MERIDIAN PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK

2019-2020

Contact Information

Main Office

(202) 387-9830

(202) 238-0036 (facsimile)

Website

www.meridian-dc.org

Locations

Elementary School (Grades PK3-6)

Meridian Public Charter School

2120 13th Street, NW Washington, DC 20009

(202) 387-9830

Middle School (Grades 7-8)

Meridian Public Charter School

3029 14th Street, NW Washington, DC 20009

(202) 793-2667

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2019-20 Family School Calendar

August 2019						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
			S	5	T	15

August 2019

26 First Day of School K-8; Pre-School Open House
27 Pre-School 1/2 day (dismiss at noon)
28 Pre-School 1/2 day (dismiss at noon)

January 2020						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
			S	19	T	19

January 2020

1-3 Winter Break - School Closed
6 School Re-opens/ Students Return
16 Parent Conferences/Early Release
20 MLK Jr. Day - Holiday Closing

September 2019						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					
			S	19	T	19

September 2019

2 Labor Day - Holiday Closing
26 Parent Conferences/Early Release
27 PD Day - School Closed

February 2020						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
			S	15	T	15

February 2020

17 President's Day - Holiday Closing
18 - 21 Mid-Winter Break Students - School Closed
27 Parent Conferences/Early Release

October 2019						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		
			S	21	T	22

October 2019

14 Indigenous Day - Holiday Closing
24 Parent Conferences/Early Release
25 PD Day - School Closed for students

March 2020						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				
			S	21	T	21

March 2020

20 PD Day - No School Closed for students
20 End of Term 2

November 2019						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
			S	17	T	17

November 2019

11 Veterans Day - Holiday Closing
22 End of Term 1
27-29 Thanksgiving Break - Holiday Closing

April 2020						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		
			S	16	T	17

April 2020

3 PD Day - School Closed
9 Parent Conferences/Early Release
13 - 17 Spring Break. No School Students

December 2019						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				
			S	15	T	15

December 2019

23-31 Winter Break - School Closed

May 2020						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31			S	20	T	20

May 2020

5/25 Memorial Day - Holiday Closing
28 Parent Conferences/Early Release

Student/Teacher Days

S	182
T	195

Term	Days
1	60
2	65
3	57
4	N/A

June 2020						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				
			S	14	T	15

June 2020

18 Last day of School for Students
19, 22 Contingency School Closure Day

180 Required student days

XX	PD Day/No school for students
XX	Early Release/PD
XX	Early Release/Parent Conferences
	Holiday/ No School Students/Staff
	End of Term/ Marking Period (Trimester)

Contingency School Closure Days

6/19
6/22

Calendar subject to change. 04.26.19
Meridian PCS Family Calendar

About Meridian Public Charter School

Mission Statement

Meridian Public Charter School is a rigorous Pre-K to 8th grade school, with a mission to inspire a passion for learning in our students and to help them build their self-confidence and self-respect through academic achievement.

Vision

As Meridian Public Charter School celebrates its 20th Anniversary this school year, we enter the next decade with a renewed sense of purpose and a clear vision of success for our students and school community.

One School, One Community, One City... the World Intersects at Meridian

- **One School – Our School** We will celebrate and honor the diversity of our school community. Our students and families come from Ward 1, throughout DC, and around the world. We speak multiple languages (e.g. English, Spanish, Vietnamese and Amharic) and have a variety of cultural backgrounds. Our diversity will strengthen and unite us as one school.
- **One Community – Our Community** We will draw on the strengths of our neighborhood—the history of Meridian Hill and the U Street Corridor and our partnerships with community organizations-–to support our students and families through wrap around services and enrichment activities. Our school community will add to and be part of our larger neighborhood community.
- **One City – Our City** We will take advantage of all Washington, DC has to offer through in-depth school-based learning combined with field trips that make the city part of our classroom. We will give back to our community through service to our city.
- **The World Intersects at Meridian** We will prepare Meridian graduates to be active citizens of our country and our world through second language exposure, a rich and rigorous curriculum, and schoolwide norms that instill curiosity, respect, resilience and leadership.

Over the past three years, student achievement at Meridian has improved dramatically. We will continue this momentum, building on our strengths to become—and remain—a Tier I Public Charter School, where students can learn, achieve, and blossom as they prepare to become citizens of our school, our community, our city, and our world.

History

Meridian Public Charter School was founded in 1999 by a group of dedicated individuals who shared a common belief that they could improve the lives of the children who reside in the District of Columbia. With this belief, Meridian Public Charter School opened to one hundred students in Pre-Kindergarten through Third Grade. The group quickly recognized that students would be better served if they started school earlier. This thought was the driving force of expanding our student body to include three-year-old students. Each year Meridian added one grade to accommodate the progression of our third graders until we reached 8th grade.

Meridian is managed by a Board of Trustees and a leadership team which now serves over six hundred students from age 3 through 8th grade. Our school boasts a rich history and has been the cornerstone of the community for many years.

Accountability Agreement

It takes a village.

The following is a contract between parents, students and the school. Meridian recognizes that in order for true learning to take place, there must be a partnership between home and school.

AS TEACHERS OF MERIDIAN PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL, WE WILL:

- Provide a safe and welcoming learning environment.
- Ensure effective learning experiences.
- Promote high expectations for student's achievement, responsibility and behavior.
- Establish and maintain open communication with students and parents.
- Meet individual student's educational needs.
- Comply with school, local, district and federal policies.

AS ADMINISTRATORS OF MERIDIAN PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL WE WILL:

- Provide high quality, well-articulated, standards-based, curriculum.
- Establish a learning environment that is nurturing, mutually respectful, and includes appropriate resources and materials.
- Keep parents/guardians informed of student's academic progress.
- Support the partnership between parents, students, staff and community.

AS A PARENT/GUARDIAN, I WILL:

- Make sure my child attends school daily and on time.
- Ensure my child is prepared for school (sleep, breakfast, dressed appropriately in the school uniform).
- Communicate daily with my child about schoolwork.
- Support the school's vision and mission for academic success.
- Promote high expectations for my child's behavior and academic achievement.
- Maintain open communication and participate in decisions regarding my child's progress.

Meridian Code of Values

Meridian Public Charter School highly values the following:

- Students' development of moral ethics and citizenship.
- Students' ability to navigate using cutting-edge technology.
- A collaborative approach to teaching and learning for student success.
- Student learning as a process and a constant.
- Scaffolding the learning of students to support them in becoming critical thinkers and problem-solvers.
- The individual student and their role in the collective.
- Students as individuals.
- The collective support of all stakeholders to support student learning.
- Our students' responsibility to improve the local and global community

Respect
Respect for others starts with respect for ourselves. self-respect. We come to school ready to learn and support one another. We demonstrate respect by considering the feelings of peers, the rights of all students, and the traditions of our community. walking quietly in the halls, without pushing, shoving, or hitting others. We acknowledge everyone's abilities and achievements in a supportive manner. We give respect to Overall, we interact in a warm and friendly manner that creates a welcoming school environment that allows space for everyone to thrive.

Curiosity
At Meridian, we believe curiosity is the key to enjoying learning. Likewise, when students are interested in what they're learning, it prepares them to better retain that knowledge. Instilling a strong desire to know and learn is an essential student success in school. Curious students ask questions and seek out answers. Learning is a more rewarding experience for students when we allow curiosity to guide our instruction.

Resilience
At Meridian, we believe resilience is a life skill that goes hand and hand with perseverance. Building the ability to adapt to stress, adversity and trauma is an essential part of the learning experience. By understanding how to respond to challenges and setbacks, students become more open to learning, more receptive to receiving assistance and motivated to continue the pursuit of knowledge.

Leadership
Leadership skills foster a sense of purpose in students and allow them to make their own decisions. It instills confidence in their ability to problem-solve, think creatively, and work as a team. Developing leadership in students also builds their self-confidence, offering them the opportunity to communicate freely and fearlessly explore their passions.

General Policies

Board of Trustees

A Board of Trustees governs Meridian. The Board of Trustees consists of parents and community members. Two parent Board members are part of the Board. Board members serve time limits and are governed by the By-Laws. The president of Meridian's Board of Trustees is Edie Ashton. She can be contacted at meridianboard@meridian-dc.org.

A regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Meridian Public Charter School shall be held at least quarterly and at each year at such time, day and place as shall be designated by the Board of Trustees for the purpose of transacting such business as may come before the meeting. The Board, by resolution, may provide for the holding of additional regular meetings. The Board will hold an Annual Meeting, each year, which shall be publicized on the school's website in accordance with the school's bylaws, and open to the public.

Enrollment

Any student who is a resident of the District of Columbia may enroll at Meridian per the school's admission criteria. Student enrollment forms must be completed in their entirety by one (1) parent or guardian with legal custody of the student. A parent includes a natural parent whose name is listed on the student's birth certificate or an adoptive parent with valid legal documentation. A guardian or third party custodian is an individual appointed by the court as stated in valid legal documentation.

In the absence of either of these documents, Meridian accepts the *Attestation of Other Primary Caregiver*, when verified by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), on a case-by-case basis. This form can be obtained from each campus.

Students must have all enrollment information completed and turned in prior to a student attending school; it is imperative that all information is correct. Students without proper contact information will receive notice at home for correction.

Students are considered enrolled upon completing the school's enrollment process and providing valid residency verification documents. This must be done in person, at the school, with our data office. The enrollment process will be shared with families annually. Students may not enroll in more than one school at the same time in the District of Columbia.

Students who do not complete the re-enrollment process per established deadlines will be referred to complete a student application through MySchoolDC. Students will not have any preferences to a seat unless preferences align to DC law and Meridian policy.

Lottery

If the number of applications exceeds the number of spaces available, a lottery is held to determine the order in which students are offered seats. Per the District of Columbia School Reform Act, siblings (students who share a biological parent) of current Meridian students (enrolled during the current school year) receive preference in the lottery should they apply during the open enrollment period. Students applying after the open enrollment period will be added to the waitlist on a first-come first-served basis. Meridian participates in My School DC and will use the common timeline and lottery for enrollment.

Matched families who miss established enrollment deadlines or are unresponsive to the school's communication efforts may have their offers declined due to non-responsiveness or missed enrollment deadlines. Waitlisted families who miss the waitlist offer deadline can be declined due to non-responsiveness or missed enrollment deadline. Current families who do not complete the enrollment process per established school timelines will need to apply through the MySchoolDC lottery system as their seats will be relinquished.

Residency

All students must prove DC residency during the designated enrollment slot for each student. If there are any residency disputes, the parent/guardian has three (3) business days to submit the additional documentation. If residency cannot be proven by this time, the child will automatically be un-enrolled. DC residency must be proven by the legal guardian. If anyone besides the birth mother or birth father is proving residency, legal documentation must be submitted proving guardianship. Meridian will initiate a residency investigation with the Office of the State Superintendent for Education (OSSE) upon receiving evidence that a family is not living in the District of Columbia. A non-resident finding will result in mandatory withdrawal and a referral to the Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE). Presentation of

false, forged, or doctored proof of residency will also result in immediate withdrawal and a referral to OSSE. OSSE and the D.C. Office of the Attorney General (OAG) are required by law to pursue retroactive tuition for all students who are found to be non- residents for the period of time they were enrolled.

Required Documentation for New Students

Parents/guardians must provide the following documentation after receiving an acceptance to Meridian through MySchoolDC when completing enrollment:

1. Online registration
2. Verification of Residency in the District of Columbia;
3. Child's birth certificate
4. Enrolling parent/guardian's government issued identification
5. Immunization and Health Records;
6. Final report card from previous school(s);
7. Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan (504 plan), if applicable (used for course placement, not as a criterion for acceptance)**.**

Emergency Contact Information

All students must have Emergency Contact Information on file, listing the names and phone numbers of any adults (18 or older) who may be contacted in the case of an emergency. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to keep this information accurate and current. Students and/or student records will not be released to any individual not listed on the Emergency Contact Information. Changes and/or updates to the Emergency Contact Information must be done in writing by the primary parent/guardian. Verbal changes will not be accepted.

Transfer or Withdrawal of Student

Students may withdraw from Meridian during the school year, before the school year, or after the school year. Students who wish to withdraw must complete the Withdrawal Form, return all assigned textbooks, and pay all outstanding school fees. A parent or guardian of record is required to come to the school and sign the necessary forms for a Student withdrawal or transfer from Meridian. Parents/Guardians must provide proof of enrollment in a subsequent school within ten (10) calendar days. Failure to do so will result in the student being considered truant. Proper truancy protocols will be followed.

Students who withdraw from Meridian at any point may not re-enroll during the same school year. Students must begin the enrollment process as new students for subsequent school years and follow enrollment and lottery protocols through MySchoolDC.

