



Missoula County Public Schools

Forward Thinking, High Achieving

**PAXSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
**STUDENT HANDBOOK**



*2023-2024*

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## **TO STUDENTS AND GUARDIANS:**

MCPS Elementary School Student Handbook contains information that students and guardians are likely to need during the school year. The handbook is organized alphabetically by topic.

Throughout the handbook, the term “the student’s guardian” is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board policy. Please note that references to policy codes are included to help guardians confirm current policy. A copy of the District’s Policy Manual is available in the school office.

## **SUPERINTENDENT’S MESSAGE**

Welcome to Paxson Elementary School. This handbook is to acquaint you with the organization, policies, and procedures of your school. Please read this handbook and sign the accompanying signature card for return to the school office. The rules governing our school are a result of the combined efforts of the Board of Trustees, Administration, faculty, students, and community. We sincerely hope that each of you will have a successful and enjoyable year.

*Micah Hill, Superintendent*

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2023-2024**

The Board of Trustees would like to extend an invitation to students, guardians and community members to come to board meetings throughout the school year and summer. We would also like to encourage you to share with us your concerns, ideas, and general comments. We will be available to listen to and we will provide guidance on how to get your concerns addressed through the proper channels. Please find trustee contact information on the [MCPS website](https://www.mcpsmt.org/Page/13098) (<https://www.mcpsmt.org/Page/13098>).

- Jeffrey Avgeris
- Grace Decker
- Nancy Hobbins
- Koan Mercer
- Wilena Old Person
- Karen Sherman
- Jennifer Vogel
- Arlene Walker-Andrews
- Meg Wicher
- Keegan Witt
- Rob Woelich

## **NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

The Missoula County Public School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability, in the educational programs and activities it operates including admission and employment. The District is required by federal law, including but not limited to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX, and Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act and their regulations to not discriminate against individuals in violation of these laws. The District also provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding complaints under Title IX (sex discrimination and sexual harassment) and all other non-discrimination policies:

**Title IX Coordinator** - Trevor Laboski

**Address:** 909 South Ave West, Missoula, MT 59801

**Telephone No.** 728-2400 X1038

Inquiries may also be directed to the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education

## **ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

According to School Board Policy 3110, no pupil may be enrolled in kindergarten or first grade whose fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) or sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) birthday does not occur on or before the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) day of September of the school year in which the child registers to enter school. A parent or guardian may request a waiver ([see board policy](#)). MCPS requires evidence of a birth certificate, immunization records, and proof of residency prior to admission.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Regular school attendance is essential for the student to make the most of his or her education — to benefit from teacher-led activities, to build each day's learning on that of the previous day, and to grow as an individual. The District permits resident students of school age who are enrolled in a nonpublic or home school to enroll part-time in a District school at the parent's request.

- A student between the ages of 7 and 16 **must** attend school unless the student is otherwise legally exempted or excused. A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her sixteenth birthday is required to attend each school day.
- A student who persistently does not attend school for the day or any part of the school day equivalent to the length of one class period is truant and may be subject to disciplinary action. Truancy may also result in assessment of a penalty by a court of law against the student and his or her guardians. The District's Attendance Officer may request a meeting with the truant student's guardian or legal guardian to develop a truancy plan in the event of continued truancy.
- The principal or designee will attempt to contact a student's guardian, guardian, or legal custodian by the end of the school day in order to inform him or her of the student's absence if no excuse has been offered. See Policy [3120](#) & [3122](#).

When a student is absent from school, the guardian/guardian must call the school 406-542-4055, any time after 7:30 a.m. to notify the school of the absence. If the guardian/guardian does not call, the district personnel will call home when an absence has occurred. If contact has been made with the guardian/guardian, it will not be necessary for the guardian/guardian to send a written excuse with the student upon his/her returning to school, unless requested by the administration. If no contact was made, the student will have one (1) day to bring a note, or the absence will be unexcused.

A student who is absent for any reason other than an unexcused absence should promptly make up specific assignments missed and/or complete additional in-depth assignments assigned by the teacher.

### **Types of absences**

The following reasons shall be sufficient to constitute excused absences: a) Family authorized excused absences: b) Personal illness c) Family emergency or death in the family d) Medical or dental treatment e) Other activities as approved by the school f) School authorized excused absences g) Approved field trips h) Interscholastic competitions and events i) Other activities as approved by the school j) Bullying does not include the determination after an investigation that the student's used reasonable and necessary physical force as self-defense or the defense of another in response to a physical attack 2) Unexcused Absences: - These are absences which are not authorized by the parent/guardian or the school. The following absences are examples of absences which will not be excused: a) leaving school premises without authorization b) failing to attend class (while remaining on the premises) without advanced permission c) other absences not authorized by the school or parent/guardian.

### **Tardiness**

If arriving after the tardy bell, guardians must escort students to the front office to check in.

### **Human Sexuality Instruction Absence**

A student may be absent from a class period, assembly, school function, or other instruction at the request of a guardian/guardian/other person responsible for care when the subject matter is related to human sexuality. These absences do not count toward the student's discretionary 10-day total. The District will provide guardians/guardians with at least 48-hours notice before such instruction is scheduled to occur.

## **ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL**

### **Arrival Procedures**

Students will line up at their designated grade level area and will enter their designated door beginning at 8:12 a.m. Classes begin at 8:15 a.m. Please do not drop your student(s) off at school prior to 8:00 a.m. as there is no playground supervision prior to 8 a.m.

- Breakfast will be served in the classroom, free of charge, to all students.
- Any student arriving after 8:15 a.m. must gain access through the front entrance and receive a tardy pass from the front office.

If you are driving your child to school, please use Gerald St. and Hastings St. for drop off only. Please pull forward, drop off, and pull away. Do not idle or park in the drop-off zone. If you'd like to walk your child onto the school grounds, please park on a nearby street and walk your child to their designated door.

Car riders should not enter from the Higgins Street side of the school. This entrance is for buses only. Grade level entrances are listed below:

KG=Hastings Street doors with line up area next to play structure.

1st=East Wing doors next to garden area

2nd= Same doors but line up area is near play structure

3rd=Doors at the tunnel on the playground

4th=Hastings Street next to doors

5th=Evans Street doors with line up area along Gerald Street fence

### **Dismissal/End-of-Day Procedures**

Students who are meeting guardians after school will be dismissed from the same door they entered.

Parents or designated adult can meet students at these doors at 3:15 p.m. Dismissal time for

Thursday is at 2:30 p.m.

Students riding the buses will walk on the sidewalk to the Higgins Street bus lane.

Please make sure to send a note to school in the morning if there are changes to a student's dismissal plan. Beach Transportation requires a written permission slip for students to ride home with a friend. This written permission must be approved by the administration and Beach.

Permission forms can be found on our school website or at the front office.

### **BELL SCHEDULES**

#### **K-5**

- 8:15 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. - Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday
- 8:15 - 2:30 p.m. - Thursday Early Out
- First bell rings at 8:12 when students will be escorted by their teachers inside the building

### **BULLYING/HARASSMENT/INTIMIDATION/HAZING**

Bullying (including cyberbullying), harassment, intimidation, or hazing, by students, staff, or third parties, is strictly prohibited and shall not be tolerated. Bullying does not include the determination after an investigation that the student's used reasonable and necessary physical force as self-defense or the defense of another in response to a physical attack.

