. Try to remain calm and nonjudgmental.
7. Let the student know that you believe his or her story.
8. Reassure the student he/she is not to blame for what happened.
9. Respect the privacy of the student.
10. **DO NOT** tell other people who do not need to know.
11. Explain to the student what will happen next (i.e., tell them you will call someone to help.)

### **REPORTING WITHIN THE SCHOOL**

Inform the Executive Director or the school counselor of your findings. The Executive Director and/or the counselor will work with employees in contacting social services.

### **REPORTING TO SOCIAL SERVICES**

1. Name and address of student and parents or caretaker
2. Date of Birth
3. Nature of student's injury
4. Identity and address of perpetrator, if known
5. Any other information you believe social worker will find helpful
6. Names and dates of birth of other children in the home

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

Unless expressly authorized to do so, employees are prohibited from sending, transmitting, or otherwise distributing proprietary information, data, or other confidential information belonging to the MSA. Unauthorized dissemination of such material may result in severe disciplinary action as well as substantial civil and criminal penalties under state and federal Economic Espionage laws.

The MSA shall operate in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 regarding student information and records. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) have provided schools, school districts, and state educational agencies guidelines in disclosing student records. School officials with a "legitimate educational interest" in any student information can have access to educational records without specific consent of parents or eligible students.

A legitimate educational interest is the person's need to know in order to:

1. Perform an administrative task required in the school employee's position description approved by the SBE Subcommittee;
2. Perform a supervisory or instructional task directly related to the student's education; or

3. Perform a service or benefit for the student or the student's family such as health care, counseling, student job placement, or student financial aid. However, the misuse or improper disclosure of confidential information by school officials or a third party is strictly prohibited and is punishable by federal statutes.

Electronic access to student information will be limited to job duty specifications of each employee. At no time should this information be printed, transferred, or shared under conditions other than those stipulated in FERPA. A complete explanation of FERPA may be found online at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpc/ferpa/index.html>

## **INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT WITH STUDENTS**

As mandated by the State Superintendent of Education, MSA must implement policies and procedures related to the prohibition of inappropriate relationships and/or conduct with students. The MSA Student Handbook informs students that such conduct is prohibited and that if an employee treats them in any inappropriate way, they should report it immediately.

DO NOT email, text message, call or contact students via any form of communication regarding personal matters. All communications should be highly professional and related to school ONLY. The same applies to verbal or written conversations and communications at school, school related activities, or off campus.

### **DO NOT BLUR THE LINES BETWEEN ADULTS AND STUDENTS!**

The administration, when it hears or becomes aware that a situation might exist between one of its employees and a student, must investigate all possible leads. While rumors may be nothing more than gossip, the administration must evaluate the credibility of the information to determine if there is sufficient substantiation to investigate.

Investigation should include interviewing students, the accused staff member, other staff members, looking at phone records, emails, text messages, etc. If there is no evidence that any wrongdoing has occurred, the investigation can be closed. However, the investigation should be properly documented regarding what the inquiry entailed and that there was no evidence to support the charges.

If the investigation reveals suspicious conduct, then the investigation must continue until the allegation is dismissed as unfounded or there are sufficient facts to lend credibility to the charges. Usually the investigation does not prove absolutely that sexual behavior has occurred between a staff member and a student but that other inappropriate conduct did occur, such as personal emails and text messages between the staff member and a student. There may be a legitimate reason for an occasional email between an employee and a student, but it must be school related. Personal emails, telephone calls and text messages are not appropriate and are grounds for dismissal.

If there is a reasonable basis to believe that any type of sexual involvement has occurred between any employee and a student under the age of 18, it is mandatory that the Executive Director or

principal must report it to the district attorney. Thus, if the investigation reveals information that provides a reasonable basis to believe that sexual involvement occurred, the district attorney must be informed. In summary, the administration must thoroughly investigate all accusations of misconduct in an expeditious manner. Documentation of the investigation is important, regardless of the conclusions reached. Once evidence is found, the information must be turned over to the District Attorney and dismissal of the employee should take place.

## **STAFF/STUDENT NON-FRATERNIZATION**

Adults who have contact with children and adolescents through school activities have the responsibility not to betray or misuse their privileged position and shall never take advantage of students' vulnerability or of their confidence.

It is the policy of the MSA to prohibit any sexual relationship, contact or sexually nuanced behavior or communication between a staff member and a student, while the student is enrolled in the school. The prohibition applies regardless of gender, whether the student or the staff member is the initiator of the behavior, and whether or not the student welcomes or reciprocates the attention.

### **Guidelines**

Staff members are expected to use good judgment in their relationships with students both inside and outside of the school context including, but not limited to, the following guidelines:

1. Staff members shall not make derogatory comments to students regarding the school and/or staff.
2. Staff members shall not exchange gifts with students.
3. Staff-sponsored parties, at which students are in attendance, unless they are a part of the school's extracurricular program and are properly supervised, are prohibited.
4. Staff members shall not fraternize, written or verbally, with students except on matters that pertain to school-related issues.
5. Staff members shall not text students nor participate in any student blogs unrelated to school.
6. Staff members shall not friend students on any social media platforms prior to graduation.
7. Staff members shall not associate with students at any time in any situation or activity which could be considered sexually suggestive or involve the presence or use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs.
8. Staff members shall not date students. Sexual relations with students, regardless of age and/or consent, are prohibited and will result in dismissal and criminal prosecution.
9. Staff members shall not use insults against students as a method of forcing compliance with requirements or expectations.
10. Staff members shall maintain a reasonable standard of care for the supervision, control, and protection of students commensurate with their assigned duties and responsibilities.

11. Staff members shall not send students on personal errands.
12. Staff members shall, pursuant to law and Board policy, immediately report any suspected signs of child abuse or neglect.
13. Staff members shall not attempt to counsel, assess, diagnose or treat a student's personal problem relating to sexual behavior, substance abuse, mental or physical health and/or family relationships but instead, should refer the student to appropriate school personnel or agency for assistance, pursuant to law and Board policy.
14. Staff members shall not disclose information concerning a student, other than directory information, to any person not authorized to receive such information. This includes, but is not limited to, information concerning assessments, ability scores, grades, behavior, mental or physical health and/or family background.

### **Social Media**

All employees, faculty and staff of this school district who participate in social media websites or applications such as, but not limited to FaceBook, Twitter, Snapchat, and/or Instagram shall not post any data, documents, photos or inappropriate information on any website that might result in a disruption of classroom activity. The determination of appropriateness will be made by the Executive Director.

Employees, faculty and staff are solely responsible for the content and the security of their social media websites and applications and shall not give their social media website passwords to students.

Employees, faculty, and staff shall NEVER use their personal social media accounts in any way purporting to be or speaking for the MSA.

Fraternization via the internet between employees, faculty or staff and students is prohibited and in violation of standards of the Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics.

Communications with both students and parents shall be done in person, over telephone, through standard mail, secure educational applications, and/or through email. Social media shall never be used and is not an appropriate form of communication.

Access of social media websites for individual use during school hours is prohibited.

Violation of any of these policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Nothing in this policy prohibits employees, faculty, staff or students from the use of educational websites.

### **Annual Reminder to Staff**

The Executive Director and the Principal will annually remind staff members and orient new staff members concerning the importance of maintaining proper decorum in the on-line, digital world as well as in person. Employees must conduct themselves in ways that do not distract from or disrupt the educational process. The orientation and reminders will give special emphasis to:

1. Improper fraternization with students using social media and similar internet sites or networks
2. Inappropriateness of posting items with sexual content

3. Inappropriateness of posting items exhibiting or advocating use of drugs and alcohol
4. Examples of inappropriate behavior from other districts, as behavior to avoid
5. Monitoring and penalties for improper use of district computers and technology
6. The possibility of penalties, including dismissal from employment, for failure to exercise good judgment in on-line conduct.

### **Periodical Review**

The Executive Director or designees will periodically conduct internet searches to see if teachers have posted inappropriate materials on-line. When inappropriate use of computers and/or websites is discovered, the school principal and/or Executive Director may download the offensive material and promptly take proper administrative action.

### **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.

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 speak with. Students should preserve evidence of bullying/cyberbullying and/or harassing behavior.

All teachers, employees, volunteers, and students shall fully cooperate with the investigating 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 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.

The Mississippi School of the Arts 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)
- 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
- 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.

*Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-67 and 37-11-69*

## **HARASSMENT**

The Mississippi School of the Arts 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. 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, sexual 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.
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 a 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 MDE 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.

## **DRESS CODE GUIDELINES**

The following recommendations are provided as guidelines for acceptable dress for employees of the Mississippi School of the Arts (MSA). The guidelines apply to all employees.

The MSA exists to enable all Mississippi students to develop, in a safe and productive environment, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to reach their fullest potential as individuals and citizens. In this role, MSA employees provide services to educators who support and govern education and to the general public. While conducting business, employees should always project a positive, professional image through work and appearance.

To accomplish this, all employees should be well groomed and be dressed in a manner that will result in a positive image of the school. Clothing worn should be neat in appearance, in good repair, appropriate for employees' job responsibilities, and should not be offensive to the public or fellow workers. Attire should not detract from the job being performed or the message being delivered and should project a serious, competent image. **MSA employees may be asked to change attire or accessories deemed provocative, revealing, or inappropriate by the Executive Director or a designee.**

## **UNACCEPTABLE CLOTHING**

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

- Overalls, 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
- Jeans (except on Fridays), shorts, skorts, tights, spandex, leotards and tee-shirts
- Short skirts, blouses with inappropriate necklines, see through fabrics, or shirts with shelf bras that are immodest.

## **EXCEPTIONS**

Ultra-casual clothing is rarely appropriate in a school setting. At-home lounge or outdoors activity/work clothing and foot apparel, including sneakers, are inappropriate for the office. However, some employees have primary work assignments, which require them to move or maintain equipment or work outdoors (e.g., maintenance, food service, visual arts and dance teachers). These employees should discuss relaxed dress code guidelines with their supervisors; **however, all workers must dress professionally according to their specific work duties.** Other occasions, which may call for a relaxed dress code, include office cleaning/packing/moving days and medical purposes. These situations should also be discussed with an employee's supervisor.

The Executive Director reserves the right to authorize staff to dress in different manner (e.g., blue jeans, school t-shirts) on any given day. This decision will generally be centered on a special event or occasion.

## **BUSINESS CASUAL**

Business-casual attire shall be the acceptable requirement of dress. Business-casual attire in an office setting means a relaxed look that differs from standard business attire. Business-casual attire is not the same as attire normally worn to ball games, picnics, or during non-work hours.

Business-casual attire typically involves no ties for men, sweaters, turtlenecks, short sleeve, golf shirts (with a collar), slacks, and appropriate shoes (Sandals are not appropriate shoe attire for men.). Examples of preferred options for women include flat shoes and relaxed ensembles of sweaters, turtlenecks, blouses, and skirts or slacks.

## **SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Clothing should cover and fit in a manner appropriate for a business environment. Good judgment and professionalism are expected of all employees in both traditional-business and business-casual attire.

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that all employees are aware of the dress code guidelines and that staff do not abuse the flexibility intended by the business-casual provision. If an item is questionable, the employee should discuss it with his or her supervisor prior to wearing it. Should there be any questions concerning the acceptability of any clothing, supervisors shall provide guidance.

## **TELEPHONES/CELL PHONES**

Telephones are an integral part of communications within MSA. Therefore, telephones should be used primarily for school business purposes. Personal calls are permitted to a reasonable extent; however, they must be limited, and this privilege not abused. The use of cell phones, iPods, and any other device, including but not limited to headphones or earphones, which may interfere with an employee's ability to operate a school vehicle or to adequately observe and monitor the behavior of students while said students are under his or her supervision are strictly prohibited.

## **VISITORS**

All visitors to the school shall report to the school security office in the Student Life Center, turn in their identification, and receive an official visitor's pass before entering any other school facility. This procedure applies to all visitors, guest artists, community members, etc. The only exceptions are groups who have made appointments for campus tours and are escorted by school staff. All employees shall stop any unauthorized person on campus, direct them to the security office, and report their presence to the security office immediately.