Re-Enrollment Deadline

In December of each year, we will announce our re-enrollment period for eligible returning students who have first rights to reserve a space for the next school year. We will announce the re-enrollment process and deadlines via written and telephonic communications. Please adhere to the deadline so that we may welcome your children back for the upcoming school year. Once we start our admissions process to admit new students, your child will forfeit his/her space if s/he has not officially re-enrolled by submitting necessary documentation by the established timelines. He/she will need to submit an application using the citywide common lottery (MySchoolDC). The student is not guaranteed a spot at Meridian and must abide by all lottery timelines.

Homeless Students/McKinney-Vento

Meridian provides services for students who qualify as homeless under the McKinney Vento Act. Families receive information on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act annually. The school's McKinney-Vento liaison acts as the main point of contact for families and government agencies. Referrals may be made to the school's social worker/counselor, the McKinney-Vento liaison at the elementary and middle school campuses.

The McKinney-Vento liaison annually informs staff and parents/guardians of steps to take when referring a child for assessment, common signs of homelessness, and services that will be made available to all identified students. Referrals and assessments will be on-going throughout the year. Once a student is successfully identified, the liaison—in cooperation with school staff—ensures and records that all services are being rendered to the student if need is presented; Metro cards, uniforms, and supplies will be handled through the office of the liaison. All students, regardless of situation, are tracked academically through their principal and/or social worker. If a student is identified for having an IEP, through the statewide database system, they will receive Special Education in a timely manner from the Special Education Department. On a quarterly basis, the McKinney-Vento liaison will check in with all students identified as homeless to verify that services are being provided. If, at any time, a disciplinary hearing is required due to an identified student's actions, the liaison will sit in on the meeting to verify that those actions were not as a result of their living situation.

All identified students will be re-assessed annually, unless a change in living situation is presented to the school.

School Operations

Building Hours

Meridian is open to Elementary School students from 8:00am to 3:30 pm and to Middle School students 7:50 am to 3:45 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. On Thursdays, Meridian closes to students at 1:00 pm, an early release for staff development. Upon dismissal, all students must be in an adult-supervised after school activity or after-care program. Students must abide by the school's entry processes and procedures upon entry and exit.

Before care is provided as a service (for a fee) to families at the elementary campus from 7:00 - 8:00 am. Upon dismissal from before care, students either report to class (PK-2nd) or the cafeteria (3rd-6th) for breakfast.

Office hours are 8:00am to 4:00pm.

School Hours

Operating hours for each campus are noted below:

School	Monday- Friday School day begins	Mon. - Wed., Fri. School day ends	Thursday School day ends
Meridian ES	8:30 am	3:30 pm	1:00 pm

Meridian MS	8:25 am	3:45 pm	1:00 pm

After care and After School Activities

Meridian partners with external organizations to offer on- and off-site after care programs to keep children engaged and safe outside of normal school hours. Information on how to enroll in partners' after-care programs is typically distributed in Welcome Packets prior to the start of the school year and on the school's website.

Additionally, Meridian believes that rich, effective after school activities enhance student engagement and family participation with the school. Therefore, Meridian seeks to provide after school programs (clubs, sports, and tutoring) that can also boost academic performance, promote physical health and provide a safe, structured environment. Meridian will provide details of the year's after school clubs and sports offerings during Parent Orientation and on its website.

School Closures, Delays and Emergency Situations

In the event of an emergency requiring the closure or emergency early dismissal of school, best efforts will be made to notify all parents by phone (automated call and/or text). Additionally, such information will be communicated to local television and radio stations. Families can also visit the school website for most current updates. In the event of school closure that only impacts Meridian, communication will be sent home to families. For early closing, school delays, and school closures due to inclement weather (snow, excessive heat, etc.), Meridian will follow the same schedule as the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) or as indicated by the Head of School.

All students are required to have emergency contact information on file at the office. Should contact information such as an address or phone number change, please furnish accurate information to the school. If you are not receiving the automated calls, text messages or emails from Meridian Public Charter School, please fill out the Parent/Guardian and Emergency Contact Update form.

In the event that the school is closed for more snow and/or emergency closing days than allotted each calendar year, a contingency plan will be enacted to restore academic days.

What does a 1-hour or 2-hour delay mean?

If DCPS opens one hour late on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Friday, the Middle School will start at 9:25 AM (doors open to the building at 8:50 AM), and the Elementary School will start at 9:30 AM (doors open to the building at 9:00 AM). If DCPS opens two hours late on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Friday, the Middle School will start at 10:25 AM (doors open to the building at 9:50 AM), and the Elementary School will start at 10:30 AM (doors open to the building at 10:00 AM).

School will still close at the regular time. For a 1-hour delay, there is no before-care but breakfast will be served. For a 2-hour delay, any before-school programs such as before-care and breakfast will be canceled. The daily school schedule is adjusted, and the school will begin serving lunch at 11:15 AM. When the opening of school is delayed, after school programs will still operate as scheduled.

What if there is a 1-hour or 2-hour delay on a Thursday?

Meridian normally operates on an early release schedule on Thursdays, dismissing all students at 1:00 PM. **On Thursday only, if DCPS calls for a 1-hour or 2-hour delay, Meridian will be closed**. You will find this information posted on Meridian's website, local news outlets, and the DC Public Charter School Board website. We will also send an automated call and/or text message to your phone notifying you of the status.

Emergency Early Dismissal

In the event of early dismissal, after school clubs and sports are cancelled. External partners' after care programs will communicate their operating status directly to families.

Emergency Plans

Meridian has monthly fire drills, bi-monthly lock-down drills, bi-annual evacuation drills, and annual severe weather drills to practice safe, speedy, and calm emergency procedures. If you are in the building at the time of an emergency, please be aware of our safety procedures.

Prohibited Items

Drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, weapons, sharp objects, and other potentially dangerous substances or objects that are, or could be, intended to inflict harm are prohibited on school grounds. Possessing or using prohibited items are grounds for expulsion for students, barring notice for adults, and possible termination for employees.

Damaged, lost or stolen items

Meridian is not responsible for any student personal property or school issued materials to a student that are damaged, lost or stolen. Students should only bring necessary school supplies with them to school. Meridian strongly discourages students from bringing in costly items such as electronics, jewelry, or toys. The school will not reimburse students for damaged, lost or stolen items.

Grievance/Complaint Policy

Meridian values the input of students, parents and guardians, and encourages parents to offer feedback on any aspect of the school program. A quality educational program for students at Meridian can be achieved best by all individuals working together harmoniously. There will be times, however, when an individual may feel the need to file a complaint. When complaints or concerns occur, they should be resolved at the school or at the lowest possible administrative level through an informal process of cooperative agreement among the affected individuals.

However, when the informal process fails to provide resolution, an individual is entitled to file a formal complaint and seek a review of any administrative decisions made by school system staff members. Complaints and concerns should be initially directed to the following individuals:

- Teacher (if appropriate)
- Dean of Students
- Principal or departmental Director

Formal Complaint Process

When a concern or complaint is not resolved through the informal process, you may initiate the formal complaint process outlined below.

The first step in the formal process is to contact the student's Dean in writing using the Formal Complaint Form (see annex) or a letter. You may attach descriptive or supportive information to your letter. Keep a copy of the form/letter and any attachments.

When your complaint is received at the school, the Student's Dean or designee should contact you within three (3) school days to establish the date, time and place of a meeting to discuss your concern, if such a meeting has not already occurred. Usually, this meeting will take place within ten (10) school days. Within 10 school days of receipt of the written complaint, or this meeting, if any, the Student Dean and/or Principal should respond to you in writing with a decision.

Sometimes a complaint or its resolution may be too complicated or, for other reasons, cannot be decided within 10 school days. In such cases, the Student Dean and/or Principal or designee will contact you within the first 10 days and arrange for an extension of the decision for no more than an additional 10 school days.

If you are not satisfied with the written decision, or if you do not receive a reply to your formal complaint within the specified time, you may request that your complaint be considered by the Head of School. You must file your request for review within 15 calendar days of the Dean/Principal response or the date when a decision was to have been made.

If you wish to request a review, forward the complaint to Head of School, with a note explaining the basis for disagreeing with the decision. The Head of School will respond, using a procedure and time limits similar to those followed by the Student Dean/Principal, as follows: (a) a meeting may be arranged within 3 work days; (b) a resolution on the review within 10 work days after the meeting, if any; and (c) an extension of an additional 10 work days if the matter is unusually complicated or otherwise requires additional time. The Head of School or his/her designee may respond by phone or in writing.

All formal grievances must abide by the school's grievance policy available on the school's website.

If you feel your complaint, whether administrative or programmatic, is not addressed properly by school-based leadership alone, you may:

- contact the Chair of Meridian's Board of Trustees, Edie Ashton, at meridianboard@meridian-dc.org.
- file a complaint with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). The most current OSSE complaint form can be found at: http://osse.dc.gov/seo/frames.asp?doc=/seo/lib/seo/assessment_and_accountability/OSSE_ESEA_Complaint_Policy.pdf

School Meals

Access to healthy foods is an important factor leading to academic success. Meridian strives to provide nutritious meals and snacks to our students before, during, and after school through a comprehensive

school meal program. Meridian participates in the National School Lunch program and serves both breakfast and lunch to all students.

Schools are required to increase participation in the meal programs through development of a coordinated, comprehensive outreach and promotion plan that may include flyers, home mailings, or website advertisements. This should include efforts to reach beyond the local school community, including encouraging greater community coalitions. This also may include creating after-school cooking clubs for families, more parent workshops, community/school gardens, and providing wellness resources to families.

Breakfast

Meridian operates a universal "Free for All" School Breakfast Program. Breakfast is served from 8:00am – 8:25 am at the elementary school and 7:50 am – 8:20 am at the middle school.

Lunch

Meridian will ensure that all students will be served free lunches. Meridian will provide a minimum of 30 minutes to eat lunch for students.

After School Snacks

After-school snacks, when offered, will contribute to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Schools serving after-schools snacks will comply with the requirements of the National School Lunch Program.

Nutritional Quality of School Meals

All meals served must meet the requirements of the DC Healthy School Act and the National School Lunch Program.

Meridian will offer a specialized meal for any students that have religious, dietary or medical restrictions. To obtain copies of menus, ingredients, and food origins information please contact the school office.

Meridian will prohibit students' ability to leave campus to obtain fast food for lunch or other meals. We ask parents to refrain from bringing fast food lunch to school for their students. Removing students from the school building at midday for lunch is a disruption to the school day. Parents will be required to follow the school's early dismissal policy.

Healthy Food and Snacks during Celebrations and/or School Events

Meridian attempts to limit celebrations that involve food during the school day. Each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (described in detail in the Meridian's Local Wellness Policy, available on the school's website). A list of healthy, nut-free party ideas for parents and teachers is available on the school's website. **All food and beverage items brought in for classroom celebrations or school wide events must be provided in its original container from the licensed catering vendor or store bought package.**

School Materials

The school provides a variety of materials to aid students' learning. Students must use these items with care and respect, as they and their parents/guardians are responsible for the cost of any school property

that is lost or damaged. Students purchase their own notebooks, folders, pens, pencils, paper, and other necessary school supplies.

Media Policy

As part of the Enrollment process, parents are required to sign a Media Release Form which grants or refuses permission for their child to be photographed or videotaped by Meridian Public Charter School or a third-party it designates/partners with. Photographic or video images of Meridian students, student artwork or student written work may appear in the school's newsletter, on its websites, in other promotional materials, or in the public media.

Student Fees

Student fees accumulated during any school year must be paid in full to receive final report cards, transcripts, or school records when graduating, withdrawing or transferring a student. Students at terminal grades with an outstanding balance will not be allowed to participate in promotion activities. If students have outstanding bills, they may not be able to participate in school activities throughout the school year or subsequent school years.

Families receive updates of student account bills throughout the school year. Student fees are assessed for the following:

1. Textbooks
2. Lunch bill
3. School uniforms
4. School IDs
5. School supplies
6. Student consumables (workbooks, novels, lab materials, any other supply provided to a student).
7. School issued electronic devices used by the student (laptop, e-reader, tablet, etc.)
8. Student field trips
9. Any other item where a fee is assessed by the school

Non-solicitation

To avoid disruption of business operations or disturbance of staff, students and/or visitors, Meridian has a Non-solicitation Policy. For purposes of the Non-solicitation Policy, "Solicitation" (or "Soliciting") shall include, canvassing, soliciting or seeking to obtain membership in or support for any organization, requesting contributions, and posting or distributing handbills, pamphlets, petitions, and the like of any kind ("Materials") on Meridian property or using Meridian resources (including without limitation bulletin boards, computers, mail, e-mail and telecommunication systems, photocopiers and telephone lists and databases). "Commercial Solicitation" means peddling or otherwise selling, purchasing or offering goods and services for sale or purchase, distributing advertising materials, circulars or product samples, or engaging in any other conduct relating to any outside business interests or for profit or personal economic benefit on Meridian property or using Meridian resources. Solicitation and Commercial Solicitation performed through verbal, written, or electronic means, are covered by the Non-solicitation Policy.

Parent/Guardian Access

Meridian shall, to the extent practicable, provide full opportunities for the participation of parents/guardians:

- with limited English proficiency,
- with disabilities,
- of homeless students, and
- of migrant students.