All complaints about behavior that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated.

Retaliation is prohibited against any person who reports or is thought to have reported a violation, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry.

For additional information, please see [Policy 3225](#).

## **CELL PHONES**

The possession and use of cellular phones, pagers, and other electronic signaling devices on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities, or while otherwise under the supervision and control of District employees is a privilege.

Bringing cell phones including smart watches that use cellular data (i.e. gizmo phone watches, apple watches, fitbits etc.) to school is strongly discouraged at the elementary schools. If it is essential that a child bring a cellular device to school, it must be turned off and stored in a backpack from the time the student steps onto school grounds until the student leaves school grounds. Any student who is using the cell phone/smart watch during the school day will have the phone/smart watch confiscated and it will be the responsibility of the guardian to come to the office to retrieve the phone/smart watch.

Students are prohibited from operating a cell phone or other electronic device (or camera embedded in such device) while in a locker room, bathroom, or any other location where the privacy rights of others may be violated. Students may not use cell phones, pagers, or other electronic signaling devices during classes unless such use is under the direction of certified staff for educational purposes.

Unauthorized possession or use of these devices is grounds for confiscation. Repeated unauthorized use will result in disciplinary action. Depending on the nature of the unauthorized use, the student's guardians and/or law enforcement may be contacted and the student's cell phone may be searched.

## **CHILD SAFETY GPS AND AUDIO CHILD TRACKING/MONITORING SYSTEMS**

Parents and students are expressly prohibited from using covert means to listen-in or make a recording (audio or video) of any meeting or activity at school. This includes placing recording devices, or other devices with one- or two-way audio communication technology (i.e., technology that allows a person off-site to listen to live conversations and sounds taking place in the location where the device is located), within a student's book bag/backpack, on the student's person or otherwise in an area capable of listening in or recording without express written consent of the Superintendent. Any requests to place a recording device or other device with one- or two-way audio communication technology within a student's book bag/backpack or on a student's person shall be submitted, in writing, to the Superintendent along with an explanation of why such recording is necessary. The Superintendent or a designee shall notify the parent(s), in writing, whether such request is denied or granted within five (5) school days. Where consent has been given by the Superintendent, the Principal must be given access by the parent to be a school guardian on the device. This will ensure any "Listen-In" feature is disabled during school hours due to privacy concerns.



## COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

To protect children from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. guardians of a student with a communicable or contagious disease should phone the school nurse or principal so that other students who **may** have been exposed to the disease can be alerted.

These diseases include, but are not limited to:

Amebiasis	Mumps
Campylobacteriosis	Pinkeye
Chickenpox	Ringworm of the scalp
Diphtheria	Rubella (German Measles)
Gastroenteritis	Scabies
Hepatitis	Shigellosis
Influenza	Streptococcal disease, invasive
Measles (Rubeola)	Tuberculosis
Meningitis	Whooping Cough (Pertussis)
Coronavirus	

### **Keeping a child home from school/returning after illness or injury**

Upon occasion, it is necessary for a child to remain home due to an illness. The following guidelines should be followed when determining whether to keep a child home:

- A child should not be sent to school hoping that he or she will feel better after arriving at school
- A child should be kept home following a nighttime bout of nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea and watch for further symptoms
- A child should have a normal temperature for 24 hours before returning to school
- Do not send your child if he or she is taking prescription pain medicine

When a student has been absent from school due to an injury or serious medical issue, please contact the school nurse prior to having the child return to school. The school nurse should be made aware of students who are returning to school with a cast, on crutches, or has had a surgical procedure or a concussion.

### **Health Services**

First aid for injuries and illness response is provided by school staff and when present, a school nurse. It may be necessary for the school to contact emergency services or to send a child home due to illness or injury. It is VERY important that the school have current emergency names and phone contacts. Parents and guardians should complete a new health history form whenever there are significant health changes in your child such as a new life threatening allergy. Ask the school secretary or school nurse for this and any other health related forms, procedures or information. See the district website under the student services/health services tab at <http://www.mcpsmt.org/domain/845>. On occasion, other students and parents may be asked to limit bringing in certain items due to another student's life threatening allergy. Your cooperation with these needed restrictions is greatly appreciated and important to keep all children safe.

## COMPLAINTS BY STUDENTS AND GUARDIANS

Usually student or guardian complaints or concerns can be addressed simply — by a phone call or a conference with the teacher. If the complaint is not resolved, please contact the principal. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the District has adopted a Uniform Complaint Procedure policy for most complaints ([Policy 1700](#)) with the exception of complaints/concerns regarding sexual harassment and/or disability discrimination.

If a student or guardian believes that the Board, its employees, or agents have violated their rights, he or she may file a written complaint with any District Principal or Supervisor under the applicable grievance procedure. If still unresolved, the matter generally may be referred to the Superintendent. Under some circumstances, the District provides for the complaint to be presented to the Board of Trustees in the event the matter cannot be resolved at the administrative level.

Some complaints require different procedures. Any building office or the Superintendent's office can provide information regarding specific processes for filing complaints. Additional information can also be found in [Policy 1700](#), available in any principal's and Superintendent's offices.

**Students shall use the Title IX Grievance Procedure to address complaints/concerns about sexual harassment. A copy of the Title IX Grievance Procedures can be obtained on the [District's website](#) or any District or school office or by contacting the Title IX Coordinator.**

Students shall use the Section 504 Grievance Procedure to address complaints/concerns about disability discrimination. A copy of the [Section 504 Grievance Procedures](#) can be obtained on the [District's website](#) or any District or school office or by contacting Virginia Haines at 728-2400.

## COMPUTER RESOURCES

Computer resources, including the District's electronic networks, are an integral part of the District's instructional program. Use of these resources is a privilege, not a right. Students have no expectation of privacy in material that is stored, transmitted, or received via the District's electronic networks or the District's computers. General rules for behavior and communications apply when using the District's computer resources. Students must sign the *Authorization for Electronic Access* Agreement prior to being authorized to use the District's computer resources. See Appendices B (K-6) and C (7-12) for the forms. For additional information, see Policy [3612](#) and [3630](#).

## CONDUCT

In order for students to take advantage of available learning opportunities and to be productive members of our campus community, each student is expected to:

### Expectation Matrix

## Paxson Behavior Matrix

***What does it look like to be respectful, responsible, safe and kind learners?***

Objectives	Classroom	Playground	Hallway	Lunch	Bathroom	Garden
Respectful	<p>Listen and Follow Directions</p> <p>Treat materials and equipment properly</p> <p>Use positive actions and words towards adults and peers</p> <p>Be an active listener.</p>	<p>Use Kelso's choices to solve problems</p> <p>Share and take turns</p> <p>Include and invite others</p> <p>Use positive actions and words towards peers and adults</p> <p>Enter and exit calmly</p> <p>Share equipment</p> <p>Listen to staff</p>	<p>Follow voice expectations</p> <p>Keep hands and feet to self.</p> <p>Use positive actions and words towards peers and adults</p>	<p>Use please and thank you.</p> <p>Use positive actions and words towards peers and adults.</p> <p>Be patient and polite</p> <p>Clean up after yourself.</p>	<p>Use quickly and get back to class.</p> <p>Respect each other's privacy/allow for privacy.</p> <p>Flush</p> <p>Turn off water</p> <p>Place paper towels in the garbage bin.</p>	<p>Have a calm body</p> <p>Feet stay on the paths</p> <p>Follow voice expectations</p> <p>Gravel stays on the ground.</p>
Responsible	<p>Be ready for the day</p> <p>Be here</p> <p>Be on time</p> <p>Do your best</p> <p>Make good choices</p> <p>Participate.</p>	<p>Use equipment safely/properly</p> <p>Gather belongings at end of recess</p> <p>Wear appropriate clothing</p> <p>Line up when the bell rings</p> <p>Resolve conflicts peacefully and safely.</p>	<p>Voice level is "0 to 1"</p> <p>Walk on the right side</p> <p>Open and close lockers quietly.</p>	<p>Use a quiet voice with people at your own table</p> <p>Bus your own tray/ Lunchbox</p>	<p>Flush</p> <p>Wash hands</p> <p>Return to class promptly</p> <p>Throw away paper towels</p>	<p>Pick or harvest only with adult permission.</p> <p>The area behind the shed is off limits.</p>