Salespersons and other individuals desiring business transactions with the school must obtain permission for visitation from the administration to present to the appropriate individual.

## **POLITICAL ACTIVITY OF STAFF MEMBERS**

MSA recognizes the rights of its employees and encourages them as citizens to engage in activities which exemplify good citizenship. However, school property and school time shall not be used for political purposes. Any statements made by employees on social media or otherwise, that effects that employee's ability perform his/her duties or causes a disruption of manner at school is prohibited. Statements of this nature can result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to termination.

## **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES (TEACHERS AND STAFF MEMBERS)**

1. To plan, organize, and conduct a program of instruction in the subjects, grades or programs to which they are assigned.
2. To assume custody of the pupils assigned to their care and to take precautions that will ensure the pupil's safety and general welfare. Students should never be left unsupervised.
3. To participate in all school orientation and registration meetings and professional development unless assigned school duty conflicts.
4. To perform extracurricular duties assigned by the Executive Director or a designee, such as classroom, hallways, campus grounds and similar essential duties in any school facility.

5. To attend all faculty or staff meetings scheduled by the Executive Director or a designee, coordinators, supervisors, or superintendent, unless excused by the person calling the meeting.
6. To keep classes in session each day during school hours and not dismiss them for any time without the prior consent of the Executive Director or a designee.
7. To be responsible for all school property and equipment entrusted to them.
8. To be responsible for the behavior of their pupils and all other pupils with whom they have contact on campus.
9. To prepare all records as directed by the Executive Director or a designee.
10. To make all contacts and/or requests to the Legislature, Mississippi Department of Education or the SBE through the Executive Director or a designee and superintendent.
11. To be accountable for the performance of assigned duties to the Executive Director or a designee.
12. To keep lesson plans and/or outlines of class procedures as directed. These will aid Executive Director or a designee in performing their duties and will serve as guidelines for substitute teachers.
13. To prepare a substitute folder as prescribed and keep it up to date.
14. In all cases where a teacher terminates employment during the school year, said teacher shall provide lesson plans for at least two weeks in advance to the replacement teacher .
15. To practice, and to require the pupils to practice shared responsibility by:
  - a. Conservation of environmental and material resources
  - b. Good housekeeping by forbidding clutter, trash, scattered personal belongings;
  - c. Storing books, work materials, supplies, and equipment in a neat and orderly manner;
  - d. Keeping bulletin boards, display areas, and whiteboards clean, functional, and attractive;
  - e. Having blinds properly hung, raised, or lowered and window ledges clear of objects that appear ill-kempt from the outside;
  - f. Keeping heating and cooling vents clear of obstructions at all times;
  - g. Practicing other activities necessary to reflect good housekeeping.
16. To notify the Executive Director, direct supervisor or their designee directly upon any anticipated absences, obtaining prior approval when required.
17. To strive to interpret the work of the school fairly, honestly, and adequately to patrons at every opportunity.

18.To avoid political, doctrinal, sectarian, and denominational teaching.

19.To keep up to date in areas of expertise.

20.To strive at all times to maintain cordial relationships with colleagues, the home and parent(s)/guardian, keeping the parent(s)/guardian informed of the student's progress and holding conferences whenever necessary.

21.To perform other duties as may be assigned by the Executive Director or a designee or assistant Executive Director or a designee.

## **DISCIPLINE GUIDE FOR ALL EMPLOYEES**

The Mississippi School of the Arts is not only responsible for student academic progress but teaching students to be successful citizens in life. Every employee is responsible to for knowing and enforcing all of the policies and procedures in the student handbook. In order to be familiar with school policies, employees must read and understand all handbooks provided.

### **EMPLOYEES SHOULD:**

- Learn student names as soon as possible. All people like to be recognized;
- Be fair and consistent;
- Treat each student equally;
- Be empathetic and accentuate the positive, avoid the negative;
- Be thoroughly prepared for all classes, activities, or events and have ample involvement for all students throughout the time period;
- Be cheerful, attractive and orderly; let the learning, work, and recreation spaces reflect these qualities;
- Be professional in demeanor and maintain a sense of humor;
- Be flexible; know when to adjust plans or timelines;
- Admit errors and apologize when mistakes are made;
- Establish a minimum number of simple rules and help students understand why policies and procedures are necessary;
- Let students assist in formulating rules, policies, and procedures and in publicizing them;
- Correct students when needed to prevent minor problems from growing into larger ones;
- Watch for indicators of harassment or bullying;
- Report problems that are simmering and have the potential to escalate, thereby affecting more students and becoming much more serious. Report problems to the Executive Director and/or Security, depending on urgency;
- Remember that all employees are on duty at all times when on campus; and
- All employees are responsible for student discipline.

### **EMPLOYEES SHOULD NOT:**

- Fail to report disciplinary infractions;
- Punish the entire group for the misbehavior of a few;
- Argue with students;
- Embarrass or belittle students;

- Ignore disciplinary infractions because the paperwork takes too long;
- Refuse to consider mitigating circumstances;
- Stereotype groups of teens; even artistic students are unique;
- Compare students with one another;
- Become overly friendly or familiar with students; this can cause loss of respect;
- Repeatedly show favoritism to certain students;
- Challenge or dare students to repeat an undesirable act or get yourself in a position of “do it or else”
- Administer unusual punishments;
- Punish by leaving students alone and unsupervised in a classroom or hall;
- Punish by having students write lines;
- Make physical contact in an attempt to discipline; or
- Be alone with students in a non-public, inappropriate place.

### **GUIDELINES FOR ISSUING DISCIPLINARY ACTION:**

When issuing discipline for students, follow these steps if on campus in the academic setting:

1. Deal with the issue immediately with the student in a calm and appropriate manner
2. Report the issue to the Principal/Director of Residence Life in writing
3. The Principal/Director of Residence Life will decide the level of infraction and document in student files:
  - a. If level 1-2, the Principal/Director of Residence Life will handle the situation and inform the Executive Director
  - b. If level 3, the Executive Director will handle the situation and involve the Principal/Director of Residence Life
4. A conference with the student will be held as necessary with consequences outlined in writing
5. Follow-up will be made as necessary to fulfill consequences
6. If parents need to be contacted, the Administrator will make the contact for the conference

When issuing discipline for students, follow these same steps if on campus in the residence life setting. The Director of Residence Life will take the place of the Principal.

When off campus for MSA event, if discipline issues arise all the steps should be consistent with on campus regulations.

When off campus in the community unrelated to MSA, follow these steps:

1. Deal with the issue immediately with the student in a calm and appropriate manner
2. Do not make a scene with the student in a public place, ask the student to step to the side to discuss.
3. Report the issue to the Executive Director.
4. A conference with the student will be held as necessary with consequences outlined in writing.

5. Follow up will be made as necessary to fulfill consequences.
6. If parents need to be contacted, the Executive Director will make the contact for the conference.

## **CONTACTING PARENTS**

Teachers do have authority to contact parents with regard to academic issues. All disciplinary issues should be reported to the Director of Residence Life, Principal, or Executive Director, and contact will be made with parents as necessary. In an effort to build relationships with parents, we encourage positive reports to them as often as possible.

## **TECHNOLOGY OFFICE AND LOCATIONS**

The MSA technology office and secured technology locations are off limits to staff and students unless they are accompanied by the Technology Coordinator or given permission from the same. Staff members must not use master keys to enable a student to access the technology office.

## **TECHNOLOGY – ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

*All staff members must participate in training, read and sign the Acceptable Use Agreement Contract.*

MSA 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.

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 if and 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.

## **CHILDREN’S INTERNET PROTECTION ACT (CIPA)**

In December 2000, Congress enacted the 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, in chat rooms and in cyberbullying awareness and response.

## **CHILDREN’S ONLINE PRIVACY PROTECTION ACT (COPPA)**

The 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**

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 commitment to:

1. The standards and acceptable use of Internet services as set forth in the MSA Acceptable Use Policy;
2. 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).
3. 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 campus computer network is referred to as MSANet. The MSANet usage policies are designed to provide an environment that is consistent with the MSA mission and vision, 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.

## **CYBERSECURITY**

Cybersecurity plays an important role in today’s technological world. With advanced threats from criminals around the world, any exploit in technology systems can be used to gain unauthorized access from perpetrators. With that in mind, MSA will take pertinent steps to help prevent cyber-attacks against the institution’s computer network systems, but employees must also do their part in helping to prevent such attacks.

Staff and students are encouraged to take cybersecurity seriously. Training on cybersecurity shall be conducted yearly, and additional training will be held as optioned by the administration.

Users of MSA computer systems are prohibited from sharing login credentials with other users unless expressed permission is given by the Technology Coordinator. It is the responsibility of the user to secure his login credentials when accessing trusted network resources. Passwords associated with trusted resources must contain an appropriate strength, and of at least 8 alphanumeric characters.

In regard to cybersecurity, MSA reserves the right to monitor the network 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. The following behaviors are not permitted on district computers:

1. Sharing confidential information on students or employees;
2. Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures;
3. Using obscene or sexually explicit language or images;
4. Discriminatory, harassing, derogatory, insulting or attacking any individual or group;
5. Defamatory or threatening language or images;
6. Damaging computers, computer systems or computer networks;
7. Violating copyright laws or any laws;
8. Using others' passwords;
9. Trespassing in others' folders, work or files;
10. Intentionally wasting limited resources;
11. Using computers for personal or commercial purposes;
12. Supporting/opposing political candidates or issues;
13. Engaging in practices that threaten the system (e.g. loading files that may introduce a virus);
14. Violating regulations prescribed by the provider;
15. Conducting union business;
16. Promoting, supporting, celebrating or opposing religion or religious institutions;
17. Engaging in for any purpose that is contrary to MSA's policies or interests;
18. Visiting obscene web sites;
19. Participating in any obscene "chat room" communications;
20. Unauthorized monitoring or intercepting files or electronic communications of other users;
21. 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);
22. Hacking or obtaining access to systems or files that are unauthorized to the user.

No personal computer or other personal hardware device(s) may be used to connect to, to log into, or to interface with the MSANet academic network at any time. No personal removable

media (including but not limited to floppy disks, PIN, thumb, jump drives, etc.) may be used in conjunction with MSA equipment. MSA will archive all emails sent or received through the network or on MSA equipment for a period of at least 60 days and that these emails are subject to review by the Technology Department staff and the Executive Director or designee(s).

## **USER RESPONSIBILITIES**

As MSANet account holders, users should:

1. Be owners of their data and keep account information confidential;
2. Provide a personal USB flash memory drive 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 Technology Coordinator 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.
7. Remain in good standing as a staff at the MSA. When staff are suspended, dismissed, or otherwise no longer employed, permission to use school resources may be removed, and access to the school and its systems may be denied until the staff member returns to the school in good standing. Staff who are dismissed from employment automatically forfeit all access to school technological resources.

## **PERSONAL COMPUTERS AND PERIPHERAL DEVICES**

In general, staff 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, staff may connect thumb drives to the system for purposes of storing and retrieving their own personal data as it relates to school purposes.

Staff who choose to have their own computers on campus must:

1. Provide the computer and all necessary accessories to allow it to function that is configured by the staff 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 staff computers;

3. Understand that it is a privilege NOT a right for a staff 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;
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.

## **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 misuse of computer privileges;
6. Deny access temporarily pending review when there is reasonable suspicion that such 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 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 individuals' 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 credentials at all times, and are not to share credentials. Any use of another user's credentials 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, 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.

## **DEADLINES**

Deadlines (e.g., attendance, grades, budget requests, cleaning for school events) are established to ensure a timely response to the students, parents, and community as well to ensure a safe and orderly campus. Employees who fail to meet deadlines will be subject to administrative review.

## **FORMS AND PUBLICATIONS**

A wide variety of forms are necessary to acquire data necessary for the effective operation of a residential school. Forms shall be made available using network resources and available to all employees, subject to access rights assigned by the Technology Office.

Occasionally, a need arises for a new form. All forms must be created using an appropriate MSA format. Before distribution and use, all forms must be approved by the Executive Director. Be certain that the document has been proofed for correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation before submitting it for approval. The documents provided by an organization reflect on its professional quality.