In order to support students whose families speak a language other than English, Meridian translates notifications and other key documents into Spanish and has bilingual staff members who are fluent in Spanish and other languages. Meridian provides Spanish interpretation at all parent teacher conference sessions and most school-wide events. In addition, parents/guardians who speak Amharic or other languages may request translations or interpretation for parent meetings or other events. Please let administrators know if you or a parent you know needs translation into languages other than Spanish or Amharic.

School Policies/Handbook

Meridian updates its policies on an on-going basis. The Student Handbook is published annually and updates are made as warranted throughout the school year. The most recent version of the Student Handbook should be viewed on the school's website. Meridian reserves the right to revise, amend, or delete any school policy at any time without notice.

Policies governing Meridian are reflected in multiple policy documents, communications, and Handbooks. Meridian policies may be added or amended during the current school year. Any major policy changes will be communicated to students and parents/guardians in writing via the school website. Additional policies may be found in other Meridian documents such as parent letters, memos, and program-specific handbooks.

Birthday Celebrations

Preschool and Elementary School classrooms may have a monthly birthday celebration for students whose birthdays fall within that month. Families are welcome to help celebrate a student's birthday on that day but must coordinate with their child's teacher in advance, scheduling birthday celebrations as often as possible on the last Friday of each month. While we recognize an individual's birthday, classes do not host individual birthday parties. Please refer to the "Healthy Food and Snacks during Celebrations and/or School Events" above for general guidance and reach out to your child's teacher to confirm that any food contributed is appropriate and reasonably accommodates allergies and dietary limitations of that classroom where possible.

Video/Audio Recording

Video and audio recording of events not open to the public involving a) school employees carrying out their school-related duties, and/or b) students, and/or c) parents and/or d) others involved in school-related business, including but in no way limited to meetings between parents and teachers/administrators, IEP team meetings and other special education – related meetings, meetings between or among administrators and school employees and/or meetings between or among school employees only and/or meetings between or among administrators only shall not be permitted.

Exceptions to this policy may be granted by the Head of School in her/his sole and exclusive judgment. Prior written requests to video or audio record events as aforesaid must be made to the Head of School at least 48 hours prior to the event that the requestor seeks to video or audio record. Such permission should only be granted under extraordinary circumstances and where doing so will be in the best interests of Meridian in pursuing its educational mission and in the best interests of students. If permission is granted to video and/or audio record an event, under no circumstances may any recording of any kind whatsoever be made public, posted on the internet, or sold.

Nothing herein shall be interpreted to prohibit any person from video or audio recording any school-related event which is open to the general public, including but not limited to athletic contest, fine arts performances, debate tournament, etc. A person may not profit directly or indirectly from the recording of any such public event by selling or posting such recordings on the internet for a fee.

Video Surveillance

Meridian is secured with video surveillance equipment. Video cameras record and monitor school activity before, during, and after school. Students and/or visitors to the building should not have the assumed right to privacy. Video footage will be reviewed as deemed necessary by school administration, Deans, and/or security. Video footage is the property of Meridian and will not be released except to law enforcement. To ensure the privacy of all students, the school will not honor any requests to view video footage by anyone except law enforcement.

Visitors

Visitor Policy

Family members of students and other guests are welcome at Meridian; families are encouraged to visit their student's class after the first three weeks of school. In order to assure an effective, positive, and nurturing learning environment with minimal distractions, we ask that you follow the guidelines below when visiting a classroom while school is in session and for scheduling conferences with teachers and administrators:

- Contact the teacher so that s/he can plan for your presence and inform you of any special information or considerations. While we will make every effort to accommodate your request as soon as possible, our priority is to ensure that our teachers are providing uninterrupted instruction to students. Please allow up to 24 hours for a teacher to respond to your request. Teachers will ensure that the Receptionist has a schedule of classroom visits, conferences or meetings.
- Visitors who request to meet with the Head of School, Principal, and Assistant Principal must make an appointment through the Receptionist.

The procedures outlined are established to minimize the disruption to the instructional program and daily routine of the school.

To ensure the safety of all members of the community, the school established the following visitor policy:

- Before being granted access to the school building, all visitors must report to the security desk to
    - identify themselves and present proper identification,

    - sign the visitor log book (noting the date; purpose for the visit; individual they are visiting; times of entry and departure; and if applicable, the agency/office they represent and their badge number), and
    - receive a visitor's badge that must be worn for the duration of the visit.
- Proper identification includes a driver's license/other government issued personal identification card, passport, or a current employee identification card from a local/federal government agency or private entity.
- Only visitors with school-related business will be granted access to the school; and the scope and duration of the visit must be directly related to the purpose for the visit.
- All visitors must follow the instructions provided to them at the security desks. The school Principal/designee may, at his/her discretion, direct school security to limit the areas and time during which the visitor may access the school building.
- All cell phones must be silenced/turned-off while in classrooms
- Before exiting the building, all visitors must return their visitor's badge to the security station.
- Visitors who violate these *Check-In Procedures* shall be immediately reported to the Principal/designee or security officer, who will determine what, if any, further action is necessary.

Visitor Code of Conduct

During school visits, all parent/guardian and other visitors are expected to be engaged in activities directly related to the purpose of their visit. If any visitor engages in disruptive, threatening or inappropriate behavior (directed towards a student, staff member, parent/guardian, or visitor) while on school property, the school Principal/designee, at its discretion, can-

- remove the individual from the building,
- permanently bar the individual from the building,
- bar the individual from attending future Meridian events, and/or
- call the MPD.

Examples of disruptive, threatening, or inappropriate behavior include, but are not limited to:

- Disturbing the school environment or operations;
- Compromising the safety or security of the school, its students or school-based staff;
- Disrupting the instructional program of any student;
- Refusing to identify oneself to staff members;
- Failure to comply with staff instructions;
- Failure to model and support Meridian values;
- Being rude to any staff members;
- Falsely accusing staff members;
- Trespassing on school property while school is not in session;
- Congregating in hallways, lobbies, stairwells, and other public areas;
- Interrupting a class while in session;
- Refusing to leave a classroom when asked to do so by the teacher;
- Speaking to any other student that is not their own;
- Speaking on a cell phone in public areas of the school;
- Endangering the physical safety of another by the use of force or the threat of force;

- Engaging in behavior that endangers or threatens to endanger the health, safety, welfare, or morals of others;
- Public intoxication; and/or
- Using profanity or raising of one's voice.

Barring Notices and Procedures

Meridian reserves the right to deny an individual's access to a school building for violating the *Visitor Code of Conduct* set forth above. Should such circumstances arise, the school Principal/designee shall issue a Barring Notice. A Barring Notice, at a minimum, shall include:

- The name of the barred individual;
- The name of the Principal/designee issuing the barring notice;
- The school from which the individual is barred;
- The reasons for which the individual is barred; and
- Notice that:
    - barred parents/guardians may request a review meeting not earlier than eight (8) weeks after the barring notice is issued by contacting the Principal/designee; and
    - the barring notice is for the duration of the current school year (unless cancelled in writing).

Volunteers

Meridian welcomes volunteers into our schools and are always grateful for volunteers who can spend time with us during the school day or at school events. These interactions are beneficial and rewarding to parents/guardians, students, and staff. We also recognize, however, that not all parents/guardians are able to help during the school day, and appreciate any time volunteers can provide, no matter how small.

In order to maintain a safe environment, any members of the Meridian community (employees, families and community partners) that plan to

- Volunteer more than 10 hours throughout the school year
- Coach sports, sponsor clubs, or tutor
- Chaperone field trips
- Chaperone school events

must undergo a school volunteer background check <u>every two years</u>. This background check will, at minimum, screen local and national criminal, sexual offender and felony databases. This background check is at no cost to parent/guardian(s) of current Meridian students.

In order to initiate the background check, all individuals interested in volunteering must first complete a brief Volunteer Interest Application using one of the following methods:

- Contact Ms. Chaunti Sockwell, Business Operations Coordinator
    - Email: csockwell@meriidan-dc.org
    - Phone: 202-387-9830 ext. 221
- Visit our school's website (www.meridian-dc.org) and:
    - Click on the Get Involved Tab
    - Click on the Volunteer Tab
    - Complete the brief Volunteer Interest Application

- Select Submit

After successfully completing one of the above options, you will receive an email from our volunteer screening software. Volunteers must complete the process indicated by the volunteer screening software within 24 hours of receiving the link via email. Additional assistance is available by phone and in person at both campuses (visit the Parent Center at the Elementary School or the Front Desk at the Middle School) to submit the initial Volunteer Interest Application and/or the information requested by the volunteer screening software. Language interpretation support to submit the requested information is also available by contacting Ms. Hilda Marquez, Spanish Translator/Parent Coordinator in the Parent Center or at hmarquez@meridian-dc.org, 202-387-9830 ext. 203.

Volunteer screenings take at least 48 hours and some may take longer. Therefore, anyone seeking to volunteer at a specific school event or field trip should complete the Volunteer Interest Application no less than 10 days in advance to ensure enough time for the background check and confirmation letter to be completed. Once the background check is complete, the volunteer will receive a letter confirming they are able to volunteer at Meridian Public Charter School from the Business Operations Coordinator.

If you have any additional questions about this process, please reach out to the Ms. Chaunti Sockwell, Business Operations Coordinator at 202-387-9830 ext. 221 or via email: csockwell@meridian-dc.org.

While on school property, volunteers must adhere to the *Visitor Security Check-In Procedures* and *Code of Conduct* outlined above.

Attorneys

School personnel shall make every effort to cooperate with attorney visitors in the investigation of a matter, but are not required to do so unless a valid subpoena has been issued against a particular staff person. Other attorney visitors can include, but are not limited to, attorneys from the United States Attorney's Office (USAO), the OAG, the Public Defender Service (PDS), private attorneys, advocates or representatives.

Protocol

In addition to the Visitor Security Check-In Procedures and Code of Conduct set forth above, school-based staff shall also observe the following protocol during attorney visits:

- Direct to Main Office - Once the attorney(s) is checked in pursuant to the *Visitor Security Check-In Procedures*, the attorney(s) shall be directed to the school's main office to speak with the Principal/designee.
- Attorney Questioning (by OAG or USAO attorneys)
    - *Students who are under 18 years old*
        - If an attorney comes to question a student regarding a matter, the attorney must first obtain consent from the student's parent/guardian.
        - The Principal/designee, may, but is not required to, contact the student's parent/guardian, inform them that an attorney is at the school to question the student, and give them the opportunity to either:
            - give consent over the phone for the student to speak with the attorney, or
            - come to the school to participate in the interview

        - A student may be questioned by an attorney, but he/she is not obligated to answer questions.
        - Where practicable the Principal/designee shall be present during questioning.
    - *School-based staff*
        - If an attorney from OAG or USAO comes to the school to investigate a matter and wishes to speak with school-based staff, the Principal/designee and all school-based staff should cooperate and answer any questions doing so it not disruptive to the school environment or class instruction.
- Requests for Documentation - If an attorney from OAG or USAO wishes to review and/or copy documents, the request must be made in writing. The school will review on a case by case basis each request.
- PDS or Private Attorneys - **Under no circumstances** shall these attorneys, their investigators, or their process servers have any direct interaction with any students.

Law Enforcement

School personnel shall make every effort to cooperate with law enforcement and permit them access to the school, so long as their visits do not disrupt the school environment and class instruction. Law enforcement officials include local, state, and federal police officers; members of the fire department; and, investigators from DC agencies, such as the DC Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

Protocol

In addition to the Visitor Security Check-In Procedures and Code of Conduct set forth above, school-based staff shall also observe the following protocol during law enforcement visits:

- Direct to Main Office - Once the law enforcement official(s) are checked in they shall be directed to the school's main office to speak with the Principal/designee.
- Designate an Escort - After being checked in, appropriate school personnel should be designated as the official's escort during the visit (ideally the school Principal/designee). The designated escort should remain with the law enforcement official(s) at all times (to the extent practicable).
- Give Complete Authority in Emergencies - If a law enforcement visit is in response to an emergency, these officials shall be given complete authority to resolve the emergency, and all school staff shall provide any necessary support.

Specific Scenarios Protocol

School-based staff shall respond to the below scenarios as follows:

- Law Enforcement Questioning
    - *Students who are under 18 years old*
        - The police must first obtain consent from the student's parent/guardian.
        - The Principal/designee shall contact the student's parent/guardian, inform them that the police are at the school to question the student, and give them the opportunity to either:
            - give consent over the phone, or
            - come to the school to participate in the interview.

- **EXCEPT**: Consent shall not be required if there are circumstances under which the health, life, or safety of the student would be at risk if the school tried to obtain consent from the student's parent/guardian.
    - A student may be questioned by the police, but he/she is not obliged to answer incriminating questions.
    - Where practicable the Principal/designee shall be present during questioning.
- *School-based staff*
    - The Principal/designee and all school staff shall cooperate and answer any questions, so long as their cooperation does not unduly disrupt the school environment or class instruction.