Safe	Use materials for intended purposes  Maintain personal space  Use Kelso's choice to resolve conflict peacefully and safely	Stay in boundaries  Keeps body to self  Use PAX choices  Follow the rules of the game  Observe seasonal rules and guidelines	Hands and feet to self  Walk in single file  Eyes forward/feet forward  One step at a time, one hand on railing  Appropriate space between other kids	Eat only your food  Feet and hands to self  feet under table bottom on seat	One person per stall  Flush, wash, leave  Report problems	Enter shed only with adult permission.
Kind	Share  Use manners  Help others  Be patient  Use kind words  Be a "Bucket Filler"	Include/invite others  Share  Use kinds words  Use a Kelso's choice  Help others	Smile  Wave	Use manners  Use kind words	Allow for privacy of others  Flush	Help take care of the garden.

### **Applicability of School Rules and Discipline**

To achieve the best possible learning environment for all our students, the Missoula County School District's rules and discipline will apply:

- On, or within sight of, school grounds before, during or after school hours or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group;
- Off school grounds at a school sponsored activity or event, or any activity or event that bears a reasonable relationship to school;
- Traveling to and from school or a school activity, function or event; and
- Anywhere, including virtual networks, if conduct may reasonably be considered to be a threat or an attempted intimidation of a staff member, an interference with school purposes or an educational function, or a threat to the safety and welfare of the student population, or conduct that detrimentally affects the climate or efficient operations of the school.

### **Violation of Student Code of Conduct**

A student is in violation of the Student Code of Conduct if the student engages in any inappropriate behavior, including but not limited to:

- Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling tobacco, vapor products, or marijuana products (tobacco includes, but is not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, snuff, smoking tobacco, smokeless tobacco, alternative nicotine product, or any other tobacco or nicotine innovation; marijuana products include but are not limited to edible products, ointments, tinctures, marijuana derivatives, marijuana concentrates, and marijuana intended for use by smoking or vaping);
- Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling alcoholic beverages.
- Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling illegal drugs or controlled substances, including marijuana, look-alike drugs, and drug paraphernalia.
- Using, possessing, controlling, or transferring a weapon in violation of the “Possession of a Weapon in a School Building” section of this policy.
- Using, possessing, controlling, or transferring any object that reasonably could be considered or used as a weapon.
- Disobeying directives from staff or disobeying rules governing student conduct.
- Using violence, force, coercion, intimidation or other comparable conduct toward anyone or urging other students to engage in such conduct except when physical force is determined to be reasonable and necessary and used as self-defense of another person after an investigation into such conduct..
- Causing or attempting to cause damage to, or stealing or attempting to steal, school property or another person’s property.
- Engaging in any activity that constitutes an interference with school purposes or an educational function or any other disruptive activity.
- Unexcused absenteeism.
- Misconduct of any sort on any means of District transportation.
- Bullying, hazing, harassment (including sexual harassment), or intimidation, including cyberbullying.
- Forging any signature or making any false entry or attempting to authorize any document used or intended to be used in connection with the operation of a school.

### **Gun-Free Schools/Firearms**

In accordance with the Gun Free School Act, any student who brings a firearm onto school property shall be expelled for a period of not less than one calendar year unless the Board of Trustees has authorized the school administration in writing to modify the requirement for expulsion, including eliminating the requirement for expulsion, on a case-by-case basis.

An administrator may immediately suspend a student if there is cause to believe the student brought a firearm to school or possessed a firearm at school prior to any board hearing on a recommendation for expulsion. If there is a recommendation to expel a student for bringing a firearm to school or possessing a firearm at school, the trustees shall notify the adult student or guardian/guardian of a minor student in a clear and timely manner that the student may waive his or her privacy right by requesting the hearing be held in public and may invite other individuals to attend the hearing. At a due process hearing on the recommendation for expulsion due to a student bringing a firearm to school or possessing a firearm at school, there shall be a presentation of a summary of the information leading to the allegations and an opportunity for the student to respond to the allegations. The Board of Trustees is permitted to expel a student only when the trustees determine that the student knowingly (had knowledge of the facts) brought a firearm to school or possessed a firearm at school.

The Board of Trustees is not required to expel a student who has brought a firearm or possessed a firearm at school as long as the firearm is secured in a locked container approved by the District or in a locked motor vehicle the entire time the firearm is at school unless the firearm is in use for a school-sanctioned instructional activity.

If a student is determined by trustees to not have knowingly brought or possessed a firearm at school, the student's record will be expunged of the incident.

## **CORPORAL PUNISHMENT**

No person who is employed or engaged by the District may inflict or cause to be inflicted corporal punishment on a student. Corporal punishment does not include, and district personnel are permitted to use, reasonable force as needed to maintain safety for other students, school personnel, or other persons, or for the purpose of self-defense.

## **COUNSELING**

### **School Counseling**

School counselors are available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, or emotional issues, or substance abuse. Counselors may also make available information about community resources to address these concerns. Students who wish to meet with a counselor should contact Ms. Roscoe, Mrs. Maguire, or Ms. Kate Spencer.

**Please note:** The school will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the guardian's written consent, unless required by state or federal law for special education purposes.

## **DISCIPLINE AND DUE PROCESS**

Students who violate District policies, rules, and directives are subject to discipline at the discretion of District administration. Discipline may include referrals, detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion. Administrators have the discretion to impose, or in the case of expulsion, recommend, the level of discipline deemed appropriate for the misconduct.

### **Suspension**

An administrator has the authority to suspend a student for up to ten (10) school days. The student is entitled to oral or written notification of the charges and is entitled to the opportunity to provide his or her version. Immediate suspension when the student's presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption to the educational process may occur without notice or the opportunity to be heard provided that notice and the opportunity to be heard shall follow as soon as practicable. Written notice of the suspension containing a statement of its basis and notice of the right to a review of the suspension will be sent to the guardians as soon as possible. At the request of the guardians, the Superintendent will review the appropriateness of the suspension. The decision of the Superintendent is final.

An administrator has the authority to extend a suspension for an additional ten (10) school days. Prior to extending the suspension beyond the original length not to exceed ten days, the administrator must hold an informal hearing with the student and determine that the student's immediate return to the school would be detrimental to the health, welfare, or safety of others, or would be disruptive to the educational process.