Communications should be concise, clear to understand, but written from a supportive perspective. Use grammar and spell check to proof all documents. Word process and print all communications on school letterhead using 10-12-point Arial font with fully justified paragraphs.

When at all possible communications via electronic documents are preferred to conserve natural resources and economize in light of rising costs of postal services. Staff members must restrain from modifying MSA letterhead forms, memos, fax documents, etc. without permission. A consistent appearance in documentation helps create a school “brand”—a visual identity that communicates excellence and professionalism.

Please note that training will be provided to all employees on each form and its purpose. Staff are responsible for timely and accurate paperwork in all aspects of work. Habitual problematic submissions will result in a reprimand.

## **CUMULATIVE FOLDERS AND PERMANENT RECORDS**

MSA maintains student cumulative folders and permanent records according to state laws and regulations. Cumulative records are stored in locked, fireproof files in the administrative office basement storage area. Authorized staff members (administrative staff, counselor, teachers) may examine and work on student records only in the administrative office areas. Parents may request to inspect a student’s education records and will be arranged within 15 days of receipt of the request.

## **RECORDS RETENTION**

The MSA shall retain copies of records in accordance with the mandatory school, SBE, Department of Archives and History, and other state and federal requirements. The following documents will be used for guidelines:

1. State of Mississippi Records Retention Schedules for School Districts
2. Mississippi Cumulative Folders and Permanent Records Manual of Directions
3. Guidelines for retention of records for specific federal programs (e.g., E-Rate, National School Lunch Program)
4. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA),
5. The Confidentiality Section of the Individuals with Disabilities Act, 1997 Amendments (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).

## **STATE OF MISSISSIPPI RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULES FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL SCHEDULES**

These general records retention schedules are issued by the Department of Archives and History, Local Government Records Office, as found in Miss. Code Ann. § 39-5-9. The Local Government Records Committee approved these schedules on the dates indicated. Additions and revisions to the schedules may be issued in the future by the Local Government Records Office and will be distributed accordingly.

The retention period listed in the general schedules for each records series is the **minimum** time necessary to retain the records. *There may be conditions or factors in a local government that require retention of a particular record series for a longer period than is required by the general records schedule, and, in such cases, the local governments are urged to continue retention of the records series as needed.* In no case, however, may records series be destroyed sooner than the scheduled retention period.

*Records involved in investigations, audits, or litigation must be maintained until the settlement of the case and subsequent appeals regardless of disposition instructions found in a records retention schedule.*

*No local government records dating prior to 1920 shall be destroyed without special schedule directions issued by the Committee. Destruction of records dating prior to 1940 but after 1919 may be undertaken only with the written approval of the Director of the Department of Archives and History.*

The Committee may modify this date according to the historical value of a particular record series by placing a special statement in the retention period of such series with an approved records control schedule.

Upon expiration of the minimum retention period, local officials are authorized to dispose of the records if there are no extenuating circumstances. Disposition should be done in a manner consistent with the nature of the records (e.g. records containing confidential information should be disposed in a manner that will insure confidentiality). There may be instances when a county, upon the expiration of the retention period, may choose to transfer a records series to a public library or a local historical organization as an alternative to destruction. Prior to such a transfer, the county must contact the Local Government Records Office.

According to Mississippi law, records may not be destroyed except in accordance with an approved retention schedule. Therefore, records series not listed in these schedules are not eligible for disposal until an appropriate records retention schedule has been approved by the Local Government Records Committee.

## **ASSEMBLIES, EVENTS, & ACTIVITIES**

All events or assemblies to be scheduled during the school day must be approved by the administration in advance, added to the school calendar, and be closely connected to meaningful teaching and learning. All other events and assemblies may be held at night or on the weekends.

See section entitled “Performances, Rehearsals, & Meetings” of this handbook.

## **PUBLICITY AND PROMOTIONS**

MSA has a variety of performances, exhibits and events annually. All promotional materials (press releases, fliers, and programs) must be approved by the Executive Director prior to distribution or printing. If changes are requested a second version must be presented for approval unless otherwise instructed. Materials should be ready in a timely manner with adequate time to fix any issues before distribution.

The visual appearance of an institution makes the first impression when visitors arrive on campus. Therefore, posters and signs should reflect the quality of work that is at the heart of the MSA mission for the school. Materials promoting businesses, politics, churches, or other organizations are forbidden.

The staff member is responsible for proofing all text and check to ensure that copyrighted materials have not been appropriated. Photos of staff members, students, or others should not be used without permission. When posting signs on doors or windows, tape them inside of the glass on all corners to prevent curling and sagging. Do **not** post items on exterior surfaces or on painted or wood surfaces inside. Please remove posted signs, the tape, and any residue in a timely manner.

## **INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS**

Administrators must follow all contractual policies and procedures when securing the services of an independent contractor (e.g., fire inspections, pest control). Maintain department copies of independent contractor documentation before submitting originals to the Administrative Assistant and the Executive Director. Directors are required to submit quotes in accordance with purchasing laws for any contract when hiring independent service providers to ensure more economical pricing.

## **CONFERENCES**

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND EMPLOYEE**

Conferences will be held at the discretion of the Principal or Executive Director or upon request of the employee. Please schedule an appointment except in matters of urgency.

### **DIRECTOR/PRINCIPAL AND EMPLOYEE**

Conferences will be held at the discretion of the supervising Director/Principal or upon request of the employee. Please schedule an appointment except in matters of urgency.

### **ADMINISTRATOR (TEACHER, STAFF) AND PARENT OR GUARDIAN**

Since frequent communication with parents or guardians opens many doors, builds partnerships, and creates a supportive educational environment, MSA employees must be

responsible in taking the initiative to schedule a parent conference at the first sign of a student's deviation from the norm. Parent/teacher conferences should be scheduled during a teacher's preparation period. Non-teaching employees may schedule appointments with parents according to individual work schedules and upon approval of immediate supervisor or Executive Director. When possible, the Executive Director will notify employees in advance when parents request a conference through the administrative offices. With sufficient advance notice, the Executive Director may be invited to attend conferences if requested. When travel distance is prohibitive, a parent conference may be held via speakerphone.

### **EMPLOYEE/STUDENT**

An employee who has frequent and direct communication with students will find the profits to be overwhelming in the areas of student achievement, behavior, and overall progress. Employees should keep records where problems exist and improvement plans are designed. If a student is placed on probation, policies and procedures delineated in the MSA Student Handbook must be followed.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL EXPECTATIONS**

### **TEACHER AS THE AUTHORITY IN THE CLASSROOM**

The MSA as governed by the SBE recognizes that the teacher as the authority in classroom matters and supports that teacher in any decision in compliance with the written discipline code of conduct. Such recognition shall include the right of the teacher to remove from the classroom 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 MANAGEMENT**

## **TAKING STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

Compulsory school attendance laws mandate that students attend school regularly. Teachers and substitute teachers must take attendance each class period. Attendance must be completed within the first ten minutes of each class. Students are marked tardy if they come into class after the second bell. Students missing thirty minutes or more are considered absent. Since substitute teachers will be using a printed roster, they should call the attendance secretary each block to report attendance.

## **LEAVING STUDENTS UNATTENDED**

MSA policy forbids leaving students unattended in classrooms or sending students around campus without supervision. Teachers are responsible for ensuring a safe and orderly classroom environment where adult supervision is provided without interruption. Classroom climate should always support teaching and learning. At no time should students be left alone under the supervision of a student teacher. Supervision policies are in effect at all times when students are assigned to a classroom or duty post. Policies cover spaces inside and outside campus facilities or off campus when staff members are supervising school activities.

## **ESTABLISHING CLEAR EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS**

Students excel when they are given clear expectations and high standards for living and learning. Make certain that assignments are clear, requirements and deadlines understood, and assessment criteria determined in advance and used as a work tool. Set firm deadlines and stick to them. Do not accept work beyond established time frames except in circumstances of excused absences. See the MSA Student Handbook for specific guidelines. Never accept student work after a grading period has passed except in circumstances approved by the Executive Director or Principal.

## **SETTING RULES FOR STUDENT CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR**

Teachers are responsible for working with students to establish classroom rules and teaching appropriate classroom behavior to those under their care. Appropriate language, physical boundaries, and classroom etiquette should be taught and maintained throughout the school year. Disciplinary Reports must be completed for violations of school policies including classroom rules.

## **ALLOWING STUDENTS TO WORK OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM**

Sometimes students may need to work outside the classroom independently for legitimate learning experiences such as taking photographs, painting from real life, rehearsing in pairs or small groups out of doors, etc. Such instances must be kept to a minimum. Faculty members should make certain that students always work in common areas where they are clearly visible. Students must not work in areas where noise or physical presence of additional persons would interrupt teaching and learning in other classrooms. Teachers must circulate among the

students and maintain contact with them throughout the class time.

### **ATTENDING ASSEMBLIES AND PERFORMANCES**

All teachers must accompany their students to campus assemblies, meetings, and performances. Teachers are responsible for student conduct during these events. Proper, respectful, audience behavior is a critical component of becoming a productive citizen. When accompanying students on a field trip, proper etiquette of audience behavior is expected.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

In accordance with the MSA commitment to excellence among its employees, the school will provide opportunities for professional development for all its employees that complements and supports the educational program. Additionally, staff are encouraged to seek unique opportunities that can enhance their job performance.

### **LESSON PLANS**

Teachers are responsible for writing and following a lesson or unit plan for each class period. Lesson plans should be written with clear objectives and learning experiences so that anyone could follow the lesson. Each lesson must be tied to the MDE framework for the specific subject area.

Each teacher will be given access to Moodle and a template and should have plans available for review at 7:45 a.m. every Monday morning or the first workday of the week. An administrator observing in the classroom may give the teacher comments, questions, and suggestions for the current lesson. All print materials (e.g., handouts, tests, rubrics) should be included with each lesson plan or be made available upon request/observation.

There should be a different lesson for each course taught. If a teacher has four different courses, a different lesson should be planned for each day. Teachers are advised that all lesson plans are subject to review by administration. Teachers having computer issues should use the library for entry of lesson plans and/or make arrangements to provide a hard copy of lesson plans to the principal. Failure to prepare lesson plans may lead to administrative action. To facilitate revision, all lesson plans should be done electronically and stored for future personal use.

### **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, cartoons). This policy applies to all aspects of the campus; students and faculty members must 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 for approval.

## **HOMEWORK**

Teachers may assign a reasonable amount of meaningful homework. All homework will be checked or graded by the teacher and counted toward course credit. No homework will be given prior to subject area or standardized test days or holidays without special permission from the Executive Director or Principal. Teachers are expected to provide assignments and other assistance to students with excused absences as specified by the policies in the Student Handbook.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are an important extension of the curriculum. Students are afforded opportunities during the school year to travel in state and possibly 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 Executive Director. 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:

1. The faculty or staff member sponsoring the trip will submit a request in the Field Trip Database for approval at least two weeks prior to departure.
2. The request will be forwarded to the Principal to secure substitutes as needed and assess if ADA and class minutes are affected.
3. All trips must be educational and well planned with an adequate number of chaperones. A ratio of one adult per ten students is acceptable.
4. Parents or other adults (of acceptable age and maturity) may serve as chaperones, but the instructor is responsible for ensuring that they understand their duties.
5. Faculty and chaperones must travel in school vehicles with students to ensure proper supervision and safety while in transport.
6. Last-minute requests for trips will not be approved.
7. The request will be forwarded to the Director of Security and Director of Residence Life to see if a bus and driver are available in advance since MSA has a limited number of vehicles and drivers.
8. If admission fees or tickets are required as part of the field trip, participants should collectively share the costs for the bus driver.
9. The request will also be forwarded to the Director of Food Services. If bag lunches, beverages, or snacks are needed for the trip, the sponsor must make the request upon entry in the database and must be at least two weeks in advance using the Food Service Function section of the database request.
10. The teacher will submit in the request a list of those students participating in field trips. Notification of those attending will be posted in the Morning Announcements.
11. 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.
12. The General Permissions Information Form provides parental signature allowing students to participate in all school sponsored field trips within Mississippi. Out-of-State requests must be secured with an additional Student Permission Slip after travel authorizations from the MDE are secured for staff.
  13. Even though the school has general trip authorization signatures on file, the field trip sponsor should notify parents in advance of the scheduled event so they will know their child will be away from campus for a specified period of time.
  14. A student without all of the required signed permission forms and/or assessed fees in advance of the trip date may not participate in the field trip.
  15. Students who do not participate in field trips must complete an alternative assignment.
  16. School rules and regulations found in the MSA handbook pertain to all school-sponsored trips.