- Warrant for Student's Arrest
    - If a law enforcement official comes to school with a warrant for a student's arrest, the Principal/designee and other school staff shall comply with the terms of the arrest warrant, contact the student's parent/guardian.
- Requests for Documentation
    - If the police wish to review and/or copy documents, the Principal/designee will determine if the request will be honored on a case by case basis.

Parent Involvement

Parent Involvement Plan

Meridian strives to build strong relationships with parents and guardians. Parents who are interested in volunteering at our school or contributing their time or talents to assist other families are encouraged to contact our Family Coordinator Center.

Parent Advisory Council

As a Title I school, Meridian is required to have a Parent Advisory Council (PAC) to regularly consult with parents regarding the use of Title I funds in the school. The overall goal is to ensure that parents are involved in school life, and to support active partnership with other members of the school community. PACs are involved in the development of the school's Title I Parent Involvement Plan. Schools are required to hold regular meetings at a time convenient for parents, including an annual meeting where information about Title I funded programs and other related issues are discussed and shared.

Meridian's Parent Advisory Council (PAC) has three main goals:

- To establish a network of parents to disseminate pertinent information to share common strategies to encourage greater parent participation in the Meridian community
- To identify successful best practices from other sources that can become models for parent involvement programs at Meridian.
- To empower parents with skills and knowledge to become advocates for Title I Students at Meridian.

Meridian Student & Academic Policies

Attendance Policy

Daily attendance is a vital aspect of student success. It is important that students are present and on time every day of school. The Compulsory Attendance Law of the District of Columbia requires children from age 5 to 18 to enroll in and attend school regularly. If your child is aged 3 or 4, it is important to

understand that enrolling your child in Meridian Public Charter School means that you have enrolled your child in an educational program, and Meridian encourages families to establish attendance habits during a child's first years of school. A student must be present for 80% of the school day to be considered "present" for attendance purposes under DC regulations.

- Our Elementary School doors open at 8:00 am for breakfast. Class begins at 8:30 am and ends at 3:30 pm.
- Our Middle School doors open at 7:50 AM for breakfast. Class begins at 8:25 am and ends at 3:45 pm.

All students are expected to attend school every day that we are in session. Families are expected to ensure their student is in school. Attending school every day and on time is critically important and has a huge impact on your child's academic success. We ask that families not schedule vacations or non-emergency appointments during school time.

Students at Meridian are expected to:

- Arrive to school on time
- Be prepared for class with supplies and books
- Ask their teacher for missed assignments after an absence
- Seek assistance from staff if you have trouble getting to school

Students who are absent from school are not permitted to:

- Be on school property
- Participate in school activities
- Attend school activities and/or after school activities

Excused Absences

Excused absences count towards a student's total absences. All excused absences must be documented within **5 calendar days of the absence**. The following absences are considered excused absences.

1. Death in the student's immediate family (verification required);
2. Illness of the student
   NB: doctor's certificate is required for a student absent more than three (3) consecutive days. Parents can submit a maximum of three (3) handwritten notes to excuse an absence due to illness if the student is too sick to attend school but does not necessarily require a doctor visit. After three parent notes are submitted, all other absences due to illness can only be excused with a doctor's note.;
3. Observance of a religious holiday;
4. Out-of-School Suspension or In-School Suspension;
5. Medical reasons such as a doctor's appointment (a doctor's note must be provided when the student returns to school);
6. Failure of the District of Columbia to provide transportation in cases where the District of Columbia has a legal responsibility for the transportation of the student;
7. Absences to allow students of military to visit with their parent or legal guardian immediately before, during, and after deployment, as appropriate;
8. Other absences approved **in advance** by the Meridian administration upon the written request of a parent/guardian;

Students with disabilities will not be treated adversely for absences that are directly caused by their disabilities. Students who miss class to receive related services documented on their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or 504 plans are considered present.

Documenting an Excused Absence

When a student returns to school after an absence, s/he should bring a completed Absence Excuse Note form (see annex), note or the parent/guardian may email the Attendance Officer within five (5) days. The Elementary School Attendance Officer can be reached at attendance@meridian-dc.org; the Middle School Attendance Officer can be reached at MSattendance@meridian-dc.org. You may call the school to inform us that your child will be absent; however, this call WILL NOT excuse the absence and is for our information only. The email/note should include the date(s) of the absence, parent name and best contact (phone number or email address), student name, the valid reason for the absence, and any required documentation. ***An original doctor's certificate should be provided for medical appointments scheduled during the school day and for absences due to illness totaling three or more consecutive days.*** If no documentation is submitted to the Attendance Officer, the absence will be considered unexcused. Reporting the absence does not automatically excuse the absence; excuse notes are subject to monitoring and verification.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences are when students are absent from school without a valid excuse, with or without parental approval. Examples of unexcused absences include:

- Doing errands
- Cutting classes
- Shopping
- Oversleeping
- Babysitting
- Student employment

Arrival and Dismissal

Elementary School

Parents should not drop off their children before 8:00 a.m. unless they are enrolled in Before Care. Upon arrival, students will go directly to the cafeteria (Grades 3-6) or homeroom classrooms (Grades PK3-2). Breakfast is from 8:00 am. – 8:25 am. and students shall be seated in their classroom ready for work at 8:30 am. Students will not be allowed to enter into the building or loiter in the Front Desk area until breakfast is served. Families not enrolled in the before school program who arrive before 8:00 am must wait with their children outside until the building opens. If a student is left unattended before school opens, Meridian reserves the right to contact the Metropolitan Police Department and/or Child and Family Services. In the event that DC government declares a hypothermia alert, or heavy rain, families may enter the building and wait with their student in the lobby until 8:00 am.

All students are dismissed at 3:30 pm. After dismissal, students will not be allowed to re-enter the school. All students who participate in any extracurricular activities or after care will be picked up and escorted by their teachers/instructors. Students who are not picked up by 4:00 pm and are not already enrolled in an after school club, sport, tutoring, or after care will be taken to after care program and the

family will be charged the drop-in fee ($30 for SY 2018-19). Children who are repeatedly left in drop in program without registration or notice from a family member may be reported for 'neglect.'

Middle School

Students will be allowed to enter the school at 7:50 am. Upon arrival, students will go directly to the cafeteria. Breakfast is from 7:50 am – 8:20 am and students shall be seated in their classroom ready for work at 8:25 am. Students will not be allowed to enter into the building or loiter in the Front Desk area until breakfast is served.

Students are dismissed at 3:45 pm. After dismissal, students will not be allowed to re-enter into the school. All students who participate in any extracurricular activities or after-care will be picked up and escorted by their teachers/instructors.

On both campuses, students must have completed dismissal plans on file stating how students will leave school after they are dismissed. Written documentation must be provided by a parent/guardian if a student needs to leave in a different manner.

If the parent/guardian or other authorized pick up party will be late because of an emergency, please contact the Front Desk as soon as possible. Traffic is an ongoing challenge in our communities – please exercise caution, civility, and patience. Meridian reserves the right to contact the Metropolitan Police Department and/or Child and Family Services if a student is left unattended before school opens, remains at school excessively past their dismissal time or repeatedly joins the drop in program without prior notice.

Late Students

Elementary School students who arrive between 8:30 AM- 9:54 AM on a full day, and 8:30 AM- 9:24 AM on Thursdays are considered tardy. Middle School students who arrive between 8:26 AM- 9:53 AM on a full day and 8:26 AM - 9:20 AM on Thursdays at the Middle School are considered tardy. Tardy students must receive a Tardy Slip from the Front Desk; failure to receive a tardy slip may result in students being recorded as absent. Chronic tardiness disrupts instruction and impacts the learning of both the tardy student and their peers. Tardies may only be excused for the reasons listed above under excused absences.

In keeping with DC regulations, when a student is present at school for less than 80% of the day (arriving after the windows stated above), they will be considered absent.

Classroom instruction and work time is essential for student academic success. Middle School students who are tardy to school must report to "tardy detention" after school, on the same day they are tardy, from 3:45 pm – 4:15 pm. Appropriate documentation is required to exempt a student from "tardy detention." Appropriate documentation includes a note from a parent or guardian stating that the student had a medical or dental appointment that precluded on time arrival at school, inclement weather resulting in the school delaying on time arrival for all students, extreme circumstances with Metro or extreme circumstances affecting traffic. Tardiness caused by normal Metro delays or normal traffic patterns will not excuse late arrival. The Attendance Officer will make the final decision regarding excusing students from "tardy detention".

Early Pick-up

If a student needs to leave early for the day, advanced notification is appreciated. Students should not leave school before dismissal on a regular basis. If a parent comes to pick up a child after 3:10 pm but before dismissal, they will be asked to wait. Students are called down for dismissal once a parent or guardian arrives to pick them up. Students will not be called to wait for parents to arrive in the Lobby. Please plan accordingly and give students ample time to be dismissed. In the rare event that a student needs an early pick up, the following procedures must be followed:

- A parent/guardian must send documentation in writing to the Attendance Officer. The attendance officer will verify the documentation and approve or deny the early dismissal.
- The student will be considered excused if the dismissal is for a reason that is in accordance with the excused absence policy.
- If a student becomes ill during the school day, Meridian's on-site nurse may be able to address the student's needs. If a student is too ill to remain in school and needs to leave school, a parent/guardian will be contacted.

Early dismissals are only granted when requested from a parent/guardian and/or emergency contacts that are documented during the enrollment process.

Students are not allowed to leave school by telephone request or written note alone.

Truancy Policy

What is truancy?

Truancy is the willful absence from school by a minor (5–18 years of age) with or without parental approval, knowledge, or consent or a valid reason (unexcused absences)

What is chronic absenteeism?

Chronic absenteeism means missing more than 10 percent of school days, including both excused and unexcused absences. Chronic absenteeism and truancy both have negative long term impact on children. We understand that children get sick and that emergencies come up, but good attendance is critical to a student's education. Meridian staff will make every effort to identify students with chronic attendance issues, and to work with families to create attendance plans to address those issues. Persistent absenteeism from school will result in the following responses:

Each unexcused absence	The parent/guardian of an absent student will receive an automatic call or email to notify them of the student's absence that day and to request documentation, with follow-ups by school Attendance Officer as necessary.
Three (3) Unexcused Absences (cumulative)	3 day Unexcused Absence Letter will be sent to parent/guardian + Attendance Officer will contact the student's family to confirm their attendance record
Five (5) Unexcused Absences (cumulative)	Within two school days of a student's 5th unexcused absence, a member of the school staff

	will refer the student for in-school intervention planning with the Student Attendance Support Team (SAST). A staff member will contact the student's parent/guardian to request an attendance planning meeting within five days of the referral.
Seven (7) Unexcused Absences (cumulative) or Ten (10) Total (excused and unexcused) Absences	A certified letter notification of total absences & DC truancy law will be sent to the parent/guardian. If the family has not participated in a prior Attendance Planning Meeting, a meeting with the assigned SAST lead is required. If the parent/guardian(s) is unable or unwilling to participate in an attendance planning meeting at school, Meridian may conduct a home visit to ensure the safety of the student.
Ten (10) Unexcused Absences (cumulative)	Within two school days of a student's 10th unexcused absence, Meridian will: ● make a formal report of educational neglect to OSSE, as required by DC law. ● refer students for follow-up Attendance interventions with the SAST. The SAST will notify the Principal of an action plan within two days of the referral. ● make a formal report of suspected educational neglect to the Child and Family Services Administration (CFSA) for students aged 5-13, as required by DC law.
Fifteen (15) Unexcused Absences (cumulative) for students aged 14-17	Within two school days of a student's (aged 14-17) 15th unexcused absence, Meridian must submit a referral to: ● the Court Social Services Division (CSSD) of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia ● the Juvenile Division of the Office of the Attorney General (OAG)
Twenty (20) or more Consecutive Unexcused Absences	If a student is absent 20 or more consecutive full school days without a valid reason or excuse, Meridian has the discretion to officially withdraw the student from the school. Exceptions for extenuating circumstances as evidenced by

	supporting documentation may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Meridian will notify the family that the student has been withdrawn. Students who are un-enrolled will not be eligible to return to Meridian for the school year in which they were un-enrolled. Please note, if a withdrawn student wants to return to Meridian for the next school year, s/he will need to reapply through the annual lottery process through My School DC.
Thirty (30) or more Unexcused Absences (cumulative)	Any student who has accrued 30 or more unexcused absences for a given school year may not be promoted to the next grade level. Please refer to the Retention Policy below for more details.

Truancy Enforcement

All uniformed law enforcement officers in the District are responsible for truancy enforcement. If a truant is picked up by the police, s/he will be delivered to the school. Parents/guardians are notified of the student's truancy status. Parents/guardians and students may be required to attend a truancy conference.