### **Expulsion**

Expulsion is any removal of a student for more than twenty (20) school days without the provision of educational services. Only the Board has the authority to expel a student after holding a hearing that provides the student with an opportunity to be heard. After an investigation into the student's conduct, the administrator must send a written notice to the guardians regarding the recommendation to expel the student, the specific charges against the student and supporting evidence, a description of the rule or regulation broken, the date, time, and location of the board hearing, a copy of the Board's procedure, and a description of the student's and guardians' rights at the hearing.

### **Students With Disabilities**

Students with rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 may be suspended in the same manner as students without those rights or expelled under certain circumstances, but prior to the imposition of either penalty, the District

must follow all procedural requirements of those Acts, including holding a manifestation determination meeting when necessary, as required by these Acts.

## **DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIAL**

### **School Materials**

All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the principal and are part of the curriculum. School officials have the discretion to edit or delete material which is inconsistent with the District's educational mission. School-sponsored groups are permitted to distribute materials directly to students upon approval of the building Principal or Superintendent.

### **Non-School Materials**

Written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials may not contain material that is obscene, libelous, invasive of the privacy of others, substantially disruptive to the proper and orderly operation and discipline of the school or school activities, or which advocates conduct inconsistent with the shared values of civilized social order are not permitted. Outside groups, including governmental agencies, guardian and student organizations not sponsored by the school, and community organizations are permitted to display their materials on a centrally-located bulletin board and/or table available for the displaying of these materials.

Any student who posts material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action. Prior approval must be obtained before displaying these materials. Materials should be submitted to the front office staff at least one week prior to the requested distribution.

## **DRESS CODE**

All students are expected to dress in a manner that promotes school pride. Student dress and grooming must be consistent with the educational, safety and sanitary environment of the school. Dress should not be disruptive to the educational process. Students dressed inappropriately will be asked to call home for alternate clothing or given appropriate apparel to be worn during the school day

### **Dress code Guidelines:**

- Shoes must be worn at all times.
- Clothing and jewelry which bears graphics or speech that display profanity, bias/hate/racism, chemical substances, gangs, or sexual connotations are not allowed.
- Clothing or jewelry which present a safety hazard to self and/or others are not allowed.
- Underwear beyond shoulder straps should not be visible
- Clothing must cover your buttocks.
- Shirts must have shoulder straps and cover areas from one armpit across to the other armpit.



## **EARLY DISMISSALS**

Appointments for students should be scheduled after school hours, if possible. Should an appointment during the school hours be imperative, parents should write a request for an early dismissal and send it to the school to be given to the homeroom teacher. The child's name, time of dismissal, teacher's name and reason for the dismissal should be stated.

Parents are to report to the main office when picking up a student for an early dismissal and the student will be called to the office. Parents are required to sign out their child and provide identification if requested. Only a parent, guardian, or emergency contact may pick up a child. A child cannot be released directly from the classroom. No child will be excused at any time other than the regular dismissal time without permission from the parent or guardian.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Radios, audio recorders/players, toys and other electronic hand-held devices such as games, MP3 players, iPods and DSS should not be brought to school. The district will not be responsible for lost, damaged or stolen electronic devices that are brought onto school property in violation of this policy.

Electronic readers are acceptable for students with teacher permission.

The use of cell phones is prohibited during the school day

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS**

A student attending a nonpublic school or home school that meets the requirements under MCA § 20-5-109 may participate in extracurricular activities offered, subject to the student's eligibility as set out by Missoula County Public Schools. The student's academic eligibility must be verified by the head administrator of the nonpublic school or educator providing the student instruction in the home school as verified by the principal. Parent/guardian permission is required for a child to participate in a school club and/or extracurricular activity. Parents also have the right to withdraw their child from any club or extracurricular activity. Parental permission must be obtained for the student to participate in the extracurricular activity.

## **FEES**

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds and are at no charge to a student. A student, however, is expected to provide his or her own pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks and may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including:

- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, yearbooks (if applicable), etc.

- Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance, when uniforms are provided by the District.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.

Any required fee or deposit may be waived if the student and guardian are unable to pay. Application for such a waiver may be made to the Family Resource Center Specialist, Melanie Matelich.

## **FOOD SERVICES**

The District participates in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program and offers students nutritionally-balanced and appealing meals daily. Free and reduced-price meals are available based on financial need. The District will make every effort to prevent the overt identification of students participating in the free and reduced-price meals by utilizing electronic identification and payment systems. See school secretary to apply.

Forms will be sent home the first week of school or you can apply online.

The District acquired a waiver for the 2022-2023 school year to provide FREE breakfast for all students. Students will be charged \$3.00 per lunch.

Please refer to [Policy 8200](#) for additional information regarding the District's wellness program and its meal charging policy.

## **GUM**

Gum is not permitted in the school setting. Under special circumstances, a classroom teacher may allow gum in his/her classroom. No child should be sent to school with chewing gum.

## **HEALTHY SNACKS AND BIRTHDAYS**

At MCPS we are committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects children's health, well-being, and ability to learn. Our [School Wellness Policy](#) supports healthy eating and physical activity. Here is a [recommended snack list](#). Many classrooms are opting to celebrate birthdays and holiday parties with social activities and events rather than food. Please check in with your child's classroom teacher as to how birthdays will be celebrated.

## **HOMELESS STUDENTS/FAMILY IN TRANSITION (FIT) PROGRAM**

In accordance with federal and state law and regulations, the District will provide homeless students with access to the instructional programming that supports achievement of the content standards and to other services for which they are eligible. Students shall not be segregated into a separate school or program based on their status as homeless, nor shall they be stigmatized in any way.

The District will determine, according to the best interest of the child whether the child will be enrolled in the school of origin or in the public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child is actually living are eligible to attend. In determining the best

interest of the child the District will, to the extent feasible, keep the child in the school of origin, unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the guardian.

If the child is unaccompanied by a guardian or guardian, the homeless liaison will assist in placement and enrollment decisions, with the views of the child taken into consideration.

The District shall immediately enroll the homeless child, even if the child into the selected school even if the guardian/child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, immunization records, evidence of residency, or other documentation.

Homeless students shall be provided services comparable to services available to other students in the school system including, but not limited to, transportation services; educational services for which the student meets the eligibility criteria, such as educational programs for disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, and students with limited English proficiency; vocational and technical programs; preschool programs; before and after school-care programs; and school meals/nutrition programs.

Homeless students are entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled.

For more information or assistance with determining eligibility, contact the MCPS FIT LIason:

Colleen Lehman, 406-728-2400 ext. 1080 [clehman@mcpsmt.org](mailto:clehman@mcpsmt.org)

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is a constructive tool in the teaching/learning process when geared to the needs and abilities of students. Purposeful assignments not only enhance student achievement, but also develop self-discipline and associated good working habits.

Teachers may give homework to students to aid in the student's educational development. Homework should be an application or adaptation of a classroom experience, and should not be assigned for disciplinary purposes.

## **IMMUNIZATION**

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical or religious reasons, the student will not be immunized. The immunizations required are: diphtheria, pertussis, rubeola (measles), rubella, mumps, poliomyelitis, varicella and tetanus. Haemophilus influenza type B is required for students under age five (5). Except for those vaccinations required by law, the District will not discriminate against a student by denying or withholding educational opportunities based upon the student's vaccination status.