Field trips shall not occur during statewide testing. All field trips will be complete prior to May 1. The sponsor of any field trip must ride on the bus with the bus driver and students to and from the destination. State statute requires that a staff member in addition to the bus driver should ride in the bus with the students. For MSA field trips, rarely is there another staff member available to accompany the students. Parent chaperones or volunteers cannot be held liable for knowing MSA policies and implementing proper behavior expectations. Therefore, the sponsor of the field trip will be mandated to ride with the students on the bus.

## **STUDENT TEACHERS**

Occasionally—upon request, student teachers may be assigned to an MSA teacher. All requests for the placement of student teachers must be addressed to the Principal or the Executive Director for approval before arrangements are made. Contact by the teacher education placement office must be made, not through the student or the prospective resident teacher.

The supervising teacher will be responsible for mentoring the development of the student teacher's classroom management, teaching and learning strategies, and professionalism. Student teachers shall not administer or prescribe punishment to students. Student teachers will abide by the policies set forth by the MSA. Supervising teachers must never leave pupils alone in the care of a student teacher.

## **SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS**

When teachers anticipate being absent, they should discuss the absence with the Principal before finalizing plans to be absent from school. Faculty members must submit a request to the Principal for approval at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of requested absence. The request must have the up-to-date substitute file including all items listed below. Last minute requests will be denied. When a teacher will be off campus supervising school activities during the school day, the same procedures must be followed. MSA has a limited number of substitutes, so advance notification is mandatory, but illness and emergencies do occur occasionally.

When notifying the Principal or Executive Director during school, please call the following

numbers:

Principal  
601-823-1308 Office

Executive Director  
601-823-1303 Office

Do not leave a voice mail message anywhere. Call or text until you receive a response from someone personally. Classroom teachers must maintain an up-to-date substitute file that will be kept in the Principal's office in preparation for absences due to unexpected illness or emergencies. Folders must be clearly labeled with the teacher's name and containing the following:

1. Generic lesson plans that are meaningful to the subject area, but applicable to any time period within the semester;
2. Class rosters (Keep them up to date);
3. Teaching schedules;
4. Duty assignments with clear instructions;
5. Select students in each class whose job it will be to assist a substitute in routine matters;
6. Make sure that all necessary materials will be readily available for the substitute with instructions concerning what to do with assigned and completed work;
7. Leave blank Campus Passes for use by the substitute;
8. Please include Discipline Report forms for the substitute in case a problem arises;
9. Follow up on reports left by the substitute regarding discipline problems that may have occurred during your absence.

*PLEASE NOTE:* All work produced in the absence of a teacher must be graded and included as a part of regular grades. Too frequently students perceive work assigned in the absence of a teacher as busywork— therefore, they think it is not important. Meaningful and challenging work left in the absence of a teacher supports continuous learning and helps maintain order and discipline.

### **ILLNESSES (STUDENT)**

Send the student to the school nurse with a pass. Allow another student to accompany him/her if his/her condition so indicates. Even if a student appears to be feigning illness, it is usually better practice to acknowledge the student's feelings and allow the nurse to make a medical decision. The nurse will assume responsibility for further action and follow through.

Under no circumstances should faculty members send a student to the dorm or "prescribe" treatment when a student claims to be sick. The school nurse (or designee) is the only medical professional on campus. If a student is seriously ill, the nurse will contact the parents and the child will go home. In instances that the nurse is off campus, the second person for contact is the Attendance Secretary and the third person for contact is the Administrative Assistant in the Y-Hut. During the evening, the residence life staff is capable of administering medications according to policy and can assist with getting emergent care as needed.

### **MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION TO STUDENTS**

MSA follows a self-administration policy for students to take prescription and over-the-counter medications. Designated staff members have been trained on tracking administration of medications. Employees who have been trained are required to see the medication that a student is taking, watch them take it, and document the action in the school software. Employees who are not designated or trained are prohibited from administering medications at any time.

Designated MSA employees will dispense medication to students in accordance with policies included in the Student Handbook. Over the counter medications may be acquired from the nurse for self- administration by employees.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

Teachers are responsible for maintaining the inventory of all textbooks assigned to their classrooms or workstations. Upon arrival on campus, they must verify the Textbook Inventory form provided and report any differences to MSA Textbook Coordinator. The following procedures shall be used:

1. In assigning textbooks, teachers must record book identification numbers, book title, and the student receiving the textbook.
2. Secure all textbooks not assigned to individual students. Leaving books on open shelves in the classroom results in damage and loss.
3. When a student moves, books must be turned in to classroom teacher as a part of the withdrawal process before records are released. A teacher's signature is required to complete the withdrawal process or before checking out for the summer or before graduation.
4. Students will be charged for books that are lost.
5. All losses and collections for textbooks shall be reported to the textbook coordinator(s) in the Y- Hut.
6. Teachers and staff members distributing books to pupils are authorized to collect for any damage or excessive wear of the textbooks.
7. Loss or damage fees will be based on the schedule published in the MSA Student Handbook.
8. The amount collected should be determined by the extent such damage has impaired the future use of the book and should be sufficient to impress upon parents and student the necessity for proper care and the use of the state-funded textbooks.
9. In order to comply with state accreditation policies, books that are more than ten (10) years old are not included in state textbook inventory and must not be stored permanently in classrooms. Since MSA uses many books that are more than ten years old for reference (e.g., plays, art history texts, trade books), these books will be stored in the library, checked out by the faculty member who needs them and returned to the library when work is completed. The staff member or student who checks the books out of the library is responsible for their return.
10. Teachers must inventory textbooks and report the information to the Textbook Coordinator at the end of the school year (semester). If a faculty member leaves campus at the end of the school year without completing textbook inventory requirements will have to return to campus to complete documentation not turned in.

11. Clearly mark all personal books and resources materials with your name in order to distinguish them from state property.

## **DUTY STATIONS**

All teachers and employees who are present in the Student Life Center during meal periods are responsible for correcting inappropriate behavior. This responsibility extends to the entire campus at all times.

### **LUNCH DUTY CAFETERIA LINE**

These two duty stations are located (1) Monitoring students in line into the serving area and (2) Circulating throughout the dining room area. Duties may include:

1. Being on duty at 11:20 a.m. until 11:55 p.m.
2. Ensuring that students do not break line at the serving area.
3. Ensuring that all students abide by school rules during lunchtime.
4. Monitoring tables to make sure students dispose of trash, dishes, and trays properly.
5. Monitoring noise level and ensuring that the television remains off during mealtimes.
6. Encouraging good etiquette.
7. Completing Discipline Reports for those who violate school policy and reporting to the Principal.
8. Finding a replacement when absent or on a field trip.

### **HALL AND CAMPUS DUTY**

Between classes, all teachers should stand in their doorways before and after class in order to ensure safe and orderly conduct in the hallways when changing classes. All employees are responsible for addressing students in relation to proper behavior when passing in the common areas of the campus. Disciplinary action must be taken when students violate school guidelines.

## **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, 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, 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 Special Education Services 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 SBE, MDE, and MSA do not discriminate on the basis of 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 MDE Board Policy Part 3, Chapter 99, Rule 99.1.

## **DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH IDEA AND SECTION 504 ELIGIBILITY**

Special education students are responsible for adhering to the same rules of conduct as nondisabled students. The school complies with all provisions of the IDEA of 2004, the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Mississippi laws, and State Board Policy 7219 when implementing discipline procedures for students with disabilities.

## **PLAGIARISM**

Because plagiarism is a nationwide problem in schools, each faculty member must make arrangements to instruct their students in relation to violation of copyrights at the beginning of each course and include periodic reminders throughout the grading periods. Each arts discipline teacher must teach the difference between adaptation, appropriation, and copying in the various arts forms and make an appointment with the librarian to do additional instruction on plagiarism using online resources. Violation of copyright is stealing and results in serious disciplinary action. All employees are responsible for reporting incidences of plagiarism, including copying homework. Each employee is expected to serve as a role model by setting an example of respect for the work of others. Schools have been assessed severe fines for copyright violations. Be careful; ask questions. Staff members responsible for ensuring that documents created under their supervision do not contain copyrighted images, photos, text or other media. Adults must model correct methodologies for students.

## **GRADE REPORTING**

In order to ensure timely feedback to students, parents, the counselor, and administrators, teachers must:

1. Publish their grading processes and procedures at the beginning of each course including how various assignments are weighted to determine student grades.

2. Keep accurate, up-to-date records of student grades.
3. Use SAM to enter and average grades according to system requirements.
4. Grade all assessments and major projects or assignments.
5. Average grades in accordance with approved grading scales.
6. Post grades in SAM within three school days after grading is completed, with a minimum of one grade posted per week.
7. Provide feedback regarding grades in a timely manner to facilitate instruction, remediation, and enrichment.
8. Meet deadlines for grade entry so that progress reports and/or report cards are completed on time.
9. Enter grades with no inaccurate or incomplete information provided.
10. Administer nine weeks examinations. No students are exempt from MSA exams.
11. Include a daily participation, citizenship percentage
12. Count off points for each day late; establish a maximum number of days after which work will not be accepted.

Keeping a paper grade book is discouraged since errors may occur in transferring grades to the electronic system. A print copy of the SAM electronic grade book is recommended. Under no circumstance shall a paper grade book be a substitute for ongoing and timely entry of grades into SAM. Parents have access to student attendance, grades, and discipline via ActiveParent.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL WORKDAY**

### **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
<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</b>

## **SAFETY**

All employees must take all possible steps to ensure the safety of students at school. The interior environment, campus, and student activities must be in harmony with the requirements of safety. Immediately report any unsafe condition or behavior on campus to the appropriate administrator.

## **EMERGENCIES**

It is essential that the staff be knowledgeable of the school's emergency procedures. Remain calm during emergencies. Specific procedures are described in the MSA Safety and Crisis Management Manual.

### **FIRE DRILL**

In the case of fire, know the fire evacuation routes and procedures. Carry class rosters during evacuation and account for each student under your supervision. Know the location of the nearest fire extinguisher and how to use it.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER DEFINITIONS:**

- Severe Weather Watch - weather conditions are such that severe thunderstorms may develop.
- Severe Weather Warning - a severe thunderstorm has developed and will probably affect those areas stated in weather bulletin.
- Tornado Watch - weather conditions are such that a tornado may develop.
- Tornado Warning - a tornado has formed, been sighted, and may affect areas identified.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES**

During Severe Weather, students will remain in classrooms or the Student Life Center unless notified by school personnel who will continuously monitor the situation.

If a Tornado Warning has been issued, the City of Brookhaven sirens will sound and an announcement will be made via MSA intercom. If no electricity, administration will announce tornado warning procedures.

In Johnson Institute, all students go to the center hallway on the first floor, be seated with backs against the walls. In the Student Life Center, all persons go to the cafeteria hallway. In the Y-Hut, personnel go to the basement along the interior walls.

In the event of approaching catastrophic weather conditions such as hurricanes or tropical storms that could spawn tornados, all personnel will be moved to the SLC first floor.

### **PERSONAL EMERGENCY**

In case of a personal emergency, teachers should notify the Y-Hut immediately.

## **IDENTIFICATION BADGES**

All MSA/MDE employees must wear identification badges at all times when on duty. MSA ID badges are mandatory since a security system has been installed on the campus that requires electronic identification prior to entry into campus facilities. Any employee who reports to campus without his/her ID badge must report to security for a temporary badge.

## **ACCIDENTS**

Administration, faculty, and staff members are responsible for the safety of all students under their supervision. Injuries to students while they are the responsibility of the school must be given immediate attention. Accident procedures cannot be formulated to apply in all situations. The following will serve as general guidelines and may be modified as individual situations occur.