Anti-Bullying Policy

At Meridian Public Charter School, the administration and staff create policies and procedures to create a safe learning environment that promotes positivity, community, acceptance, and respect. Acts of bullying, harassment and intimidation are an attack on the core values Meridian strives to instill in our students. Therefore, we have instituted a bullying prevention policy to investigate all incidents of bullying and issue appropriate consequences for those that bully and remedies for victims of a bullying incident.

Meridian Public Charter School defines bullying as a pattern of pervasive or persistent physical, verbal, or electronic contact that interferes with a student's physical/mental health, academic performance, or ability to participate in school activities over a period of time. These comments or actions are typically based on a student's race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sex, age, appearance, sexual orientation, gender identification or expression, intellectual ability, political affiliation, family, or disability—whether these characteristics are actual or perceived.

Bullying involves an imbalance of power where one person repeatedly acts to harm another person by:

- Placing a person in reasonable fear of physical harm to his/her person or property.
- Causing a substantial detrimental effect on a person's physical or mental health.
- Substantially interferes with a student's academic performance or attendance.

- Substantially interferes with a student's ability to participate in or benefit from services, activities, or privileges provided by Meridian Public Charter School.

Acts of bullying are prohibited on school grounds and school sponsored events. Students may also report incidents of bullying that occur in the immediate area surrounding the school or while in transit to and from school.

Behaviors that can escalate into bullying include but are not limited to:

Verbal	**Physical**	**Social**	**Electronic**
Teasing	Hitting	Purposefully excluding peers	Mean/threatening messages sent via text, email, or social media
Taunting	Pushing	Spreading rumors	Rumors sent via text, email, or social media
Threatening	Kicking	Public embarrassment	Posting/sending embarrassing pictures or videos on social media
Sexual comments	Punching	Instigating	

Any student that believes that they are being bullied should report the problem to a teacher or any staff member. Additionally, parents/guardians that witness bullying should report it to a Meridian Public Charter School staff member. Retaliation against a person who reports a bullying incident or provides information about a bullying incident is prohibited.

When an act of bullying is reported:

- Staff will ensure the student being bullied is in no immediate danger.
- Parents/guardians of all involved will be notified of the incident report and informed that an investigation will be conducted to determine if the incident is an act of bullying.
- An investigation will be made to determine if bullying occurred or if the incident was simply a conflict. The investigation will include interviews of students, parents, teachers, and witnesses.
- A determination will be made by the school administration as to whether the reported incident involved bullying.
- Parents will be notified of the outcome of investigation.
- Regardless of the outcome of the investigation, mediation between students will take place.

Consequences would be determined on a case-by-case basis, with the desired outcomes being:

1. The student that was being bullied no longer is bullied and feels safe and comfortable in school.
2. The student who bullied makes restitution and no longer exhibits bullying behaviors.

Bullying at Meridian is a Tier 4 (see Meridian Code of Conduct) infraction and can result in a variety of consequences. Progressive disciplinary actions, consistent with Meridian's Code of Conduct will be applied. The following list of consequences serves as a guide to available responses to bullying, including but not limited to:

- Temporary removal from class
- Lunch detention
- After school detention
- Parent contact/conference
- Behavior contract
- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Police referral

Meridian takes a proactive approach to prevent bullying. We promote positive behavior and positive school culture with our character education and promotion of the school's code of values which include: responsibility, respect, building relationships.

Uniform Policy

Meridian Public Charter School uniform policy is designed to give students a sense of professionalism and community, and therefore is strictly enforced throughout the school year, including half days and birthdays. We feel that this simple show of unity eliminates the distractions that can come with students trying to keep up with the latest fashion trends. It is our hope that when students put on their uniform in the morning, they take on a professional mindset in their approach to education. By abiding by our uniform policy, students show a willingness to be a part of our school community and accept the responsibility of taking ownership of their education, actively promoting a school culture of pride, unity, discipline and safety. Uniforms also create security through identification, enabling school officials to recognize intruders. Students out of compliance with the uniform policy will be subject to disciplinary consequences as per the Student Handbook.

Dress Code Requirements

All students must wear:

- Navy blue, light blue, or white collared shirt
- Solid navy blue pants or shorts no shorter than the student's longest finger when standing upright and hands down at their side
- Closed-toed shoes

Students may elect to wear:

- Navy blue or light blue skirt or polo-style dress, no shorter than the student's longest finger when standing upright and hands down at their side
- Meridian spiritwear t-shirts (purchased from or given by the school)

Additionally, students may choose to wear the following items during cold weather:

- Meridian fleece (order forms available at Parent Orientation/Back to School Night)
- Solid navy blue or white sweater

If electing to wear a fleece or sweater, students must wear a uniform collared shirt (solid navy blue, solid light blue, solid gray, or solid white).

Students **are not** permitted to wear the following:

- Coats, jackets, and hooded sweatshirts (hoodies) are all considered outerwear and cannot be worn in class or around the building
- Open-toed shoes and sandals are prohibited; they are not safe and may cause injury to the student.
- Hats are prohibited. However, Meridian respects and protects students' religious, ethnic and cultural expression. Students may wear any religiously, ethnically, or culturally specific head

coverings or hairstyles, including but not limited to hijabs, yarmulkes, head/hair wraps, braids, dreadlocks, and cornrows.

- Leggings (any skin-tight or form-fitting garment that covers the legs and sometimes waist) may only be worn underneath skirts/shorts of the appropriate length. Leggings CANNOT be worn in the place of pants.
- Any article of clothing, accessory, or markings on clothes or skin that
  - exhibits curse words or slurs,
  - exhibits graphic or violent images, or
  - displays emblems, symbols, signs, or other things which are clear evidence of affiliation with illegal drugs, alcohol, violence, or criminally motivated organizations.

Dress Down Days

Dress Down Days may be granted for campus-wide special events (e.g. spirit or theme weeks) or earned by individual students to celebrate their success. For all Dress Down Days, the following guidelines must be followed:

- No backs or midriffs may be exposed
- No tank tops
- Shorts and skirts must reach the student's longest finger when standing upright and hands down at their side
- No holes, rips or tears on tops or bottoms

Students not in uniform, school apparel or suitable Dress Down Day attire will receive negative points on Dean's List. Parent/guardian(s) will be notified, and the student will be provided with appropriate apparel, consistent with the school's dress code, if available. After three incidents of failing to comply with the Uniform Policy and Dress Code, the student will not be permitted to attend class until he/she is appropriately dressed. The student's parent/guardian will be notified and asked to immediately provide appropriate clothing as well as schedule a meeting with the student's Dean or designee.

Cafeteria Policy

Listed below are some rules and the cafeteria procedures, which will help ensure appropriate conduct and an orderly lunch period. Lunches may be brought with the student in the morning or purchased in the cafeteria. Lunch must be eaten in the designated areas at the designated times. Students may not leave campus for meals unless part of a predetermined field trip or school-sponsored activity.

1. Students should enter the cafeteria quietly, orderly, and be seated.
2. Respect and politeness must be shown to all, including the cafeteria staff, lunch helpers or volunteers.
3. Students' tables will be assigned by grade level. The adult in charge may allow students to change seating for good behavior.
4. No jackets, hats, or anything other than the student uniform may be worn during the lunch period.
5. Cell phones or other portable electronic devices are not to be used.
6. Students must be patient while waiting to be served. A single file line must be maintained while awaiting food.

7. No food may be brought back through the food service line once it has been purchased.
8. Students must be seated at a table when eating. Once seated, there is to be NO moving from your table without permission. Students should refrain from shouting across tables.
9. Students must remove trash from tables, chairs and the floor and wait for the trash can to be brought to them.
10. Throwing food, ice, or other objects is not allowed. Running, excessive noise, "horse play", or other disruptive behavior is not allowed. All unacceptable behavior will result in school detention and/or removal from the cafeteria for specified time period.

Student Health/Welfare Policies

Toileting Policy

Meridian Public Charter School does not exclude children based on toilet learning ability. Teachers should be sensitive to parent concerns and offer open communication with parents concerning Toilet Learning, as it is developmentally appropriate for 3 year olds to be engaged in toilet learning activities.

Children who are fully toilet trained are less prone to accidents and can fully access the school curriculum. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, most children (approximately 98%) achieve bowel control and daytime urine control by 3 years old. As the Mayo Clinic indicates, "if a potty-trained child reverts or loses ground — especially at age 4 or older — or you're concerned about your child's accidents, contact his or her doctor."

In order to support children, families, and teachers with toilet learning, Meridian implements the following processes and procedures to support all parties and help children achieve age and developmentally appropriate self-help skills. In order to achieve success in this process, it is crucial that all parties maintain open, honest, and supportive communication so that children feel comfortable and can be successful. Please remember that toilet learning has to be reinforced at home as well as at school. No child will be forced to sit on the toilet.

At Meridian, a child can be defined as not toilet trained if a child has more than 3 accidents (while awake) in a week for two consecutive weeks.

Note: Any child with an Individualized Education Plan or an Individualized Family Service Plan that includes goals for Toilet Learning will follow the plan and guidelines outlined in that plan.

As part of Meridian's regular schedule and curriculum, children will be taken to the bathroom on a regular schedule and will be allowed to use the bathroom whenever they request. Meridian recognizes that as part of the toilet learning process, children may have accidents. Please note:

- If a child has a bowel movement during the school day, a parent will be called to change clothes and/or pick up for the day. If parents do not come to change children teachers will give students directions to change clothes. Teachers are not required to physically remove clothing or wipe students.
- If a child has more than three (3) accidents in a single school day, a parent will be called to pick up their child for the day.

In order to ensure we can support your child's toilet needs at school, Meridian will provide the following to ensure proper, sanitary care of your child when they have accidents:

School Provided Supplies for Toilet Learning
Latex or hypoallergenic gloves
Toilet paper
Bags for soiled clothing
Trash cans with lids for appropriate disposal
Training for staff on proper procedures for managing accidents

For children who are not fully toilet trained, as indicated by the frequency of accidents at school, families are required to meet with the student's teacher(s) and school administrators to review past accidents, discuss toilet training efforts at home, and prepare a toileting action plan to be followed at school and at home for thirty (30) calendar days. While the toileting action plan is in effect, daily toilet logs completed at school must be reviewed and signed by the family daily. Daily toilet logs completed at home must be submitted to the student's teacher at the start of each day (all non-school days, including weekends, should be submitted the following school day). If, after 30 calendar days of following the toileting action plan, the student has four (4) or more accidents in two consecutive school days, then the family will be expected to keep the student home for three (3) school days. Once the student has returned to school, if the student is unsuccessful, the cycle of two days of monitoring (4 or less accidents), three days at home will repeat, until the student is toilet trained.

While the toileting action plan is in effect, if the family does not submit daily toilet logs completed at home, or logs indicate that the action plan is not being followed at home for five (5) or more days, Meridian reserves the right to implement the two days of monitoring (with 4 or less accidents), student stays at home for 3 days cycle.

Families of students not fully toilet trained are required to bring the following supplies to school in order to support the process:

Family Provided Supplies for Toilet Learning (***Families are responsible for ensuring all of these items are in their child's cubby***)	
Wipes	
Disposable Training Pants	Children should not be sent to school in standard diapers, as we want children to get used to the process of putting on and taking off underwear.
Two changes of clothing 1. Underwear 2. A pair of socks 3. A bottom 4. A top	Please ensure that pants and belts are easy to remove (elastic waist bands, Velcro belts, snaps, not buttons) Each full change of must be in a labeled gallon ziploc plastic bag.

An extra pair of shoes	If possible

If families fail to have these items on hand and the child has an accident, the parent will be required to bring these items to the school within an hour. If parents fail to bring these in, their child will not be allowed to attend school until these supplies are verified as on hand unless the family has developed an agreement with the school counselor about obtaining clothing and/or supplies. If you have any questions, please speak with your child's teacher or the School Counselor.

Changes of Clothing

Young children's clothes can become dirty or soiled in the course of the school day and a change of clothes may be necessary for the comfort of the child. Pre-school parents are required to leave two extra sets of clothes at school. Each set of extra clothing should be labeled with the student's name and placed in a gallon size ziploc bag. Teachers will bag up the dirty clothes so that they go home with the child that day. If a child uses his/her emergency change of clothes, parents must send a new set of emergency clothes the following day. If a child needs to change and does not have an emergency change of clothes, parents will be contacted and expected to bring a set within an hour. We have a limited amount of extra clothes kept at the school. If you borrow clothes from the school, please wash and return the next day.

Ill Students

In order to maintain a healthy school, parents/guardians must not send their children to school with any contagious diseases such as the flu, strep throat, chicken pox, measles, conjunctivitis (pink eye), ringworm, scabies, or lice. Students with any of these conditions will be sent home from school until they are no longer contagious. Parents must pick up their child within two hours of being notified that their child is sick with a contagious illness. Meridian may request that the parent/guardian provide a doctor's note showing that their child is no longer contagious. Please notify the front office if you discover that your child may have been exposed to a contagious disease.

Parent/guardian(s) should not send their children to school within 24 hours of vomiting or running a fever of 100 degrees or higher. Students should not return to school until 24 – 36 hours after beginning the course of antibiotics.