A student who transfers into the District may photocopy immunization records in the possession of the school of origin. The District will accept the photocopy as evidence of the immunization. Within thirty (30) days after a transferring student ceases attendance at the school of origin, the District must receive the original immunization records for the student who transfers into the District.

If a student's religious beliefs conflict with the requirement that the student be immunized, the student must present a notarized form signed by the student (or by the guardian, if the student is a minor) stating that immunization conflicts with the religious tenets and practices of the guardians and student. This certificate will be maintained as part of the student's immunization records.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or guardian must present a certificate signed by a health care provider who is licensed, certified, or otherwise authorized by the laws of any state or Canada to provide health care under Montana law, is authorized within the provider's scope of practice to administer immunizations to which the exemption applies, and has previously provided health care to the student seeking the exemption or has administered an immunization to which the student has had an adverse reaction. This certificate must indicate the specific nature and probable duration of the medical condition or circumstances which contraindicate immunization. This certificate will be maintained as part of the student's immunization records. For further information, see [Policy 3413](#).

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

### **Questioning of Students**

Law enforcement or social service workers must contact students through the administrative office. Students will not usually be questioned or interviewed by law enforcement or other lawful authorities while at school. When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities, however, wish to question or interview a student at school or the principal requests that the student be interviewed at school:

- The principal shall verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority.
- If the interview is not at the request of the principal, the principal shall ascertain the authority of law enforcement to question or interview the student at the school. If the interview is by court order or other exigencies exist (concern about loss/damage of evidence, flight from jurisdiction, or health, safety, or welfare of the student or other students or staff), the principal has the discretion to allow the interview to take place. Otherwise, if law enforcement can reasonably interview the student at a time when the student is not in school, the principal may, absent a court order or warrant, deny the request for an immediate interview of a student.
- The principal will make reasonable efforts to notify guardians unless the officer produces a court order prohibiting the notification of the guardians.

- In the event that a guardian cannot be present or cannot be reached, the principal will observe the interview.
- Law enforcement must comply with all legal requirements regarding notification of guardians and consent prior to interviewing students.
- Social service workers may be permitted to interview students at a school consistent with Montana law.

### **Students Taken into Custody**

State law requires the District to permit a student to be taken into legal custody by a law enforcement officer or probation officer to comply with a lawful court order, a warrant for arrest, or a law enforcement determination that probable cause exists for the arrest. To the extent practicable, the arrest should be conducted out of the view of other students in the administration offices. A social service worker may take custody of a student with a lawful court order or under the powers of MCA § 41-3-301.

The principal will immediately notify the Superintendent and will make reasonable attempts to notify a guardian unless the officer or official produces a court order prohibiting the notification of the guardians. Because the principal does not have the authority to prevent or delay a custody action, notification will most likely be after the fact.

### **Service of Process**

At times, law enforcement may seek to serve a student with a subpoena or other legal documents (i.e., complaint, summons). Absent a court order, the principal has the discretion to determine whether service at school is disruptive to the educational environment. If service is directed by a court or is not disruptive to the educational environment, the principal will make reasonable attempts to contact the guardians regarding the service. Where the principal has determined that service would be disruptive to the educational environment, the principal will make a reasonable attempt to coordinate with law enforcement to serve the student when school is not in session. Service on a student will be accomplished out of the view of other students in the administration offices.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

Paxson School has a Lost and Found area located in the building. Items are stored there for a reasonable amount of time. When items are not recovered, they are given to a charitable organization quarterly. The school takes no responsibility for items left in the Lost and Found. By making certain you have labeled your child's lunch box, coat, boots with their full name, you can help ensure your child's lost items can be returned to them.

## **MEDICINE AT SCHOOL**

A student who must take prescription medicine during the school day that is necessary for his or her health and well-being must have a written authorization signed by the guardians and the licensed health care provider allowing the dispensation of the medication. The student must bring the medicine in its original, properly labeled container, to the school nurse. The school nurse or school employee to whom the task is delegated pursuant to Montana law will either give the medicine at the proper times or give the student permission to take the medication as directed.

A student who has authorization to possess and self-administer medication must have completed and filed, with the office, a written order for self-administration of a medication from a licensed healthcare provider or dentist as well as written authorization from the guardians for the self-administration. The principal may authorize, in consultation with medical personnel, a student with asthma, severe allergies, or anaphylaxis to possess and self-administer emergency medication from an epinephrine pen (EpiPen) or asthma inhaler. The written order and written authorization must be provided annually.

For additional information, please see [Policy 3416](#).

## **GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND RIGHTS**

The District believes that the best educational result for each student occurs when all three partners are doing their best: the District staff, the student's guardian, and the student. Such a partnership requires trust and much communication between home and school. To strengthen this partnership, every guardian is urged to:

- Encourage his or her child to put a high priority on education and commit to making the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Review the information in the student handbook with his or her child and sign and return the acknowledgment form(s) and the directory information notice. A guardian with questions is encouraged to contact the school principal.
- Become familiar with all of the child's school activities and with the academic programs and course of study, including special programs, offered in the District. Discuss with the counselor or principal any questions, such as concerns about placement, assignment, early graduation, methods to opt-out of programs and instruction consistent with parent/family rights, and other options available to the child.
- Monitor the child's academic progress and contact teachers as needed. guardians have the right to review their child's education records upon request.
- Attend scheduled conferences and request additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, counselor, or principal, please call the school office at [\(406-542-4055\)](tel:406-542-4055) for an appointment. A teacher will usually arrange to return the call or

meet with the guardian during his or her conference period or at a mutually convenient time before or after school.

- Become a school volunteer. For further information, contact our Family Resource Center Specialist, Melanie Matelich at [mamatelich@mcpsmt.org](mailto:mamatelich@mcpsmt.org) or by calling the school.
- Contact a counselor or principal to discuss rights related to student name and pronoun use consistent with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act and Policy 3600.

## **PARTY INVITATIONS**

Party invitations should not be sent through the school to selected individuals unless every child in the classroom is invited. To avoid hurting children's feelings, we recommend you mail all party invitations to the home.

## **PROTECTION OF STUDENT RIGHTS**

### **Parent Rights**

All fundamental parental rights are exclusively reserved to the parent of a child without obstruction or interference by a government entity in accordance with state and federal law (including without limitation to statutes and the common law) and District policy.

### **Surveys**

Guardians have the right to inspect any survey or evaluation and refuse to allow their child to participate in such survey or evaluation.

### **Instructional Materials**

Guardians have the right to inspect instructional materials used as a part of their child's educational curriculum, within a reasonable time. This does not include academic tests or assessments.

Materials can be accessed at the MCPS District Curriculum and Instruction office.

## **RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL**

A student will not be released from school at times other than at the end of the school day except with permission from the principal or designee and according to the building sign-out procedures. Unless the principal has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the instructional day.

A student who will need to leave school during the day must bring a note from his or her guardian that morning. A student who becomes ill during the school day should, with the teacher's permission, report to the office or school nurse. The administrator or nurse will decide whether or not the student should be sent home and will notify the student's guardian. When in doubt as to

custodial rights, the District will rely on the most recent information available in the student's records. A student will only be released with prior written permission from the custodial guardian to a previously unauthorized adult unless an emergency situation justifies a waiver.