1. Follow the school emergency plan.
2. Remain calm and promptly decide what needs to be done to prevent the situation from worsening.
3. Act decisively—take charge.
4. If the accident requires further assistance, call the school nurse and call or send someone to the Y-Hut to ask for help.
5. If first aid is indicated and if you are knowledgeable, administer first aid.
6. Resume normal activities as soon as possible.
7. Prior to leaving school, submit a written report to the office using the **Accident Report Form** (student or staff) provided in your **School Safety and Crisis Management Manual** and on the Staff Read Only Forms folder in the network shared drive.

Fulltime employees who are injured on the job are covered by workman's compensation insurance. On the day of the accident or within 24 hours, complete the appropriate MDE form that can be acquired from the Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director.

## **SEX OFFENDER NOTIFICATIONS**

Pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. §45-33-49(5), the MDE shall notify all school districts annually regarding the availability of the Sex Offender Registry at the Mississippi Department of Public Safety (DPS) Web site: [http://www.sor.mdps.state.ms.us/sorpublic/hpsor\\_search.aspx](http://www.sor.mdps.state.ms.us/sorpublic/hpsor_search.aspx).

DPS information provides the name, address, photograph, if available, date of photograph, place of employment, crime for which convicted, date and place of conviction, hair, eye color, height, race, sex and date of birth of any registrant. Also, a sheriff shall maintain records for registrants of the county and shall make available to any person upon request other information deemed necessary for the protection of the public. The sheriffs shall be responsible for verifying their respective registries annually against DPS records to ensure current information is available at both levels.

## **WEAPONS**

MSA desires to maintain a work environment which is safe and secure in nature. Threats, threatening behavior, or any acts of violence against employees, students or other individuals on the premises will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination, and/or criminal prosecution. Any person who engages in violent behavior, such as making substantial threats, or intentionally hitting, kicking, or striking a person or property on MSA premises may be removed by administration from the premises as quickly as safety permits, and is to remain off premises pending the outcome of an investigation. Additionally, the School Policy prohibits firearms or weapons of any type on the premises.

MSA recognizes the possession of pistols, firearms or other weapons on school premises or at school functions by persons other than duly authorized law enforcement officials creates an unreasonable and unwarranted risk of injury or death to employees, students, visitors or guests. Possession of a firearm or weapon while on the premises will be handled with appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. All employees will fully cooperate with MSA Administration and with law enforcement agencies to eliminate workplace violence risks. All personnel are responsible for immediately notifying their supervisor, Principal, or Executive Director of any threats, threatening behavior or acts of violence, which they have witnessed, received or have been told that another person has witnessed or received. Even without an actual threat, personnel should also report any behavior they have witnessed which they regard as threatening or violent when that behavior is employment or job-related or might be carried out on MSA premises. The supervisor or Principal who receives the report is responsible for informing the Executive Director so that proper documentation of the incident can be gathered.

## **DRUG AND ALCOHOL FREE WORKPLACE**

The Mississippi School of the Arts is a drug free workplace including all school facilities, grounds, and vehicles. This policy includes alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. All employees of the Mississippi School of the Arts as employees of the Mississippi Department of Education are bound by the following policy. Within this policy “MSA” are interchangeable with “MDE” and “Department.”

It is the policy of the MSA to maintain a drug and alcohol abuse-free workplace. As a condition of employment, all employees will be required to certify, in writing, that they will abide by the terms of this policy as set out below. All employees will be required to sign, at the time of employee orientation an acknowledgment of the “Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988” memorandum (Section 7.2). The signed certification will be a part of the employee's permanent personnel file.

In accordance with Public Law 100-690, the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988 and Public Law 101647, the Drug Free Schools and Community Act of 1986, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the workplace of the Department of Education. Pursuant to this law, all MSA employees will notify the State Superintendent of Education if convicted for violation of any criminal drug statutes, should said violation occur in the workplace, no later than five (5) days after such conviction.

As used in this policy, the term "drugs" includes alcohol, inhalants (chemical vapors), cannabis (marijuana), controlled substances, and similar substances that impair a person's ability to work productively and safely. The proper use of drugs as prescribed by a licensed physician is not subject to disciplinary action. If an employee's ability to work safely may be affected by the use of a prescribed drug, the employee must inform his/her supervisor so that precautions can be taken.

The MSA policy is that employees shall not be allowed to work or participate in any school or department activities while using alcohol or under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substance which alters their ability to work safely and productively. Reporting to work under the influence of, or when ability is impaired by, alcohol or the unlawful use of a controlled substance, is cause for termination. The use of alcohol or the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance while on the job, on the office premise or participating in any Department of Education activity is cause for termination.

Employees who suffer from the problems of drug abuse or alcoholism must recognize that it is their responsibility to address these problems. Upon request by the employee for assistance with a substance abuse problem, the MSA Human Resources Office will advise the employee of leave, insurance benefits and available treatment resources. It is the employee's obligation to seek diagnosis and/or treatment and to abide by any program of care prescribed by medical personnel. A request for assistance may not be entertained if it is made after the employee engages in misconduct which the State Superintendent considers to be cause for dismissal, and no request for assistance will prevent the State Superintendent from taking disciplinary action based on the misconduct which may have been related to the employee's use of alcohol or drugs.

The Department of Education, however, is under no obligation to maintain the employment of anyone who constitutes a threat to the workplace or whose current use of alcohol or drugs prevents him/her from working safely or productively, or otherwise performing his/her duties.

The Department has adopted the policy that all areas it occupies will be tobacco-free. The Mississippi Board of Education has the right to revise this policy. Nothing in this policy grants any property right to an employee who serves at the will and pleasure of the State Superintendent of Education. The Department requires that all employees report to work without any alcohol or illegal or mind-altering substances in their systems. No employee shall report for work or remain on duty when using any controlled substance, except when the use is pursuant to the instructions of a physician who has advised the employee that the substance does not adversely affect the employee's ability to perform in a safe manner.

Employees must inform their supervisor when they are legitimately taking medication that may affect their ability to work, in order to avoid creating safety problems and violating the Drug and Alcohol Policy. No employee shall use alcohol while on duty. The Department also prohibits employees using, possessing, manufacturing, distributing or making arrangements to distribute illegal drugs while at work or on department property. Further, outside conduct of a substance abuse-related nature that affects an employee's work, the Department's relationship with the government or reflects badly on the Department is prohibited.

"Workplace" is defined as the site for the performance of work done including a school building,

campus grounds or other school premises; any school-owned vehicle or any other school approved vehicle used to transport students to and from school or school activities; off-school property during any school-sponsored or school-approved activity, event or function, such as a field trip or performance event, where students are under the jurisdiction of the school.

As a condition of employment, each employee shall abide by the terms of the school respecting a drug-free workplace and shall report to work without any alcohol or illegal mind-altering substances in their systems.

**All employees should be very familiar with the MSA Student Handbook policy related to possession and/or use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs.**

## **DRUG TESTING**

All Mississippi School of the Arts employees who are licensed bus drivers are subject to 49 C.F.R. Part 40 and the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991. In order to enforce these rules, the Department reserves the right to require the above employees to submit, at any time an employee is on duty or at any time an employee may normally be called to be on duty, to drug tests to determine the presence of prohibited substances. (For more information on this policy, see the MDE Policies and Procedures Manual.)

## **SMOKING POLICY**

### **MISSISSIPPI UNIFORM SMOKE-FREE PUBLIC PLACE ACT OF 2007**

The Mississippi Uniform Smoke-Free Public Place Act of 2007 prohibits smoking on all educational property by all persons at all times. This ban includes all employees, students, and patrons attending school sponsored events and meetings. "Educational property" means any public or private school building or bus, public school campus, grounds, recreational area, athletic field or other property owned, used or operated by any local school board, school or directors for the administration of any public or private educational institution or during a school-related activity, effective July 1, 2007.

### **CIVIL PENALTIES**

Any person who violates this act shall be subject to a civil fine and upon conviction shall be liable as follows:

1. For a first conviction, a warning;
2. For a second conviction, a fine of Seventy-five Dollars (\$75.00); and
3. For all subsequent convictions, a fine not to exceed One Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$150.00).

Anyone convicted under this section shall be recorded as being fined for a civil violation of this act and not for violating a criminal statute. Any such violation shall be tried in any justice court or municipal court with proper jurisdiction.

It is the responsibility of all law enforcement officers and law enforcement agencies of this state to ensure that the provisions of this act are enforced.

A person or employer shall not discharge, refuse to hire or in any manner retaliate against any employee, applicant for employment, or customer because that person exercises a right to a smoke-free environment afforded by this act.

In keeping with the requirements of the Mississippi Uniform Smoke-Free Public Place Act of 2007, smoking and tobacco use is banned on the MSA campus and adjacent properties owned by the MSA Foundation provided for school use.

MSA employees who smoke or use tobacco may do so during breaks and at lunch. Since all MSA employees serve as role models, smokers must leave the campus to smoke out of the view of students. Smoking is not allowed in vehicles on campus. Employees who are found smoking on the MSA campus (including adjacent properties) are subject to disciplinary action and civil penalties.

## **WELLNESS**

Students are not the only ones who need good health. School employees who want to encourage children and teens to live a healthy lifestyle will be more successful if they model healthy behaviors. 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. The MSA encourages its staff to pursue a healthy lifestyle that contributes to their improved health status and personal commitment to the health of students and creates positive role modeling. All staff at MSA should model healthful eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life. The school nurse will work with all students and staff to establish a personalized wellness program and conduct periodic assessments to monitor wellness.

## **UNLAWFUL ACTIVITY**

School employees who suspect or have direct knowledge of unlawful activity either by students or other school personnel should report their suspicions to the Executive Director or their immediate supervisor who will take appropriate action.

## **TERMINATED EMPLOYEE POLICY**

Upon notification of termination, MSA has the following policy with regard to contact with the students and staff on campus.

- Visits to campus – No terminated employee is permitted to visit campus without prior written approval from the Executive Director. This is in perpetuity and will not be released. Violation of this protocol may result in arrest for trespassing.

- Attendance to MSA events on or off campus – No terminated employee is permitted to attend any campus events, even if open to the public, without prior written approval from the Executive Director. This includes performances, showcases, exhibits, and special events such as prom and graduation. Violation of this protocol may result in arrest for trespassing.
- Technology accounts – All technology accounts are discontinued effective the date of termination.
- Badges, keys, and inventory are all required to be turned in to MSA or face possible fines to pay to the Mississippi Department of Education.
- All personal items may be picked up from campus at a mutually agreed upon time when school is not in session. A list of items taken from campus will be made upon pick up.
- Final paychecks will be sent to the employee’s home address. It is the responsibility of the employee to notify MSA if the address has changed from what is on file.

## **PARKING—GENERAL**

Employees may park in any lined spaces in the Student Life Center lot. Some spaces are marked “Staff” on the east side of the lot adjacent to the Handicapped Parking Area. Marked parking spaces along the north and south sides of Cherokee Street may also be used. These are public city parking areas, so no spot may be designated. All parking is filled on a first come, first served basis.

## **PARKING—HANDICAPPED**

Miss. Code Ann. § 27-19-56(5)(a) makes it unlawful to park a motor vehicle in an area set aside for persons who are disabled if the vehicle does not have:

1. A temporary or permanent placard visible on the windshield,
2. A special license plate displayed on the vehicle, or
3. A disabled American veteran tag or plate displayed on the vehicle.

All MSA employees who qualify to park in a special handicapped parking space must have on file with Security Office:

1. A copy of the handicap placard/tag application submitted to the DMV, and
2. A copy of the temporary/permanent placard with expiration date, or
3. A copy of the disabled tag displayed on the vehicle.

This information must be submitted to the Security Office every twelve (12) months. Any employee found parking in a special handicap parking space without proper documentation on

file may be subject to disciplinary action. First offense will result in a written warning by the Director of School Safety. Any subsequent offense(s) will result in a citation and fine by the Brookhaven Police Department.

MSA employees must refrain from parking in the SLC circle or behind the cafeteria except for purposes of unloading. As soon as the car is unloaded, the vehicle should be moved. Employees must not park in fire zones; violations may result in warnings and fines as described above.