Students who are ill should remain at home rather than attend school and risk infecting other Students. In the event that a Student becomes ill or is in need of first aid, the school nurse will be available during school hours. In all non-emergency situations, a Student will be permitted to go to the Health Office after he or she has been excused from the scheduled class or activity with a signed pass.

If the student is too ill to continue with the day's schedule, Meridian will contact the parent or guardian to make arrangements for the student to go home. School homework will be provided to the student. In all other cases, the student will be expected to return to class immediately after being seen by the nurse.

The following symptoms can help you determine when to keep your child home from school:

- An oral temperature of more than 100◦
- Persistent cough
- Stomach ache
- Earache
- Diarrhea
- Red or Pink Eye
- Pale or flushed face
- Sore throat
- Loss of energy or sleep
- Headache
- Rash or infection of the skin
- Thick yellowish discharge from the nose
- Nausea or vomiting

Students must be symptom free for 24 hours prior to returning to school. The school reserves the right to ask a parent for medical clearance from a doctor for a student to return to school if out sick for more than two (2) days.

The DC DOH does not permit students to remain at school if they have a communicable disease or symptoms of a communicable disease. Parent(s)/guardian(s) should notify the school's nurse within 24 hours after the student has developed a known or suspected communicable disease. If a student is found to have signs or symptoms of a communicable disease, a notice will be sent home indicating the disease and the nature of the illness. The names of the students will not be provided. All information about communicable diseases is confidential.

Communicable Diseases

The following communicable diseases must be posted or reported:

- Chicken pox/varicella
- Conjunctivitis, infectious (pink eye)
- Diarrhea: viral, parasitic or bacterial (e.g., E. coli, Salmonella, Shigella, Rotavirus, Norwalk agent, Enterovirus, Giardia)
- Diphtheria
- Fifth Disease/Erythema infectiosum
- Haemophilus influenza type B (Hib)
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease
- Herpes simplex virus stomatitis (severe case of oral herpes)
- Impetigo
- Influenza (the flu)
- Lice
- Lyme Disease
- Measles
- Meningitis, viral or bacterial (e.g., meningococcus, enterovirus)
- Mumps
- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Rabies
- Rubella
- Ringworm of scalp or body
- Scabies
- Stomach virus
- Strep throat/Scarlet fever
- Tuberculosis
- Typhoid Fever

Lice

Meridian will follow the guidelines of the American Pediatric Association for children with lice in school. Current recommendations do not recommend children be prohibited from school for lice; instead if your child has lice, s/he can finish the school day, be treated, and return to school. Please consult your child's pediatrician regarding the most effective treatments for lice removal.

Physical and Dental Examination Requirements

DC law requires that all students attending public school in the District must furnish the school with an Oral Health Assessment and a Universal Health Certificate (documenting immunizations, tuberculosis assessment, lead screening and a physical exam) each year, completed and signed by a physician or certified nurse practitioner within the calendar year immediately preceding the first day of the school year or the date of the student's enrollment in the school, whichever occurs later. Meridian is a public school and subject to this law.

Any student, in any grade, who participates in a sports activity is also required to provide a health certificate, completed and signed by a physician or certified nurse practitioner, in order to participate.

Immunization Requirements

All children entering and attending school in DC, including Meridian, are required to show documented proof of complete, current, correctly-spaced immunizations, or proof of medical or religious exemption (Immunization of School Students Act of 1979 — DC Law 3-20 and DCMIR Title 22. Chapter 1). Students who do not have the necessary documentation may not attend school. The list of immunizations required by the DC Department of Health is available from the DOH website www.doh.dc.gov. If you have questions about DC's immunization requirements, please discuss them with your child's physician. You can also contact the DC Department of Health Immunization Division at (202) 576-7130.

Administration of Medicine

Meridian encourages families to dispense both temporary and maintenance medications outside of school hours. Ask your physician for a medication schedule that will accomplish this. In those few cases where this is not possible, please bring in the medication to the school nurse. The medication needs to be in the original container with the appropriate prescription label and the appropriate Student Health Authorization for Administration of Medication Form. We store the medicine in a secure location in the nurse's office. We will administer the medication from the school nurse's office. Please be aware the medication cannot travel back and forth to school – once it's given to us for your child's use, it must remain with us until it needs to be refilled. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to ask for two separate prescriptions when at the doctor's office with your child. Students are not allowed to have medication (prescription or non-prescription) of any kind in their possession at school. Students who have asthma or issues with anaphylaxis may benefit from a plan. Please contact the school Nurse for the appropriate form for your physician. For further information on medication or any health related issues, please call our nurse.

Parents must secure all remaining medication by the last day of school from the school nurse. Any medication left after the last day of school will be discarded.

Authorization for Medical Procedures

Please inform Meridian's Health Office before the start of the school year if your student needs to receive any medical procedures during the school day (for example a breathing nebulizer treatment). You must also complete the Authorization for Medical Procedure/Treatment forms. Additional information is available from the nurse.

Students who do not have the necessary health documents on file with Meridian may be excluded from school until the required documents are presented. Parents are expected to abide by/with the necessary health regulations before the start of each school year.

Medical Appointments

Parents/guardians are discouraged from making medical appointments during the school day. If a student must attend a medical appointment, the parent/guardian must pick the student up from school.

Students will not be allowed to leave the school grounds without the physical presence of a parent/guardian to sign them out of school from the Front Desk.

Mandated Reporting

Our student's safety is our first priority at Meridian. Because schools are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect, we will call the Child and Family Services Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline if:

A student tells a staff member that he/she:

- is being abused at home, there is drug use in the home, have been sexually abused, are engaging in child pornography or prostitution, have witnessed domestic abuse, are being threatened at home, or don't want to go home because they are afraid.

A student:

- threatens suicide or threatens to kill or seriously harm another person.
- is engaging in risky behavior (including sexual behavior, drug use, etc.) and the parents are not able to or unwilling to intervene.
- has 10 or more unexcused absences or an extreme tardy problem. (Age relevant as per DCMR)
- is being kept from school to care for family members or to do chores or work around the house.
- is not attending school because they are holding a job.

A staff member:

- sees physical signs of abuse such as bruises, burns, fractures, etc.
- notices signs of neglect, including lack of basic food and clothing, inappropriate hygiene, lack of appropriate supervision, lack of medical treatment, or the child is residing in an inappropriate or dangerous environment.
- Has general concern for student safety, well-being, or mental health.

Parent/Guardians:

- repeatedly do not return phone calls, responding to notes or letters home, or are not coming up to school for meetings.
- Have withdrawn a student and fail to provide documentation enrolling the student in another education institution within ten (10) business days.

The school has no obligation to notify a parent/guardian or disclose any communication between school and CFSA. Further, the school will not disclose to families which staff member(s) notified CFSA of suspected abuse or neglect.

Technology and Cell Phone Use Policy

Meridian has a strict policy, which prohibits student use of cell phones and other electronic devices (radios, iPods and MP3 players, CD players, video game players, cell phones, iPads, tablets, e-readers, smart watches, and similar devices) during school hours. Cell phones in classrooms have a negative impact on academic performance because they distract students from being fully engaged participants in the learning process. Cell phone use during school hours can also increase instances of cyber bullying and inappropriate posts to social media websites.

Student cell phones and other electronic devices should be turned off prior to entering the school building and placed inside their locker or turned in at Reception (at the middle school campus). Visible cell phones and other electronic devices will be confiscated and only returned to a parent or guardian. Repeated violations will result in additional consequences.

Internet Security Policy

Scope

This policy applies to all computers that reside on the inside of the schools Internet firewall.

Purpose

A policy of internet safety is enforced by Meridian Public Charter School. (MPCS- TSD). This policy includes methods and measures to block or filter internet access from both minors and adults to certain visual depictions. These depictions that are (1) obscene, (2) anything considered child pornography, and (3) any depiction harmful to minors. Infractions to any of these rules are punishable by expulsion from the network and/or by law in the District of Columbia. Meridian is responsible for providing security for the school's network only. This policy identifies the Internet/Intranet security responsibilities for both Meridian servers, workstations and school owned and operated notebooks computers.

Use of Internet and Other Technology Resources Policy

Students and their parents/guardians, as users of Meridian Public Charter School technology resources, must act in accordance with the following regulations regarding the legal and ethical use of the Internet and other technologies.

When using any technologies or the Internet at Meridian, students and parents will not:

1. Search, view, send, display or download sexually explicit, profane, violence promoting or illegal materials
2. Use interactive sites, such as "chats" unless specifically assigned by a teacher
3. Use resources to harass, insult, or attack others, including using obscene language
4. Trespass in others' files or work (including using others' passwords)
5. Damage resources, including computers, computer systems, or computer networks (including changing computer or printer configurations)
6. Violate copyright laws or a local, state, or federal law
7. Violate a school rule

As part of the Enrollment process, parent/guardian(s) are required to grant or refuse permission to access the Internet and technology resources under supervision of his/her teacher.

All users will act in a considerate and responsible manner as expected for use of these privileges, and follow any regulations posted in the classroom, library, Parent Center, or other room where computers are in use. Users will respect the privacy rights of others and will not view others' files without the owner's permission, or alter or damage others' work.

Violation of any of the Meridian Public Charter School policies regarding the use of the technology resources and the Internet may result in loss of access to technology resources and the Internet, and additional punitive/disciplinary measures.

Field Trips

Throughout the school year, teachers will take their students on educational field trips that relate to the curricular areas being studied. These trips not only extend learning outside the classroom, but are special social times for the classes as well. Meridian Public Charter School field trips are well planned, approved by school leaders, and appropriately supervised by our staff with support from parent volunteers.

As part of the Enrollment process, rather than ask for written permission each time a field trip is scheduled, Meridian requests written permission from parent/guardian(s) for their student to participate in all class field trips throughout the school year. Prior to each trip, teachers will send notification including destination, focus of trip, travel arrangements, appropriate dress, information about meals and information regarding any monies needed for the trip. Meridian also requests parent/guardian permission for students to take walks in the surrounding area of the school for purposes including, but not limited to: physical fitness, parks for educational/recreational purposes, and/or local field trips. Permission also includes visits to local libraries and other educational venues as part of the normal school day.

We are committed to providing students with educational opportunities outside of the classroom and giving students opportunities to earn trips through our PBIS rewards. In order to ensure the safety of all students and trip chaperones, the school reserves the right to exclude students from field trips for chronic tardiness, unexcused absences, as well as documented disruptive behavior and defiance.

Parent/guardian(s) who complete the Annual Field Trip Permission Form during the Enrollment process have

- given their child permission to attend all field trips when accompanied by a teacher during school hours, and
- agreed that to the extent permitted by law, they have waived any and all claims, lawsuits, actions, or demands against Meridian Public Charter School that arise or may arise in connection with his or her participation in these Meridian Public Charter School activities. This waiver includes any claims of negligence, other tort claims, or other allegations of wrongdoing by Meridian Public Charter School or its employees. Nothing in this waiver, however, limits parent/guardian rights against any parties other than Meridian Public Charter School.

Parent/guardian(s) who did not complete the Annual Field Trip Permission Form during the Enrollment process may request to continue signing forms for each singular event throughout the year.

Library Resource Policy

Meridian Public Charter School needs the cooperation of its students and their families in order to properly maintain the school's library resources. Students are allowed to read and check out books or other media from classroom libraries and/or the school's media center. It is the student's responsibility to maintain checked out material and return it when it is due. If a book/other media is lost or damaged, the student and/or parent/guardian will be responsible for the cost of replacing it. As part of the Enrollment process, parent/guardian(s) are required to indicate that they understand the library checkout procedure, and will assume responsibility for any lost or damaged books/media.

Academic Program

Academic Standards

Meridian students engage in a rigorous educational program that is in alignment with the Common Core State Standards. Our educational program is focused on teaching critical thinking and problem solving skills. In addition to creating lifelong learners, our students will be independent thinkers with the ability to solve problems, reason and communicate effectively.

Assessments

Students in all grades take a variety of assessments including class assessments, assessments internal to Meridian, MAP, PARCC, NAEP, WIDA ACCESS, among others. The purpose of these assessments is to monitor student progress and academic achievement. Assessments provide valuable feedback to students, parents/guardians, and families about individual student progress. Student participation in these exams is mandatory. Students with disabilities may be exempt from select testing, as specified by their Individual Education Plan.

Standardized Testing

All 3rd to 8th grade students take mandated standardized tests as determined by the District of Columbia including but not limited to PARCC, Next Generation Science Assessment (grades 5,8). Students with disabilities may qualify for accommodations on mandated testing, as per their Individualized Education Plan. English Language Learners may receive specific accommodations to standardized tests per District of Columbia policy,

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. Please see the Legally Mandated Notice Section of this handbook for further information.