## **RELIGIOUS PRACTICES**

Each student has a right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other activities of the school. Students may also pray in groups and discuss their religious views with other students as long as they are not disruptive or coercive. The school will not require, encourage, or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity. Student prayer, even if nonsectarian or non-proselytizing, will not be broadcast over the school public address system. A student may read the Bible or other religious material during free reading time or when self-selected and consistent with a classroom or course requirements.

Students may study religions ancillary to the studies of human history and development and various national, cultural, and ethnic groups. This study will give neither preferential nor derogatory treatment to any religion or religious belief. The inclusion of religious music, symbols, art, or writings during instruction or in school programs or performances may occur where the religious content has a historical and/or independent educational purpose consistent with the approved curriculum. For additional information, please see [Policy 2460](#).

## **REPORT CARDS, PROGRESS REPORTS, AND CONFERENCES**

Written reports of absences and report cards or performance in each class or subject are issued to guardians three times a year.

### **Standards-Based Report Cards**

Reporting student progress is an essential part of the communication and partnership between school and home. The Missoula County Public School Elementary School report card is a Standards-Based report, meaning that the student's status is reported relative to the grade-level performance standard for each area of knowledge or skill. With a standards-based approach, teachers evaluate student learning using classroom observation, student classroom work and formative and summative assessments. The combination of these pieces of evidence when reviewed with guardians provides a more detailed picture of student progress. It tells the guardian what the student can do and to what degree. This, in turn, leads to identification of and direction for future learning goals. Guardians, when using standards-referenced reporting it is important to note\*:

3 -On a standards-based report, a mark of 3 "Proficient" is the expected goal for students by the end of the year. A 3 indicates the student is performing at grade level and demonstrates all skills and knowledge within the grade-level standard.



2 -Marks of a 2 “Nearing Proficiency” indicates a student demonstrates some skills and knowledge within the standard and is approaching standard. Many students will be at a 2, working throughout the school year towards skills and knowledge required to show proficiency within the grade-level standard.

1- Marks of 1 indicate a student can demonstrate some skills and knowledge within the standard, with help and is beginning to build foundational skills toward grade level standards.

4-Marks of a 4 “Advanced” indicate the student exceeds all skills within the standard by demonstrating more complex understanding and is performing above grade level.

Should all standards be demonstrated by the end of the year? Yes. The standards are grade specific; therefore, the goal is to have every student demonstrate proficiency, reach a mark of 3 in all grade-level standards by the end of the year.

Are Habits/Attitudes included as part of an academic score? No. Habits and Attitudes are not included when determining a student’s academic score. Habits and Attitudes are reported separately on the report card based on the school’s expectations

around Respect, Responsibility and Safety. We consider Habits/Attitudes equally important to academic progress.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Open communication is encouraged, and parents may request a conference with a teacher at any time during the school year. Parents may contact the teacher by telephone, email or note to arrange an appointment. A conference opportunity is provided for parents at the end of the first and second trimester to discuss your child’s academic development. Please refer to the district calendar or school website for the specific dates.

The District may require that report cards and unsatisfactory progress reports be signed by the guardian and returned to the school.

## **SAFETY**

### **Accident Prevention**

Student safety on campus and at school-related events is a high priority of the District. Although the District has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensure school safety. A student should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk.

- Follow the behavioral standards in this handbook, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the principal, teachers, or bus drivers.
- Remain alert to and promptly report safety hazards, such as intruders on campus.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other District employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

### **Emergency Medical Treatment and Information**

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the guardian cannot be reached, the school will need to have written guardian consent to obtain emergency medical treatment and information about allergies to medications, etc. Therefore, guardians are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Guardians should keep emergency care information up to date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the office to update any information.

### **Drills: Fire, Earthquake, and Other Emergencies**

From time to time, students, teachers, and other District employees will participate in drills of emergency procedures. When the alarm is sounded, students should follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

### **Emergency School-Closing Information**

The District may close the schools in the event of hazardous weather or other emergencies that threaten the safety of students, staff members, or school property. Emergency school closing information will be sent out via our mass communication system.

Emergency School Closure: All students, parents, and school employees should assume that school will be in session and buses running as scheduled, unless there is official notification from the Superintendent to the contrary. Such notice will be given via public media. In the event that weather conditions or other emergency circumstances require a modification of the normal routine, the Superintendent will make the modification decision prior to 6:30 a.m. and contact the public media for broadcast to the community and will initiate the emergency decision tree communication procedure to all administrators. [Policy 2221](#)

### **Personal Protective Equipment**

The District may require the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), including but not limited to face masks, if determined to be necessary for the safety and welfare of students and staff members. Exceptions may be made to any such requirement for PPE as permitted by law and on a case-by-case basis.

## **SEARCHES AND SEIZURES**

To protect students, employees, and visitors from the serious risk to the health and safety of students posed by alcohol, drugs, drug paraphernalia, and weapons, which are compelling interests, it is necessary to conduct searches of persons and property under certain, limited circumstances. Such searches are necessary to: deter the presence and possession of prohibited substances and items; deter drug and alcohol abuse among the student population; to educate students as to the serious physical, mental and emotional harm caused by drug and alcohol abuse; to prevent injury, illness and harm as result of drug, alcohol abuse and/or weapons; to help identify student drug use and assist guardians in pursuing evaluation and appropriate counseling; and to maintain a safe environment free of weapons, alcohol and drug use by vigilant monitoring. In the school environment, including student use of District-owned parking lots, students have a lower expectation of privacy due to the District's responsibility for maintaining discipline, health, and safety.

District officials may conduct reasonable searches of school property and equipment, students and their personal effects, and vehicles parked on District property to maintain health, safety, and security in the schools. The types of property that may be searched by school officials include but are not limited to lockers, desks, purses, backpacks, cellular phones or other electronic communication devices, or vehicles parked on District property.

### **Students and their Personal Effects**

School officials may search a student, the student's personal effects (e.g., purses, backpacks, coats, etc.), and/or District property under the direct control of the student when there is reasonable suspicion that the search will produce evidence that the student has violated or is violating the law or the District's policies or rules. Reasonable suspicion shall be based on the specific and objective facts that the search will produce evidence related to the alleged violation. The guardian of the student shall be notified of the search as soon as possible.

### **School Property**

School property, including, but not limited to, desks and lockers, is owned and controlled by the District and may be searched by school authorities at any time it is not under the immediate, direct control of the student, regardless of whether there is reasonable suspicion. School authorities are authorized to conduct area-wide, general administrative inspections of school property without notice to or consent of the student and without reasonable suspicion. The District may employ contractors to handle trained dogs to assist in these searches.

### **Seizure of Property**

If a search produces evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the District's policies or rules, such evidence may be seized and impounded by school authorities, and

disciplinary action may be taken. When appropriate, such evidence may be transferred to law enforcement authorities.

Evidence produced by a search may be used in a disciplinary proceeding against the student.

## **STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE**

Students in foster care are entitled to educational stability under Title I for the duration of their time in foster care. “Foster care” means “24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their guardians or guardians and for whom the child welfare agency has placement and care responsibility.” This includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions, and pre-adoptive home.

The District will take efforts to ensure that a child in foster care:

- Remains in his or her school of origin (school last enrolled in at the time of placement in foster care) unless it is not in the child’s best interest; or
- If the school of origin is not in the child’s best interest, the child must be immediately enrolled in a new school regardless of being able to produce records otherwise required.