## **FISCAL MANAGEMENT**

### **FISCAL MANAGEMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The financial records and statements of the MSA will be kept and presented in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and the requirements and procedures outlined in the Mississippi Public School District Financial Accounting Manual, as amended. This uniform accounting system, which is directed by the MDE, includes a method of accounting for and keeping records of all funds received, handled, and disbursed by the MSA, whether derived from taxation or otherwise, including funds from donations, athletic events, and other special activities of the school.

MSA employs a school finance officer whose qualifications meet the criteria established by the MDE and whose primary job responsibilities are conducting, supervising, and/or directing the financial affairs and operations of the school. The MSA operates with a financial accounting system as prescribed by the MDE.

The SBE, SBE Subcommittee, and MSA have implemented a fixed asset system of accountability that complies with the standards established by the State Auditor's Office for the verification of fixed assets and the auditing of fixed assets records.

The financial accounting data and the corresponding annual audit report as submitted to the MDE reflect no less than a zero-fund balance (as defined by generally accepted accounting principles) for all funds of the MSA.

The goal of the MSA is to maintain an unreserved fund balance (at the end of each fiscal year) in its main operating fund (district maintenance fund) of at least 10% of its total revenues.

*Miss. Code Ann. § 37-37-1, 37-9-18, 37-61-23, 37-17-6(16), 37-61-9*

### **ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET**

The annual operating budget is the plan of current expenditures and the proposed means of financing them. The annual operating budget is the primary means by which most of the financing, acquisition, spending and service delivery activities of the MSA are controlled.

The annual operating budget, as required by law, is essential to the sound financial management of MSA. Funds are allocated directly through the Mississippi Department of Education budget by the Mississippi legislature and Governor.

*Miss. Code Ann. § 37-61-9*

## **FISCAL YEAR/SCHOLASTIC YEAR**

The “fiscal year” of MSA shall commence on July 1 and end on June 30 of each year. The “scholastic year” of this MSA shall likewise commence on July 1 and end on June 30 of each year.

## **ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET PREPARATION PROCEDURES**

On or before the fifteenth day of August of each year, the SBE Subcommittee, shall approve the prepared budget presented by the Executive Director, as defined in Section 37-57-1, at least two (2) copies of a budget of estimated expenditures for the support, maintenance and operation of the MSA for the fiscal year commencing on July 1 of such year. Such budget shall be prepared on forms prescribed and provided by the MDE and shall contain such information as the MDE may require.

Prior to the adoption of a budget pursuant to this section, the MSA shall submit to the SBE for approval at least one (1) public board meeting to provide the general public with an opportunity to review the proposed budget. After final adoption of the budget a synopsis of such budget in a form prescribed by the Mississippi Department of Education shall be published on the school website for statewide dissemination.

The SBE may hold an executive session for the transaction of business and discussions regarding employment and termination of employees as needed.

*Miss. Code Ann. § 37-57-1, § 37-61-9, § 25-41-7(Executive Session)(4)(K).*

## **PERIODIC BUDGET RECONCILIATION**

It shall be the duty of the Executive Director and the SBE Subcommittee to limit the expenditure of school funds during the fiscal year to the resources available. It shall be unlawful for MSA to budget expenditures from a fund in excess of the resources available within that fund.

Furthermore, it shall be unlawful for any contract to be entered into or any obligation incurred or expenditure made in excess of the resources available for such fiscal year.

Any member of the SBE, Executive Director, or other school official, who knowingly enters into any contract, incurs any obligation, or makes any expenditure in excess of the amount available for the fiscal year shall be personally liable for the amount of such excess.

However, no SBE member, Executive Director or other school official shall be personally liable (a) in the event of any reduction in budgetary allocation by action of the Governor, or (b) for claims, damages, awards or judgments, on account of any wrongful or tort action or omission or breach of implied term or condition of any warranty or contract; provided, however, that the foregoing immunity provisions shall not be a defense in cases of fraud, criminal action or an intentional breach of fiduciary obligations imposed by statute.

The SBE shall approve a budget for the MSA. The SBE shall approve amendments to such budget

where major functions of revenues and expenditures are involved. The Executive Director and/or his/her designee may amend objects within major functions as may be necessary during the fiscal year.

### **LINE ITEM TRANSFER AUTHORITY**

If the Executive Director or the SBE Subcommittee anticipates that the amounts to be received from state appropriations or any other source will be more than the amount estimated in the budget filed and approved, or if it should appear that such amounts shall be less than the amount estimated, the SBE Subcommittee, with assistance from the Executive Director, shall revise the budget at any time during the fiscal year by increasing or decreasing the fund budget, in proportion to the increase or decrease in the estimated amounts.

If it should appear to the Executive Director, or the SBE Subcommittee that some function of the budget as filed is in excess of the requirement of that function and that the entire amount budgeted for such function will not be needed for expenditures therefore during the fiscal year, the SBE Subcommittee, with assistance from the Executive Director, may transfer resources to and from functions and funds within the budget when and where needed; however, no such transfer shall be made from fund to fund or from function to function which will result in the expenditure of any money for any purpose different from that for which the money was appropriated, allotted, collected or otherwise made available or for a purpose which is not authorized by law. No revision of any budget under the provisions hereof shall be made which will permit a fund expenditure in excess of the amounts available for such purpose.

The revised portions of the budgets shall be incorporated in the minutes of the SBE Subcommittee meeting. Final budget revisions, pertinent to a fiscal year, shall be approved on or before the date set by the SBE Subcommittee for the MSA to submit its financial information for that fiscal year.

The SBE Subcommittee shall approve all transfers between individual funds except those approved as part of the budget. Transfers approved as part of the budget already have board approval and a second approval of the actual transaction is unnecessary unless different from the budget.

### **DEBT LIMITATION RESTRICTIONS ON INDEBTEDNESS**

MSA will not engage in any debt relief against the property owned by the State of Mississippi.

### **REVENUES FROM SCHOOL PROPERTY**

The SBE Subcommittee is authorized and empowered in its discretion to allow for rental of the property under terms and for purposes as agreed upon between the SBE Subcommittee and contracting party. Funds received from such leases shall be used to defray operational costs of the MSA.

### **FEDERAL AID**

In order to provide the best educational opportunities possible for children of the MSA, it shall

be the objective of the Board to seek as many sources of revenue as possible to supplement the funds provided by the State.

Therefore, the MSA shall participate in any eligible federal aid programs which provide direct educational auxiliary services or opportunities to students enrolled in the MSA.

All applications for federal aid and special grants shall be prepared by the central office administrative staff and approved by the SBE Subcommittee, if applicable.

The expenditure of all federal funds shall strictly comply with the laws, regulations and procedures as established by the terms of agreement between the district and sponsoring agency.

It shall be unlawful for the MSA to expend any public funds from any source(s) for purposes which are political. Prohibited expenditures shall include but not be limited to the purchase of partisan political materials, contributions to any candidate for public office, and use of school property, equipment or employees in support of a candidate(s).

### **FEDERAL LOANS AND GRANTS**

The MSA is ineligible for any federal loans. Any grants eligible for application by MSA will follow all guidelines with regard to cash management, internal controls, purchasing, and payments as required by law.

### **GIFTS AND BEQUESTS/DONATED ASSETS**

Items and donations contributed will become the property of the MSA and shall be subject to the same controls and regulations which govern the use or disposal of all fixed assets. The MSA reserves the right to reject any contribution to the school which does not serve to enhance or extend the school.

All donations and contributions (monies and personal property) in an amount of \$500 or more shall be formally submitted to the SBE Subcommittee for acknowledgement and acceptance. The Minutes shall reflect the contributor, amount, and purpose for the donation, if any. Any monies donated shall be deposited into the appropriate fund.

The Executive Director or designee shall have the authority to accept and acknowledge all donations and contributions (monies and personal property) to MSA valued at less than \$500 on the date of donation. Any such monies shall be receipted into the school's activity fund and deposited in that bank account.

### **CROWDFUNDING PROJECTS**

Crowdfunding is the practice of funding a project by raising small amounts of money from a large number of people.

The following guidelines apply to any crowdfunding project:

1. Any person (including employees) or entity acting on behalf of MSA, and wishing to conduct crowdfunding, online fundraising, or any other online donation campaign for the benefit of MSA, shall begin the process by seeking PRIOR written approval from the Executive Director or designee. Written approval must be obtained.
2. All items (monies and personal property) obtained through crowdfunding projects using the school name are to become the property of the MSA.
3. All monetary donations should be recorded by the school accounts receivable office in the School Activity Fund. No school banking information should ever be disclosed by individuals to anyone outside the district. A check should be requested to be mailed to the school in the name of the school and not to an individual.
4. Crowdfunding items in an amount of \$500 or more shall be formally submitted to the SBE Subcommittee for acknowledgement and acceptance.
5. Inventory policies and procedures of MSA apply to property obtained through crowdfunding projects.
6. Any cost of installation is the responsibility of the donor unless otherwise agreed to by the MSA.
7. Some crowdfunding sites are tax deductible and some are not. It is not the responsibility of the MSA to determine if the donation is tax deductible. MSA will not provide a Form 990 for crowdfunding donations.
8. Crowdfunding that would obligate the MSA to future operating or upkeep costs must be approved by the SBE Subcommittee.
9. Law, policy and procedure concerning student privacy and other requirements set out in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) must also be followed when making requests for crowdfunding projects.

## **INVESTMENT EARNINGS**

Until a fund balance can be built with the state appropriation each year, MSA does not have an investment program. The bank account balances earning interest will apply all earnings in excess of \$100.00 for deposits shall be allocated back to the fund from which the deposit or investment was made.

### **Depository of Funds**

The MSA shall advertise and accept bids for depositories no less than once every three years. (Miss. Code Ann. § 37-7-333) The depositories must meet the requirements in Miss. Code Ann. § 27-105-315.

The MSA may deposit school funds in those banks only designated as depositories by the SBE Subcommittee. School activity funds may be deposited only in banks approved as depositories by MSA.

## **FUND BALANCE**

### **PURPOSE**

The SBE Subcommittee recognizes that the maintenance of a fund balance is essential to the preservation of the financial integrity of the MSA and is fiscally advantageous for both the school and the taxpayer. This policy establishes goals and provides guidance concerning the desired level of fund balance maintained by the MSA to mitigate financial risk that can occur from unforeseen revenue fluctuations, unanticipated expenditures, and similar circumstances.

## **DEFINITIONS**

Fund balance is a measurement of available financial resources and is the difference between total assets and total liabilities in each fund.

Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement 54 distinguishes fund balance classified based on the relative strength of the constraints that control the purposes for which specified amounts can be spent. Beginning with the most restrictive constraints, fund balance amounts will be reported in the following categories:

1. **Non-spendable fund balance** – amounts that are not in a spendable form (e.g., inventory) or are legally or contractually required to be maintained intact (e.g., grants or donations).
2. **Restricted fund balance** – amounts that can be spent only for the specific purposes stipulated by external parties either constitutionally or through enabling legislation (e.g., grants or donations).
3. **Committed fund balance** – amounts that can be used only for the specific purposes determined by a formal action of the SBE Subcommittee. Commitments may be changed or lifted only by referring to the formal action that imposed the constraint originally (e.g., the SBE Subcommittee's commitment in connection with future construction projects).
4. **Assigned fund balance** – amounts intended to be used by the government for specific purposes. Intent can be expressed by the SBE Subcommittee or by a designee to whom the governing body delegates the authority. In governmental funds other than the general fund, assigned fund balance represents the amount that is not restricted or committed. This indicates that resources in other governmental funds are, at a minimum, intended to be used for the purpose of that fund.
5. **Unassigned fund balance** – includes all amounts not contained in other classifications and is the residual classification of the general fund only. Unassigned amounts are available for any legal purpose.

## **POLICY**

The responsibility for designating funds to specific classifications shall be as follows:

**Committed Fund Balance** – The SBE is the MSA’s highest level of decision-making authority, and the formal action that is required to be taken to establish, modify, or rescind a fund balance commitment is a resolution approved by the SBE or the SBE Subcommittee.