English Language Learners

Program Description

Meridian provides a comprehensive English Language Development (ELD) program designed to serve the needs of English Language Learners (ELL) at all stages of English language acquisition. Our program addresses the teaching of the English language according to the level of proficiency of the ELL student. Students receive differentiated language support by highly trained EL teachers in addition to their classroom teachers. All learners acquire English faster and easier if the curriculum they receive and the methodologies utilized to deliver the curriculum are finely tuned to their evolving fluency. The ELD curriculum is essential to the success of all EL students and is closely linked to the first goal of bilingual education; English language proficiency. All EL students must, by law, receive ELD instruction in addition to the core curriculum.

ELD is a part of the daily program for every EL student at Meridian Public Charter School. It is neither relegated to a nonspecific exposure to the English language through activities with English only students (i.e., during Physical Education, Music and Art etc.) nor is it the only instruction EL students receive. Rather, ELD instruction is integrated into daily learning by ensuring students have the academic language needed to engage with grade level content in the language domains of speaking, listening,

reading, and writing. It is a vital, planned, specific component of the total education. Students are supported based on the identified level of need across content areas. Multiple data sources are used to determine which accommodations and what level students are presenting on.

Student Placement

Parents of all enrolled students are asked to complete a home language survey as part of enrollment documents provided. This form indicates the primary language spoken in the home. If English is indicated, students are assumed to be English proficient. If any language other than English is checked, the student may be assessed for English proficiency if no prior assessment was conducted. Results from these assessments serve to determine English proficiency levels and eligibility for ELL support services. The home language survey is only used to determine eligibility for ELD services and will only be shared with with appropriate instructional staff. Parents will be informed on an annual basis of student placement in ELD services through the distribution of a Parent Notification Letter.

Student Assessment

ELL students are assessed annually using the ACCESS test. Information regarding testing is provided to parents/guardians annually. Students must participate in testing each year until they achieve a passing score of 5.0, which is considered proficient and no longer qualifies the student for ELD services

Special Education Services

Program Definition

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004): Child with a disability means a child evaluated in accordance with Sec. Sec. 300.304 through 300.311 as having mental retardation, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this part as "emotional disturbance"), an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, and other health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.

Overview of Special Education Services

The student Support Team at MPCS seeks to ensure the progress and improved performance of students with disabilities, in all areas of student development. The goal of specialized services is to assist in narrowing the achievement gap by ensuring equal access to curriculum and differentiated instruction in the least restrictive environment for every child enrolled. Services are established and provided to students to accommodate various academic, medical, and socio-emotional needs.

Parents of new students should advise the school of any previous Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or special services their child is receiving or has received prior to enrollment. If a student received specialized services at his or her previous school, he or she will not be officially enrolled until Meridian has received the complete IEP and current evaluations. All parental requests for student evaluations or any special education related documents must be made in writing.

Meridian will provide services and FAPE to any new student beginning the first day of the school year he/she enrolls.

Child Find Process

In line with the requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Meridian will locate, identify, and evaluate enrolled students who either have, or are suspected of having a disability and are in need of special education and related services as a result of those disabilities. This process is commonly referred to as the Child Find obligation. To ensure that this obligation is met, Meridian has established a policy and continues to implement efforts to seek out these children as well as educate and inform our staff, families, and broader community of the services that are available.

Child Find activities may include screening processes to determine whether a child should be referred for an evaluation. For children age birth through twenty-two (22), even when Meridan does not suspect the child may be disabled and in need of special education or related services, Meridian will utilize a comprehensive screening process, the results of which are provided to the child's parent/guardian. This process may include, but is not limited to:

- Observations in a variety of settings
- Multi-tiered problem solving approach (RtI)
- Parent/family interviews
- Review of attendance and grades
- Formal Early Childhood Screeners

Screenings must be available for all children enrolled at Meridian and include a review of whether:

- Appropriate instruction in the general education setting was delivered by qualified personnel
- Instruction and interventions were provided at varying intensity levels
- Progress monitoring data that was collected which reflected the child's progress during instruction

Meridian staff are expected to know and act in accordance with requirements and policies established within this policy. Meridian trains staff on an annual basis to ensure that all staff understand and are able to execute Child Find responsibilities.

Point of Contact

Meridian encourages parents to seek out any staff member if they have concerns about their child. Parents/guardians, or anyone with knowledge of the child, should contact the DIrector of Student Support Services to discuss the Child Find process, the referral process, and the availability of the Special Education Team to meet and discuss concerns in more detail.

Target Populations

Meridian Child Find Policy applies to children between the ages of there (3) and sixteen (16) years of age, who are enrolled in grades preschool to eighth at Meridian, including children who are:

- Homeless
- In the custody of the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)
- Committed to the District of Columbia Youth Rehabilitation Services Agency (DYRS)
- Making progress grade to grade
- Highly mobile

Outreach Efforts
In order to ensure that the community within Meridian is aware of the availability of special education and related services for eligible students with disabilities and the methods for requesting services, we provide information and education through a variety of methods, including but not limited to:

- Meridian will provide information to families as well as the larger school community at events such as back to school nights, parent teacher conferences, and enrollment events.
- Meridian will make information available in student and family handbooks and on its website
- Meridian will provide informational pamphlets which are available to parents in the main office of each campus

Coordinating with Non-Educational District Agencies
To support the identification, location, and evaluation of students with disabilities at Meridian, contact and communication with following District agencies:

- The Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)
- Department of Behavioral Health (DBH)

Meridian PCS will maintain communication on a bi-annual basis to foster cooperative relationships and updates on points of contact.

Parent Engagement
If parents/guardians have specific questions regarding Meridian's Child Find Policy, the referral process, or the availability of special education and related services, they can refer to this current document, the information available on the Meridian website, or by contacting the Director of Student Support Services. Upon request parents/guardians should be provided with specific information related to the identification, referral, and evaluation of students with, or those suspected of having, a disability. Additionally, informational pamphlets containing all relevant information are located in the main office at each campus.

Referral Process
A referral, which can be either written or verbal, is documentation that clearly states why it is thought that the student has a disability. The referral can be made by a parent/guardian or someone who has knowledge of the child (e.g. staff, teacher, medical professional). There is no standard language for a referral; if a parent/guardian needs support, whichever staff member receives the referral should assist the parent/guardian in documenting the referral in writing. Any staff member at Meridian must accept the referral.

If a parent/guardian would like to request an initial evaluation please contact their campus Special Education Coordinator. Specific contact information is located under the Point of Contact section.
A referral for an initial evaluation can be accepted from the following individuals:

- The student's parent/guardian
- The student, if they possess educational rights
- Employee of Meridian who has knowledge of the student

Meridian has three (3) business days to submit the referral in the Special Education Data System (SEDS). Following this entry, the Special Education Team has thirty (30) days to obtain parental consent for evaluations. The Special Education Team should make reasonable efforts to obtain parental consent. Reasonable effort including attempting contact at least three (3) times on three (3) different dates using at least two (2) different modalities. Within this same timeframe, Meridian should gather and conduct an analysis of all existing data in order to determine if additional assessments are required to determine if the student has a disability. If evaluations are warranted, the Special Education Team has sixty (60) days to complete the necessary evaluations and hold a meeting to determine eligibility for special education and related services.

This timeline does not apply if the (1) parent/guardian or student with educational right fails to or refuses to respond to consent for evaluation given reasonable effort, (2) the parent/guardian repeatedly fails to or refuses to bring the child to the evaluation or child with educational right refuses to attend, or (3) the child enrolls in another LEA prior to eligibility determination.

Universal Screenings

Meridian implements a universal screening process for new students to the LEA to help determine if a child should be referred for additional supports or an evaluation for special education and/or related services. If it is determined, by the Leadership Team at Meridian, that a student is at risk or below expected expectations, as identified by the screening, written notice will be sent to the parent to information them of next steps. To conduct universal, school wide screenings, parent consent is not required. Additionally, a screening administered by a Meridian teacher to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation does not require parental consent as it is not considered to be an evaluation. If a student is being referred or is in the referral process for special education, the universal screenings cannot delay or interrupt this process.

Parental Procedural Safeguards and Rights

As a parent/guardian, you have rights known as procedural safeguards that apply to every aspect of the special education process. These safeguards are designed to protect the rights of parents and their student with a disability and, at the same time, give families and school systems several mechanisms by which to resolve their disputes. Federal and state laws and regulations outline the procedural safeguards that are designed to ensure that students with disabilities with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

In the event of a disagreement, parents may pursue dispute resolution and due process rights, including mediation, due process complaints, or state complaints. Parents can learn more about their rights under IDEA by referring to the Part B Procedural Safeguards located on OSSE's website or by contacting their campus Special Education Coordinator.

OSSE Website:
http://osse.dc.gov/publication/rights-parents-students-disabilities-idea-part-b-notice-procedural-safeguards

Data Reporting

In accordance with District of Columbia law, Meridian Director of Student Support Services counts and reports the number of children with disabilities receiving special education and related services annually

on October 5th as required by DC Official Code § 38-2906. In addition, the Director of Student SUpports monitors incoming students, audits the compliance of related services providers, and monitors the effectiveness of SST Teams at the campus level to ensure that all students with disabilities are meeting expectations, receiving special education and related services, and students are being identified, referred and evaluated for special education and related services.

Referral

If a teacher or parent/guardian believes a student should be evaluated for special education services, the referral must be made orally or in writing to the school's Director of Student Support. Written parental permission must be obtained before any formal evaluation is undertaken. Any requests for evaluation that are made contemporaneously to a disciplinary incident will be granted expedited evaluation consistent with 34 CFR §300.534(d). Evaluations will begin with an in-school committee consisting of the Student Dean or designee, a classroom teacher, the referring teacher, if applicable, and the parent. Additional team members may be present at meetings as necessary. If warranted, the evaluation will continue with a specialized external team.

The purpose of referrals is to determine the most support we can provide for each child in the least restrictive environment. For more information regarding Special Education Services please contact the Special Education Department. Please note, end of year referral requests have no impact on promotion decisions.

All students referred for evaluation must have a consent form signed by parents before testing begins. All evaluations requested must be complete within 60 days from the date of consent. Once testing is complete, a special education Eligibility Determination meeting is scheduled. Key staff members, as well as parents convene to determine best next steps for the student.

Eligibility

Children with disabilities from Pre-Kindergarten to grade 8 may be eligible for special education services. Federal law under IDEA defines "children with disabilities" as meeting eligibility criteria outlined for the following 13 disability classifications:

- Autism
- Deaf-Blindness
- Deafness
- Developmental Delay
- Emotional Disability
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Disability
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech or Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury

Response to Intervention (RtI)

At Meridian Public Charter School, a Response to Intervention (RtI) team has been assembled to provide student assistance, governed by federal and state mandates. RtI is a collaborative response process for students of varying needs, to provide tiers of support to students. This multi-tiered system of supports is a systematic, continuous improvement framework in which data-based problem-solving and decision making is practiced. This process seeks to improve student performance across all levels of the educational system for supporting students.

Overview of Response to Intervention Team

In addition to the multifaceted curriculum at Meridian Public Charter School, and a differentiated learning environment through group interventions, the Response to Intervention team (including general education teachers, school administrators, parents, related service providers, counselor, and nurse) will come together to collaboratively identify individual interventions that will target the student's strengths and weaknesses in the areas including academics, social/emotional, motor development, or speech.

The RtI program performs the following functions:

1. Creates a process of assessment, collaborative planning for student instruction, intervention, and progress monitoring.
2. Provides teaching staff with a tool to ensure that students do not struggle due to personal lapses in their academic or social-emotional abilities, limited English proficiency or ineffective instruction in reading or mathematics.
3. Serves as a screening tool for students that may be eligible for a 504 plan or special education services.

Standard Course of Study

Elementary School (Grades K-6)

Students at the Elementary school will take the following courses:

- Students in grades PK3 – 3 will focus on reading and mathematics instruction.
- Students in grades 4 to 6 will take four (4) core academic classes (Mathematics, Reading (English Language Arts), Science, and Social Studies).
- All students also take Creative Arts classes, which may include: Physical Education, Spanish, Music, Art, Performing Arts, and Technology.

Middle School (Grades 7-8)

Students at the Middle school will take the following courses:

- Four (4) core academic classes (Mathematics, Reading (English Language Arts), Science, and Social Studies).
- All students also take Creative Arts classes, which may include: Physical Education, College and Career Readiness and Music.

Academic Calendar

The school year is divided into three terms. The terms are approximately 15 weeks to allow students multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of specific skills. Students will receive progress during week five and ten of the 15-week cycle. At the end of each trimester students will receive grades in all classes.

Grade Attainment

Early Childhood (Pre-K3 and Pre-K4)

Students in the early childhood program are assessed using the TS Gold outcomes rubric. Pre-K students will receive a standards-based report card generated from TS Gold every trimester. These reports are based on student mastery of D.C. Early Learning Standards, during each grading window. Student mastery is determined based on a culmination of assessments and student-generated work products.