The District will collaborate with the child welfare agency involved in a particular student’s case to make the “best interest” determination as quickly as possible. The District will also collaborate with the child welfare agency regarding the provision of transportation to the selected school for the student.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

### **Access by Guardians and Student**

A student’s school records are confidential and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The District maintains two sets of records: a permanent record and a cumulative record.

By law, both guardians, whether married, separated, or divorced, have access to the records of a student who is under 18. A guardian whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records, if the school is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights.

The building principal will be responsible for maintenance, retention, or destruction of a student’s permanent or cumulative records, in accordance with District procedure established by the Superintendent. The principal will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records. Access to records will be granted within 45 days of receipt of a written request. If circumstances prevent a guardian or eligible student from inspecting the records, the District will either provide a copy of the requested records or make other arrangements for the guardian or student to review the requested records.

Guardians of a minor, the student (if 18 or older), and school officials with legitimate educational interests are persons who may regularly access a student's records. "School officials with legitimate educational interests" include any employees, agents, or Trustees of the District; cooperatives of which the District is a member; or facilities with which the District contracts for the placement of students with disabilities, as well as their attorneys and consultants, who are working with a student or otherwise performing functions the school would perform in accordance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

The guardian's or student's right of access to, and copies of, student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records, such as teachers' personal notes on a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher, records pertaining to former students of the District, and records maintained by school law enforcement officials for purposes other than school discipline do not have to be made available to the guardians or students. Access will also not be granted to the guardian or the student to confidential letters and recommendations concerning admission to a post-secondary educational institution, applications for employment, or receipt of an honor or award, if the student has waived his or her right of access after being advised of his or her right to obtain the names of all persons making such confidential letters or statements.

See [Policy 3600](#) and [3606](#) for more information.

### **Access by Other Individuals and Entities**

Certain officials from various governmental agencies may have limited access to the records without prior consent by the guardians or students (over 18 years of age). Disclosure to these governmental agencies may be done under some of the following circumstances:

- The District may grant access to or release information from student records to employees or officials of the District or the Montana State Board of Education, provided a current, legitimate educational interest is shown.
- The District may grant access to or release information from student records without guardian consent or notification to any person, for the purpose of research, statistical reporting, or planning, provided that no student or guardian can be identified from the information released, and the person to whom the information is released signs an affidavit agreeing to comply with all applicable statutes and rules pertaining to school student records.
- The District will grant access to or release information from any student record as specifically required by federal or state statute.
- The District may release student records or information in connection with an emergency, without guardian consent, if the knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons. The Superintendent or Principal will make this decision, taking into consideration the nature of the emergency, the seriousness of the threat to the health and

safety of the student or other persons, the need for such records to meet the emergency, and whether the persons to whom such records are released are in a position to deal with the emergency.

- The District may disclose student records or information to the youth court and law enforcement authorities, pertaining to violations of the Montana Youth Court Act or criminal laws by the student.
- The District will comply with an *ex parte* order requiring it to permit the U.S. Attorney General or designee to have access to a student's school records without notice to or consent of the student's guardian.
- The District may disclose student records in a court proceeding where the guardian is a party to an action involving child abuse or neglect or dependency matters without guardian consent or notification if ordered to make this disclosure.
- The District may disclose student records to caseworkers or other Child & Family Services representatives when DPHHS/CFS is legally responsible for the care and protection of the student without notification or consent of the guardian.

The District forwards a student's records on request and without prior guardian consent to a school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. Records are also released in accordance with court order or lawfully issued subpoena. Unless the subpoena is issued for law enforcement purposes and the subpoena orders that its contents, existence, or the information sought not be disclosed, the District will make a reasonable effort to notify the guardian or eligible student in advance of compliance.

Guardian consent is required to release the records in most circumstances. When the student reaches 18 years of age, only the student has the right to consent to release of records.

The District charges a nominal fee for copying records; however, no guardian or student will be precluded from copying information because of financial hardship. An access log will also be maintained for each record which details those individuals accessing the records and their legitimate interest in the records.

### **Challenging Content of Records**

Students over 18, and guardians of minor students may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. If the District refuses the request to amend the records, the requestor has the right to ask for a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the requestor has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, guardians and the

student are not allowed to contest a student's grade in a course or references to expulsion and out-of-school suspensions through this process.

### **Directory Information**

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone, including military recruiters and/or post-secondary institutions, who follows procedures for requesting it, unless the guardian objects to the release of any or all directory information about the child. The opportunity to exercise such an objection was provided on the form signed by the guardian to acknowledge receipt of this handbook. Directory information includes: a student's name, address, telephone number, electronic mail address, date of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, photographs, dates of attendance, grade level, and honors and awards received in school.

### **Maintenance of Records**

Permanent records are maintained in perpetuity for every student who has enrolled in the District. Cumulative records will be maintained for eight (8) years after the student graduates or permanently leaves the District. Cumulative records which may be of continued assistance to a student with disabilities, who graduates or permanently withdraws from the District, may, after five (5) years, be transferred to the guardians or to the student if the student has succeeded to the rights of the guardians.

### **Rights Under FERPA**

Specific guardian and eligible student rights are Appendix A in this Handbook.

### **Privacy Matters – Photographs and Social Media**

Because of the advent of cell phones and social media, it has become almost impossible to fully protect the privacy rights of any individual from having his or her picture taken and shared with others. Guardians have the right to annually opt out of the District sharing their child's photograph in publications or through District media events. The District will honor any guardian opt-outs and not share this information. However, the District cannot prevent others who are present from sharing photos and videos from school events open to guardians and/or the public, including music performances, sporting events, open assemblies, or field trips.

### **TEXTBOOKS**

Board-approved textbooks are provided free of charge for each subject or class. Books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. A student who is issued a damaged book should report the damage to the teacher. Any student failing to return a book issued by the school or damaging a book issued by the school may be charged to replace the book.

## **TOYS AND GAMES**

Students are not permitted to bring toys and electronic games to school, unless approved by the principal or the principal's designee. Toys and games can present a safety hazard as well as a distraction from learning. When toys and games get broken or lost/taken the school cannot be held liable.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **School Sponsored**

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. The principal, however, may make an exception so that the student be permitted to ride with the guardian, or the guardian presents — before the scheduled trip — in a written request that the student be permitted to ride with an adult designated by the guardian.

### **Buses and Other School Vehicles**

The District makes school bus transportation available to all students living 3 or more miles from school. This service is provided at no cost to students. Bus routes and any subsequent changes are posted on [Infofinder](#) on the MCPS website.

Students are expected to assist District staff in ensuring that buses remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. When riding school buses, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook. Students must:

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Enter and leave the bus in an orderly manner at the designated bus stop nearest home.
- Keep feet, books, band instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the bus or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the bus.
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the bus and before crossing in front of the bus.
- If **seatbelts** are available on your bus:
  - All students are required to wear seatbelts as designed.
  - Students are expected to buckle themselves in once they have taken their seat. If a student needs assistance, students may ask the bus driver for help.



- Students refusing to use seatbelts as designed will be subject to a Bus Conduct Report and/or a phone call from the principal.
- Repeated refusal to wear seatbelts will result in suspended riding privileges from the bus.