**Assigned Fund Balance** – The SBE has authorized the Executive Director and the School Financial Officer as officials authorized to assign fund balance to a specific purpose as approved by this fund balance policy.

### **MINIMUM UNASSIGNED FUND BALANCE**

The goal of the MSA is to maintain an unassigned fund balance (in its main operating fund) of at least 10% of its total revenues. Because the budget of MSA is allocated by the state of Mississippi legislature and is the main source of income, the school will create a plan to build the desired fund balance with incremental annual contributions over five years to attain the goal.

### **ORDER OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS**

When multiple categories of fund balances are available for expenditure (e.g. a project is being funded partly by a grant, funds set aside by the SBE Subcommittee, and unassigned fund balance), the MSA will start with the most restricted category and spend those funds first before moving down to the next category with available funds.

### **BONDED EMPLOYEES AND BOARD MEMBERS**

The SBE Subcommittee may execute a surety bond for any MSA employee who receipts and/or disburses funds, unless a different penalty is prescribed by law.

The Executive Director, before entering upon the duties of his/her office, shall hold a surety bond in the penal sum amount of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00) with sufficient surety.

The purchasing agent(s) of the MSA, before entering upon his/her official duties in such capacity, shall hold surety bond in the amount penal sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00).

A Principal acting must be bonded for total statutorily required coverage of \$100,000.00. The position of Principal may be covered by blanket bond, but the position of purchasing agent requires individual bond.

The premium on surety bonds will be paid from the MSA. All surety bonds shall be filed and recorded at the office of the Chancery Clerk.

**INDIVIDUAL BOND:** A new bond in the amount required by law shall be secured at the beginning of each new term of office or every four (4) years, whichever is less.

**BLANKET BOND:** A new bond in an amount not less than that required by law for public employees shall be secured upon employment and coverage shall be secured at the beginning of each new term of office of the public or appointed official by whom they are employed, if applicable, or at least every four (4) years concurrent with the normal election cycle of the Governor.

## **ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING**

The Executive Director shall open and keep regular sets of books, as prescribed by the MDE, which shall be subject to inspection during office hours by any citizen so desiring to inspect the same. The books for each fiscal year shall be kept separately and same shall be safely preserved by the Executive Director.

MSA funds shall be maintained in accordance with the accounting and reporting system developed by the Mississippi Department of Education for uniform use by school districts. This system shall include a method of accounting for and keeping records of all funds received, handled and disbursed by the MSA.

The MSA shall prepare annual financial statements, including the notes to the financial statements, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles at June 30 of each fiscal year.

Monthly, the Executive Director shall furnish to the SBE Subcommittee or MDE designee a financial statement of receipts and disbursements, by funds, and other financial reports as required by the Mississippi Department of Education. The SBE Subcommittee shall be authorized to investigate and audit all financial records of the Executive Director at any and all times.

*Miss. Code Ann. §37-37-1, §37-61-23, §37-9-18; Mississippi Public School District Financial Accounting Manual*

## **INTERNAL CONTROL OF CASH RECEIPTS**

The Executive Director shall develop a plan of organization under which employee duties are so arranged and records and procedures so designed as to make it possible to exercise effective accounting control over assets, liabilities, revenues, and expenditures. The work of employees shall be subdivided so that no single employee performs a complete cycle of operations. The procedures to be followed shall be prescribed in the Standard Operating Procedures Manual as well as the Mississippi Department of Education Financial Accounting manual which outline proper authorization by designated officials for all actions to be taken.

All monies shall be receipted to the MSA using pre-numbered receipts. Under no circumstances shall monies be deposited to any bank account without a proper receipting of such monies. Any and all documentation necessary to support the cash receipts shall be maintained on file.

**ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS** include, but are not limited to, the plan of organization and the procedures and records that are concerned with the decision processes leading to management's authorization of transactions. Such authorization is a management function directly associated

with the responsibility for achieving the objectives of the organization and is the starting point for establishing accounting control of transactions.

ACCOUNTING CONTROLS comprise the plan of organization and the procedures and records that are concerned with the safeguarding of assets and the reliability of financial records and consequently are designed to provide reasonable assurance that:

1. Transactions are executed in accordance with management's general or specific authorization.
2. Transactions are recorded as necessary (a) to permit preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles or any other criteria applicable to such statements and (b) to maintain accountability for assets.
3. Access to assets is permitted only in accordance with management's authorization.
4. The recorded accountability for assets is compared with the existing assets at reasonable intervals and appropriate action is taken with respect to any differences.

Characteristics of reliable internal control systems are:

1. Segregation of Responsibilities -- This characteristic is sometimes referred to as "division of duties." There should be segregation of the three main duties associated with transactions. These are:
  - a. Authorization to execute a transaction.
  - b. Recording the transaction.
  - c. Custody of assets involved in the transaction.
2. Authorization and Record Procedures -- This characteristic refers to "a system of authorization and record procedures." Such a system means that approved procedures and methods should be employed by management's accounting function.
3. Sound Practices -- This characteristic refers to "sound practices in the performance of duties and functions." Sound practices refers to the many and varied error-checking routines that may be performed in connection with record keeping, including periodic comparison of recorded amounts with existing assets and liabilities.
4. Quality of Personnel -- This characteristic is the most important and the most difficult to evaluate. This refers to the "competence of personnel."
5. Actual System Performance -- Any system may be beautifully designed, but if the personnel do not operate the system as designed, then the system exists only on paper.

## **AUDITS**

All MSA funds are subject to annual audit. The audit may be conducted by the MDE, Mississippi State Auditor's Office, or by a certified public accounting firm.

## **AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES**

There is a dual signature required for activity fund checks by the Executive Director and Principal. The Executive Director is authorized to sign checks on all school accounts. Payroll will be signed by the Executive Director

## **CASH IN SCHOOL BUILDINGS**

Teachers shall never leave money in classrooms. All money shall be turned in to the Executive Director's office for deposit, where it will be receipted and kept in the safe if needed overnight. Deposit receipts are to be filed in the Executive Director's office. No substantial amount of money will be kept overnight in school buildings. Any funds that cannot be deposited right away will be held in the Executive Director's safe. Funds should not be held more than 48 hours in the building.

## **SALARY DEDUCTIONS / REDUCTIONS**

The MSA shall deduct and withhold from the wages of all employees:

1. the amount of federal income tax required by federal law; 26 USCA 3401-3402
2. the amount of social security tax required by federal law; 26 USCA 3101-3102; S25-11-3, et seq.
3. the amount of contributions to PERS. S25-11-123(f)(1992)
4. the amount of state income tax required by the state
5. the amount of other deductions elected by the employee (such as insurance and annuities) so long as the employee has adequate gross earnings to offset the deduction.

*Federal law USCA 3401-3402; USCA 3101-3102; Miss. Code Ann. § 25-11-3 et seq., § 25-11-123.*

## **PURCHASE OF FOOD, DRINKS, FOOD SUPPLIES FROM PUBLIC FUNDS**

In accord with the Attorney General's legal opinion dated July 30, 1999, the Board does hereby adopt such opinion as policy and in accord with such opinion does hereby grant unto the Executive Director and Principal's authority to make food and beverage purchases consistent with the Attorney General's opinion and when such purchases and the consumption thereof are a necessary and reasonable expense for the meeting and reasonably related to the educational goals or functions of the district.

Regarding student athletic or student recognition banquets, "activity funds" may be used for such limited purposes regarding school related programs, conventions or seminars where the Executive Director and Principal determines that such expenditure shall be beneficial to such official or extra-curricular programs of the district.

Regarding the expenditure of general public funds (other than activity funds) coffee supplies, soft drinks and edible items may be purchased when the Executive Director and the Principal determines (1) that there is a particular goal or function that is a scheduled event and (2) the particular event is reasonably related and incident to educational goals of the MSA.

Coffee, soft drinks, like beverages or edible items may be considered a reasonable and necessary expense when purchased by the Executive Director relative to an officially called meeting of the SBE Subcommittee or work or training sessions or seminars or like meetings where there exists an itemized agenda of topics related to the furtherance of educational goals for the MSA.

Caveat: The state auditor has ruled that neither general public funds nor activity funds may be used for teacher recognition banquets.

## **PURCHASING**

All purchases of supplies, equipment or services in behalf of the MSA shall be in accordance with the Laws of the State of Mississippi and all applicable rules and regulations as may be established by other agencies responsible for the supervision of expenditures.

Further, purchases of supplies, equipment or services on behalf of the MSA shall be in accordance with the policies outlined in the Policy Manual.

*Miss. Code Ann. § 31-7-13; § 31-7-1. et seq.*

## **PURCHASING AUTHORITY**

The SBE Subcommittee does hereby designate the Executive Director as purchasing agent for the MSA together with the authority to establish a central purchasing system.

Pursuant to the authority granted by Section 37-39-15, Mississippi Code 1972 as amended, this Board hereby designates other individuals as “purchasing agents” subject to the limitations set forth below:

In addition to the Executive Director, the SBE Subcommittee hereby designates the Principal and School Finance Officer as “purchasing agents” with general authority to negotiate for and purchase the commodities and services necessary for the operation of the MSA, within the limits of budget categories and purchasing law.

*Miss. Code Ann. § 37-39-15.*

## **BIDS AND QUOTATIONS**

All purchases or expenditures of the MSA funds shall comply with the legal requirements for bids and quotations as mandated by the laws of the State of Mississippi.

All purchases or expenditures using federal funds shall comply with the applicable federal procurement laws for bids and quotations.

For detail policies and procedures relating to bids and quotations, see the Standard Operating Procedures Manual.

## **PAYMENT PROCEDURES**

This SBE Subcommittee has the power, authority and duty to make orders directed to the Executive Director for the issuance of pay certificates for lawful purposes on any available funds of the MSA and to have full control of the receipt, distribution, allotment and disbursement of all funds provided for the support and operation of the schools whether such funds be derived from state appropriations, collections or otherwise.

**Docketed Claims** – The Executive Director shall maintain responsibility for a docket of claims in the manner required by law, upon which he/she shall immediately enter all demands, claims and accounts to be paid from MSA funds. Claims shall be numbered consecutively in the order of filing and at each regular or special meeting of the SBE Subcommittee the docket of claims shall be called and all claims on file not previously rejected or allowed shall be passed upon in the order in which they are registered upon the docket. All claims found by the SBE Subcommittee to be illegal shall be rejected or disallowed. All claims which are found to be legal and proper shall be allowed and approved in the order in which they appear upon the docket. Continuances shall be granted in proper cases as provided by law. Pay certificates shall be issued by the Executive Director in payment of claims which are allowed and approved by the Board.

**Other Claims** – Teachers' salaries, amounts due private contractors upon written contracts previously approved and accepted by the SBE Subcommittee, or other payments or salaries where the amount thereof has been previously approved by a contract or by an order of the SBE Subcommittee entered upon its Minutes, need not be entered as demands or claims upon the docket of claims and the amounts of the payments thereby required may be paid by the Executive Director by pay certificates issued by him against the proper fund without allowance of a specific claim therefore, provided that the payment thereof is otherwise in conformity with law.

**Prepayment of Claims** – The SBE Subcommittee grants the Executive Director or his/her designee, the authority to pay MSA claims prior to the regular SBE Subcommittee meeting. This authority includes only claims for which there are MSA fund resources available to pay said claims and said expenditures are in conformity with the law. In addition, no limit shall be placed upon the dollar amount of any prepaid claim.

In order for a claim to be prepaid, the Executive Director or his/her designee must approve a written request from an employee requesting a prepaid claim. The request must include payee, amount and purpose of prepaid claim. The prepaid claim is to be included on the subsequent docket of claims submitted to the SBE Subcommittee for approval.

*Miss. Code Ann. § 37-9-14; 37-7-301*

## **STUDENT ACTIVITIES FUND MANAGEMENT**

The SBE Subcommittee adopts a decentralized accounting system as a method of accounting for school activity funds. This method of accounting provides for receipt and expenditure of funds at

the school level. The Executive Director is hereby authorized to receipt and disburse these funds according to the guidelines established in the Financial Accounting Manual for Mississippi Public School Districts and the Standard Operating Procedures Manual of the MSA.

School activity funds shall be classified either a general fund or an agency fund with monies maintained in bank accounts of financial institutions approved by the SBE Subcommittee. The Executive Director must approve the opening and closing of bank accounts for activity funds. The Executive Director and Principal shall be authorized to sign checks on the activity fund bank account.

## **RECEIPTS**

All local activity funds received shall be accounted for according to guidelines established in the Financial Accounting Manual for Mississippi Public School Districts and the Standard Operating Procedures Manual of the MSA. If at all possible, monies received shall be deposited daily. No more than \$100.00 cash should remain in the Executive Director's office safe at the close of the day.

## **PURCHASING**

Activity funds may be expended for the following: any necessary expenses or travel costs (including advances) incurred by students and their chaperones in attending school related programs, commodities, equipment, travel expenses of school employees, purchased services, and school supplies deemed beneficial to the official or extra-curricular programs of the school by the Principal, including items which may subsequently become the personal property of such individuals (such as: book covers, trophies, yearbooks). These purchases, when utilizing a general fund, shall be subject to state purchasing laws. Expenditures made by funds classified as agency funds are not subject to state purchasing laws. Pre-numbered purchase orders must be used for all purchases and must be approved by the Executive Director. The person at the school receiving the goods shall either prepare and sign a receiving report form, or sign and date the invoices denoting receipt of the goods.

## **DISBURSEMENTS**

Disbursement of all activity funds shall be made according to guidelines established in the Financial Accounting Manual for Mississippi Public School Districts and the Standard Operating Procedures Manual of the MSA. Pre-numbered checks containing the original signature of the Executive Director and Principal must be utilized for payment.

## **REPORTING**

A transmittal report of all activity fund transactions (receipts and disbursements) for the previous month shall be delivered to the Executive Director no more than ten (10) working days after the close of the month.

## **FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES**

The SBE Subcommittee authorizes the Executive Director to approve fundraising activities that are appropriate or beneficial to the official or extracurricular programs of the school. Any proceeds of such fund-raising activities shall be treated as activity funds and shall be accounted for as are other activity funds. When a fund-raising activity is conducted as a part of the sale or rental of items to students, these funds (inclusive of the fee, commission or rebate) may be paid directly to the vendor by the student and rebated later to the school. If this is done, there must be a disclosure statement advising that a portion of the proceeds of the sales or rentals shall be contributed to the student activity fund. The School Finance Officer shall obtain an independent listing of the students and the amounts paid to the vendor by each student so that the amount due the school can be reconciled. The monies collected from the vendor shall be credited to the appropriate general fund by the School Finance Officer.

Monies collected by the school through school sponsored fund-raising activities (such as vending machines, concessions, school stores, festivals, school-wide sales projects, sales by principal or staff to students) shall be accounted for in the appropriate general fund. The price for the activities shall be set by the organizer when gaining approval for the fund-raising activity. For all items purchased for resale to students, there must be a reconciliation of the items purchased, the items sold, and the net profit amount. The reconciliation must be performed on a periodic basis and be submitted to the district office for review and approval.

The MSA Foundation is a private 501(c)(3) agency dedicated to support of the activities of the MSA. Any funds donated to the MSA foundation will be subject to Secretary of State and IRS regulations for nonprofit agencies and audited as such. These funds will not be mingled with the MSA appropriated funds, activity accounts, or rebates. The MSA Foundation has a separate operating procedure and is not bound by the policies in this manual.

## **IDEA FUNDS**

MSA does not receive IDEA Funds as all students with this designation and an Individualized Education Plan are claimed through the Brookhaven School District (BSD) Interlocal Agreement. All services are provided by the BSD and funds are received for said services.

## **TRAVEL**

The following travel policies are established for use by individuals who are required to travel in-state and out-of-state on official Mississippi School of the Arts business. These policies are based on and are in addition to the guidelines established by the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA), Office of Purchasing, Travel and Fleet Management (OPTFM) in accordance with Section 25-3-41, Mississippi Code Annotated (1972).

The State Travel Manual in its entirety can be found at <http://www.dfa.ms.gov/media/7952/travel-manual-0617.pdf>.

OFFICIAL WORKPLACE - The official workplace for all employees shall be the office to which they are assigned. In extremely rare instances, an employee's official duty station shall be his or her residence if he/she is not permanently assigned to an office.

TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION - A Travel Authorization Form must be completed in ADVANCE for all travel (in-state and out-of-state travel). For in-state travel, the highest level of approval needed is the "Division Approval." For all out-of-state travel, "Agency Approval" is needed from the Executive Director. The Executive Director is exempt from completing a Travel Authorization Form for in-state travel. Travel advances may be requested for out-of-state trips and for prior-to-trip expenses for in-state travel such as the first night of a hotel which is due when the reservation is made.

The Travel Authorization Form must be used to request the advance. Advances should be requested and submitted for processing 15 days before the travel is to occur; however, payment of the advance will not be made more than 10 days in advance. Advances are made to cover meals, hotel expenses, and other related travel costs. The advance should not include the cost of airline travel or conference fees as these should be paid in advance by the Department.

An employee will be allowed one outstanding travel advance at a time. No additional advances will be given until the previous advances have been cleared. The travel advance must be cleared upon the employee's return. If an advance is not settled within ten (10) working days after the end of the month in which travel was completed, the employee's paycheck will be held or their direct deposit stopped until the debt to the school is resolved.

Expenses for travel will be reimbursed when the travel has the advance authorization of the superintendent. The superintendent may grant this authorization without prior Board action when the travel expense has been anticipated and incorporated into the operational budget of the particular program involved.

District personnel will follow travel related authorization and reimbursement procedures as outlined in the MSA Standard Operating Procedures Manual, which is in compliance with federal and state guidelines.

Persons who travel at district expense will exercise the same economy as a prudent person traveling on personal business and will differentiate between expenditures for business and those for personal convenience.

AUTOMOBILE TRAVEL - Actual mileage shall be calculated from the official workplace or residence and back or actual miles traveled, whichever is less. The most direct route to a destination should be claimed for reimbursement purposes. The travel voucher must indicate if any intermediate stops were made. Specific sites visited must be noted on the voucher in lieu of "Vicinity Travel." Effective July 1, 2017, state agencies under the purview of the DFA Bureau of Fleet Management are required to use the Trip Optimizer System (TOS) developed and administered by the DFA Office of Purchasing, Travel, and Fleet Management in computing the optimum method and cost for travel by state employees using a motor vehicle.

Reimbursement will be based on the least expensive method of transportation. Prior to travel, the Trip Optimizer System should be used to determine the lowest cost mode of transportation. The maximum amount authorized for travel reimbursement related to motor vehicle usage will be the lowest cost option as determined by the TOS. All travel claims submitted for reimbursement must include the results of the Trip Optimizer System indicating the lowest cost option for travel. The maximum amount reimbursable for travel by motor vehicle will be the lowest cost calculated.

## **FIXED ASSETS/PROPERTY/EQUIPMENT/FURNITURE USAGE**

State policies regarding the inventory and use of equipment are strict. The person to whom the equipment is assigned is financially responsible for that equipment. Therefore, under no circumstances should any person use a master key to enter a storage equipment area and remove items for use without authorization. Events and needs should be planned for and equipment reserved well in advance. All equipment stored in the library must be checked out using the appropriate form.

Do not check something out in your name and then allow a student to use it. A contract signed by all parents and students regarding use of equipment is kept on file each year. Parents and/or students are financially responsible for any loss of or damage to school property. These contracts cover all MSA owned items. Require that students check out needed equipment from the library. Under no circumstances should a student be allowed to use an employee's computer.

MSA has to account for equipment to MDE with a formal quarterly audit. Employees are responsible for all equipment assigned to them. Do not loan or borrow another user's equipment without permission from the user and Fixed Asset Property Officer with proper documentation as described in this policy. All transfers and surplus of equipment must have the appropriate paperwork submitted to the person in charge of fixed assets. Upon resignation or termination, employees must return all school property on or before the last day of work.

Please adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Complete a Furniture/Equipment Inventory Form at the beginning and end of the school year.
2. All furniture must remain in its assigned location. Do not rearrange or remove any furniture.
3. Do not move furniture or equipment into hallways; this clutters passageways and creates possible safety hazards.
4. Check out all equipment (e.g., laptops, projector, portable tables, cameras, tripods, lenses) with the library, technology department, or staff member responsible for that equipment.
5. Ensure that parents sign the appropriate contracts before a student is allowed to use any MSA equipment.
6. Store equipment not in use in a secure location. Employees are responsible for all equipment checked out to them.
7. At no time should MSA property/equipment/furniture be removed from campus without proper permission.
8. Any maintenance problem or malfunction of equipment should be reported to the appropriate

MSA administrator.

9. Employees should at all times require students to exercise care in use of school property and equipment.
10. Any damages sustained to property or equipment must be assessed and paid for, no matter how minor. Such occurrences must also be reported to the Executive Director promptly.

### **OFF CAMPUS USE OF EQUIPMENT**

Per Office of State Auditor guidelines, equipment purchased and/or inventoried must be used for official school use only. At no time may equipment be used for personal or financial gain. Under very minimum situations, it may be necessary for some employees to take equipment off campus for work-related purposes (includes repair). An Equipment Receipt must be completed and signed by the equipment's responsible owner and executive director. This Equipment Receipt must be on file in the event of an audit while equipment is off campus. The Equipment Receipt is valid for one year from date but may be revoked at any time during the valid term.

### **SCHOOL PROPERTIES DISPOSAL PROCEDURE**

As it relates to school properties disposal, this district will comply with all applicable provisions of the Mississippi Code of 1972 Annotated including but not limited to §37-7-451, §37-7-471 through §37-7-485 as amended, and with all other applicable federal and state laws.

### **FACILITY USAGE**

Due to limited space on campus, all facilities must be reserved for use after 5:00 p.m. All property (real and spatial) belongs to the school for the purposes of educating and supporting students. A spirit of cooperation will enhance collaboration as the population and services of the school increase. All requests related to facility usage should be directed to the office of the Executive Director.

### **WORKSPACES**

#### **SHARED INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES**

Due to increased student enrolment over the past few years, some classrooms or other instructional spaces may have to be shared with itinerate teachers. Although such situations are never ideal, staff must respect the work of colleagues and collaborate in using available facilities.

#### **DESK AREAS AND OFFICES**

Employee offices and desk areas are not spaces for extended visits with adults or students. While all staff members should be supportive of students, visitors, colleagues, and others. These persons should not be encouraged to "hang out" in work areas during free time. Employees should maintain a friendly, but professional demeanor when working with

students, staff, and visitors.

## **FACULTY WORKROOM**

The faculty workroom is located on the second floor of Johnson Institute. All faculty members are assigned keys to the workroom for their convenience. Individuals are responsible for maintaining the space in which they work. Monitor personal items in the refrigerator to prevent spoilage. No student should be in the faculty workroom without a teacher. The workroom door should remain locked at all times.

## **HALLWAYS**

Although classroom, storage, and exhibition spaces on campus are limited, staff members must keep hallways clean and free of obstruction. Fire codes must be followed and areas should be monitored on a daily basis. Hallways are not storage areas for excess furniture, equipment, works-in-progress, or student books and belongings.

## **HEALTH CENTER**

Due to the nature and function of the Health Center and office areas, doors must remain locked at all times. Staff should never allow a student to enter the health center unless accompanied by the school nurse or other authorized adult. Medications must be kept in locked areas at all times.

## **SECOND FLOOR DESK**

The area behind the reception desk on the second floor of the Student Life Center is reserved for adults only. It is not a storage area for student belongings or a hangout area at any time.

## **SECURITY DESK**

Although students have to enter the security desk to turn in or retrieve car keys, students should not be allowed to hang around the security desk where all the monitoring equipment is easily accessible. The security desk must remain supervised by an alternate staff member when officers are making rounds on campus. MSA employees must not use the security desk as a lounge area during the workday.

**APPENDIX A – Organizational Structure**

**APPENDIX B – Teacher Pay Scale**

**APPENDIX C – LEAVE STRUCTURE AND LEAVE WORK DAYS**