When students ride in a District van or passenger car, seat belts must be fastened at all times.

Misconduct will be punished and bus-riding privileges may be suspended.

### **Bus Passes**

Beach Transportation requires a written permission slip for students to ride home with a friend. This written permission must be approved by the administration and Beach. Permission forms can be found on our school website or at the front office.

### **VIDEOTAPING OF STUDENTS**

The District has the right to use security and surveillance video cameras on District property to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of all staff, students, and visitors to District property, and to safeguard District facilities and equipment. Video cameras may be used in locations as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent. Students in violation of Board policies, administrative regulations, building rules, or law shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Others may be referred to law enforcement agencies.

Video recordings from security and surveillance cameras may become a part of a student's educational record. The District shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws related to record maintenance and retention. Signs will be posted at various locations to inform students, staff, and members of the public that video surveillance cameras are in use. The District will seek consent before recording students individually in the classroom. A consent form seeking permission to record during extracurricular activities for coaching or instruction is available.

### **VISITORS**

The District has the discretion to permit visitors. For the safety of those within the school, all visitors must first report to the main office. Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher and so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment.



## **Receipt of Handbook and Acknowledgement of Rights**

I have received a copy of the Paxson Elementary School Student Handbook for the 2023-2024 school year. I understand that the handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year. I understand that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the handbook.

I further acknowledge that I have been provided the opportunity to opt out (or limited opt-out) of the release of directory information about my child. If I so choose, I will make that designation in writing to my child's principal by September 17 of this school year.

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix A – FERPA RIGHTS**

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

The District is providing you notice of these rights, as outlined below:

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the District receives a request for access. guardians or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the guardian or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the guardian or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. guardians or eligible students may ask the District to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the District decides not to amend the record as requested by the guardian or eligible student, the District will notify the guardian or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the guardian or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a guardian or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

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

4. The District classifies the following as Directory Information: a student’s name, address, telephone number, electronic mail address, date of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, photographs, dates of attendance, and honors and awards received in school. School officials may release this information

to any person without the consent of the guardians or the student. Any guardian or eligible student who objects to the release of any or all of this information without his consent must notify, in writing, the principal of the school where the records are kept by October 1 of this school year, or within 10 working days following enrollment if enrollment takes place after October 1 of this school year. The objection must state what information the guardian or student does not want to be classified as Directory Information. A guardian has the right to provide a limited opt-out of directory information, which could include but is not limited to the District's disclosure or sharing of student photographs or images. If no objection is received as required above, information designated above will be classified as Directory Information until the beginning of the next school year.

5. Copies of the complete FERPA Policy adopted by the District may be obtained from the Superintendent's Office or from the Principal's Office of each school within the District.

6. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Capitan Municipal School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-4605

## **APPENDIX B - K-4 AUTHORIZATION FOR ELECTRONIC ACCESS**

*guardians and Students:*

Please read together and after signing, return this document to the school.

### **Statement of Purpose:**

The District believes that all students should have access to technology when they act in a responsible, efficient, courteous and legal manner. Internet access and other online services, available to student and teachers, offer a multitude of global resources. Our goal in providing these services is to enhance the educational development of our students.

Acceptable uses of technology are devoted to activities that support teaching and learning. The following are our agreements about the use of technology in District schools:

### **Terms of Agreement**

Using the computer correctly and responsibly is very important. I promise to follow these rules:

1. I promise to use all computer equipment carefully and not damage, change or tamper with the hardware, software, settings or the network.
2. I promise to use the computer and the Internet for schoolwork only. I will use only the programs and websites that my teacher has approved.
3. I promise to print only when my teacher tells me to print.
4. I promise to use my own file or my own folder on the student server.
5. I will not view, send or display inappropriate or illegal messages or pictures.
6. I promise never to use any form of electronic communication<sup>1</sup> I to harass, frighten or bully anyone while at school.
7. I promise to tell a staff member if I read or see something on the computer that is inappropriate.
8. I promise to obey copyright laws.
9. I understand that if I break any of my promises, I might lose my computer privileges.

### **Use of New Web Tools**

As part of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, teachers and students may be using new web tools such as blogs, wikis, podcasts and videocasts. These technologies improve students' communication and collaboration skills, provide a real audience and extend learning beyond the classroom walls while building digital citizenship skills. At some point during the school year, you may be asked to sign additional permission forms regarding the use of new web tools.

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<sup>1</sup> "Electronic communication" means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including but not limited to, a telephone, cellular phone, computer, pager, iPod, or other mp3 or audio-video players and cameras.

I will sign my name to show I understand and will follow the rules.

Student Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_ Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_

I have read this Agreement and have discussed it with my child:

guardian/Guardian Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

guardian/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX C - 5-12 AUTHORIZATION FOR ELECTRONIC ACCESS**

*guardians and Students:*

Please read together and after signing, return this document to the school.

### **Statement of Purpose:**

The District believes that all students should have access to technology when they act in a responsible, efficient, courteous and legal manner. Internet access and other online services, available to student and teachers, offer a multitude of global resources. Our goal in providing these services is to enhance the educational development of our students.

Acceptable uses of technology are devoted to activities that support teaching and learning. The following are our agreements about the use of technology in District schools:

### **Terms of Agreement**

Using the computer correctly and responsibly is very important. I promise to follow these rules:

1. I will not damage, change, tamper or interfere with the hardware, software, settings or the network in any way.
2. I will obey copyright laws. I will cite sources.
3. I will not seek, view, send or display offensive, inappropriate, or illegal messages or media.
4. I will keep my passwords private.
5. I will not waste limited resources, such as disk or server space, bandwidth or printing capacity.
6. I will not trespass in or harm another student's folders, work or files.
7. I will use my personal email account or any personal electronic device in accordance with school rules and or District policy.
8. I will notify a staff member immediately if I encounter materials which violate the rules of appropriate use.
9. I will not use any form of electronic communication<sup>2</sup> to harass, intimidate or bully anyone while at school.

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<sup>2</sup> "Electronic communication" means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device including, but not limited to, a telephone, cellular phone, computer, pager, iPod or other mp3 or audio-video players and cameras.



10. I am prepared to be held accountable for my actions and for any loss of privileges if these rules are violated.

### **Use of New Web Tools**

As part of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, teachers and students may be using new web tools such as blogs, wikis, podcasts and videocasts. These technologies improve students' communication and collaboration skills, provide a real audience and extend learning beyond the classroom walls while building digital citizenship skills. The following terms and conditions relate to these new web tools.

1. I will act safely by keeping personal information out of my web projects. I will not give out my family name, email address, home address, school name, city, country or other information that can help someone locate or contact me in person. I will not post identifying photos or videos, unless authorized by my instructor.
2. I will treat blog and wiki spaces as I do a classroom space, and I will use appropriate and respectful language. I will only post on school-appropriate subjects. If I include pictures on my blog, podcast, videocast or wiki, they will be appropriate.
3. If I post a link in a blog, podcast, videocast or wiki, I will have read that information carefully to be certain that it is appropriate for the school community.
4. I understand that if I fail to follow these guidelines, I may lose the opportunity to use web-based tools.

I will sign my name to show I understand and will follow the rules.

Student Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_ Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_

I have read this Agreement and have discussed it with my child:

guardian/Guardian Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

guardian/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