Elementary and Middle Grades (K-8)

Percentage	Grade	Definition
90%-100%	A	Student demonstrates a deep mastery of the content and skills that have been taught in that subject.
80%-89%	B	Student demonstrates a solid understanding of the content and skills that have been taught in that subject.
70%-79%	C	Student has a limited understanding of the content or skill that have been taught in that subject. The quality of their work just meets minimum requirements.
60%-69%	D	Student has significant skill and/or content deficits and is performing below minimum requirements.
50-59%	F	Student does not demonstrate enough mastery of the content and skills that have been taught in that subject and is performing significantly below minimum requirements.

Report Cards

At the end of each trimester, students will receive a report card. If concerns arise, please contact the teacher. To schedule a parent-teacher conference outside of the designated dates, please contact the teacher for your student's course. The dates of the Parent-Teacher Conferences are on the school calendar.

Meridian encourages parents to be proactive by utilizing PowerSchool to keep abreast of your child's academic progress (login will information will be provided). Should parents and/ or guardians have any questions about their child's grades, they should contact the appropriate teacher and schedule a conference.

Final Grades

The final, year-end grade for a course is the numerical average of the three trimesters. Each trimester is weighted equally. Grades are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Homework

Homework is designed to reinforce the day's lessons by practicing skills and/or using new skills in different contexts in order to promote student mastery. Homework assignments are designed to be developmentally appropriate for each grade level and to help students reinforce and review skills and concepts taught in class.

Family members are encouraged to attend school-sponsored workshops for parents/guardians about their child's academic program (e.g. Back-to-School Nights, Literacy Nights, Math Nights, etc.) and to ask their child's teacher(s) for additional ways to support students' academics at home.

Promotion and Retention

Meridian aims to prepare students academically and socially to matriculate to the next grade. Promotion criteria differ based on student's grade levels. Students must meet all criteria of the promotion policy for his/her grade level in order to matriculate to the next grade. Students with Individual Education Plans

will have Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings to review the student's status if promotion is in jeopardy.

Promotion Policy

For students to be promoted to the next grade level, he or she must do the following:

- Successfully complete the academic requirements for the current grade level in core subjects (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies).
- Maintain compliance with the school's attendance policy.

Double Promotion

Double promotions may be made in exceptional circumstances in light of such factors as the child's age, achievement scores, measured ability, effort and attitude, physical and emotional maturity, and parents' or guardians' attitude and support. Principals are responsible for the final decision regarding double promotions within their school, but parental or guardian consent must be obtained and teachers and school staff with direct knowledge and first-hand experience with the students academic and social-emotional needs may be consulted prior to the decision.

Retention Policy

Students may qualify for retention for one or all of the following reasons:

- **Attendance Retention**: Any student who has accrued 30 or more unexcused absences for a given school year may not be promoted to the next grade level.

- **Academic Retention I**: If a student earns a failing grade in both Reading and Mathematics in their final trimester or as an average for all trimesters, the student may be retained in the current grade level.

- **Academic Assessments:** Retention decisions based on success in ELA and math are supported by:
  - NWEA Measure of Academic Progress (MAP)
  - PARCC scores for students in grades 3-8
  - Any additional standardized assessment score for the student

Although academic performance is generally the best indicator of a child's ability to find success in the next grade level, other factors must be considered. The following outlines other considerations that may lead to retention of a student in a grade level:

Meridian will consider age, maturity, and past retention status in making promotion decisions, but none of these factors will by themselves automatically prevent the school from making a promotion decision.

- If a student in Pre-K or Kindergarten has met the proficiency requirements in the core subject areas but is not deemed ready for promotion to Kindergarten or 1st grade by a teacher or a parent due to functional skill level in the areas of physical, social or emotional development, an option to repeat Pre-K or Kindergarten may be considered.
- A student may be demoted to the next lower grade in exceptional circumstances in light of such factors as the child's age, achievement scores, measured ability, effort and attitude, and physical and emotional maturity. Parents, kept aware of concerns throughout the school year, must be notified by the end of the second trimester of the school year of the recommendation for other placement. Demotion must be approved by the principal, the sending teacher, and the parents or guardians.

- A student in Grade 6 must complete two terms with a passing grade in mathematics, English or reading, and science for promotion to seventh grade. The principal has the authority to determine the course(s) which needs to be repeated. No student may be retained more than once in the sixth grade.
- A student in Grade 7 must complete two terms with a passing grade in mathematics, English or reading, science, and social studies for promotion to eighth grade. The principal has the authority to determine the course(s) that needs to be repeated. No student may be retained more than once in the seventh grade.
- A student who enters Grade 8 must complete three terms with a passing grade in mathematics, three terms with a passing grade in English or reading, two terms with a passing grade in science, and two terms with a passing grade in social studies during the seventh- and eighth-grade years for promotion to high school.
- An eighth-grade student not meeting the criteria for promotion to ninth grade may be retained in the eighth grade for the following school year. A retained eighth-grade student may not be promoted midyear. An eighth-grade student may be retained for more than one year, until they reach the age of 16.
- A student with a disability who is enrolled in a program of special education may be promoted to high school if the student meets the requirements for promotion to high school that are prescribed in the IEP.

Retention Process:

- September-December: Teacher identifies student need, implements and documents appropriate interventions.
- September-December: Teacher discusses students academic and/or behavioral concerns with parents.
- September-December: Student is referred to the RtI committee for intervention support and teacher creates an action plan tailored to support the student's individual needs. (Action plan must be submitted to the admin team.)
- December-February: Failure/Retention Candidate letter must be shared with parent no later than February.
- April: Teacher completes retention and submits Retention Checklist to the administration team. Continued concern for possible retention must be discussed with parent.
- May: Parent meets with the Grade Placement Committee in May to determine if student will be retained or promoted to the next grade level. Committee consists of parent, teacher, member(s) of administration team, and member(s) of the RtI committee. Parent signs a form either acknowledging student retention or promotion.
- May-June: Parent reserves the right to request an appeal. Parent must request the appeal prior to the last day of June. During the appeal hearing, the Grade Placement committee must determine that if promoted and given accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction during the next year, the student is likely to perform at grade level by the conclusion of the school year. The committee must reach a unanimous decision in order to promote the student to the next grade level.

- For an Attendance Retention, the appeal must be submitted to the Principal. The principal must then submit a written explanation justifying the decision to the Head of School before the promotion is made. The Head of School will make the final decision on approval.

Nutrition Education

One component of a comprehensive health education program is nutrition education. Schools will provide nutrition education that:

- is part of the health education course;
- is accessible to all students;
- is integrated into other content areas such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects (resources will be disseminated to teachers and other staff);
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally- relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- links with Meridian's curriculum, school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services and education programs;
- incorporates wellness nights into school programming;
- teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing; and
- includes training for teachers, parents and community partners.

Student Culture and School Discipline

Meridian considers student safety, order and discipline fundamental to learning. Meridian is therefore committed to maintaining a positive, consistent, safe school environment in which each student has an equal and appropriate educational opportunity; and, shall provide a fair and consistent approach to student culture.

Meridian has adopted a school wide behavior management system, routines, procedures, practices, values instruction, and language to support the creation and reinforcement of a positive, consistent culture. A focus on age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate behaviors is at the core of our student culture.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage their emotions, set and achieve goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

Meridian's implementation of SEL curriculum is imbedded in morning meetings, advisory, closing circles and community meetings. Through SEL students can perform better academically, and the school community can become a more nurturing environment. Research demonstrates that schools with effective SEL programs and an increase in positive student behaviors and decrease in student misbehavior and suspensions.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

At Meridian Public Charter School, students will be encouraged to make appropriate choices regarding their personal conduct. There will be monthly celebrations to recognize students making positive behavior choices, and end of term celebrations to acknowledge academic growth and success.

PK3-PK4

The "Clip Chart" serves as the PBIS system for our students in grades PK3 and PK4. The clip chart is a color-coded system with positive adjectives and reinforcement phrases used to monitor a student's appropriate and inappropriate behaviors within the classroom. Each classroom contains a behavior chart, which serves as a visual representation of a student's behavioral choices in following classroom rules and expectations throughout the day. Each student has the opportunity to clip up/down throughout the day.

Color/Definition/Phrase	Expectation	Recognition/Consequences	Rewards
Green: Meeting Expectations "Awesome, Ready to Learn"	The daily starting point for all students. We expect all students to achieve this expectation	• Clip up to Blue • Keep up the good work	• Sticker • Student of the day entry
Blue: Rising above expectations: "Way to go, good day"	A student has exceeded the daily expectations by making good choices	• Clip up to Silver • Keep up the great work	• Sticker • Student of the day entry

Silver: Exceeded expectations: "Super student, excellent job"	A student has exceeded all expectations	• Role model: top of the chart • You are a rock star	• Sticker • Student of the day entry
Yellow: Warning (2x): "Oops, think about it"	Warning: student is not meeting expectations. Student has an opportunity to get on track in order to stay with the group/lesson	• Verbal redirection (1st time) • Clip down to orange (2nd time)	• Student has a chance to get back on track • Clip up to green and above
Orange: Consequence: "Slow down, make better choices"	Not meeting expectations: student has had two warnings and now must go to the Reset spot (away from group but inside classroom)	• Verbal redirection • Reset/Refocus area (PK/K: 3 min; Grades 1-2: 5 min) • Clip down to Red (2nd time)	• Student has a chance to get back on track • Clip up to green and above
Red: Parent contact: "Stop, Outside support"	Not meeting expectations or displaying inappropriate behavior. Student is not successful in re-setting their behavior in the classroom and warrants immediate removal.	• Verbal redirection • PK-K: Buddy Room for 10 min • Grades 1-2: Refocus/ISS for 15 min • Parental contact	• Student has a chance to get back on track • Clip up to green and above

Grades K-8

Every school staff member will strive to add to the positive and safe environment that encourages and supports student success. Students will be encouraged to make appropriate choices regarding their personal conduct. Middle school students are expected to adhere to a school-wide discipline plan, which is designed around Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (PBIS).

As part of our Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS), students will be encouraged to meet the behavioral expectations outlined in the PBIS Matrix. To recognize students who meet these expectations, students will receive points through DeansList. DeansList is an online application that we use to monitor and encourage positive behaviors. Parents will have access to daily and weekly reports in DeansList, where they can monitor when their child receives points for exhibiting positive behaviors and receive communications from teachers and administrators when behavior concerns arise. Students receive celebrations and incentives, individually and collectively, for achieving high point totals.

Restorative Justice

The implementation of restorative justice practices at Meridian is designed to increase accountability and strengthen community in our school by acknowledging that relationships are affected by both misbehavior and primarily punitive consequences. This program will incorporate behavior supports that will help students understand how misbehavior impacts themselves as individuals, and the larger school community. Students will be provided opportunities to acknowledge, take account and remedy misbehavior, by working with peers, teachers and administrators to repair relationships that have been damaged through their actions. Through this program, we hope to continue promoting a positive school culture for all individuals in our school community.

Student Code of Conduct

Disciplinary Response to Student Behavior

The school's Discipline Policy is designed to address conduct that might reasonably lead the school to forecast substantial disruption of or material interference with school activities, undermine the school's basic educational mission, or interfere with the rights of others. The following are details regarding when the policy applies, disciplinary action that may be taken for violating the policy, a list of infractions, and other school policies that parents must review with their children. A student's age and development is considered in all infractions and consequences.

Jurisdiction

While the provisions of this Code of Conduct purports to control, regulate, or establish standards for the actions, behavior, or activities of students of Meridian, those provisions are enforceable by school authorities, both during regularly scheduled school hours, as well as such other times and places, including, but not limited to, the following:

- When the student is on school grounds
- When the student is on or off school grounds participating in or attending any school function or activity, including, but not limited to, extended learning, extra- curricular activities, field trips, or class trips sponsored by the school
- While the student is away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management, and welfare of the school (this specifically includes, but is not limited to, bullying and cyberbullying)
- When the student is off school grounds while wearing the school's uniform and traveling on public transportation or transportation provided by Meridian; and
- En-route to and from school while wearing the school's uniform

Disciplinary Action

Students who violate the discipline policy will be subject to one or more of the following documented actions at the discretion of the school administration and the Board of Trustees. A Student's failure to adhere to any of the following may result in further disciplinary action. Parent/guardian involvement is a beneficial part of student re-entry into classroom and while not a requirement, additional parent involvement may be requested in some cases.

Meridian- Disciplinary Response to Student Behavior

Tier 1

Tier 1 behaviors are those behaviors that are defiant and cause minor disruptions to the academic environment. Tier 1 behaviors result in classroom-level disciplinary responses. Tier 1 behaviors are not referable. Tier 1 behaviors may be elevated to a higher tier depending on the severity and number of occurrences.

Tier 1 Behavior	In-Class Response/ Consequence
1.1 Deliberate classroom disruption (yelling, tapping, talking)	Proximity, relocation, negative Dean's List point(s)

1.2 Excessive noise in the classroom, hallway, or cafeteria	Proximity, relocation, negative Dean's List point(s)
1.3 Tardy to class	Parent contact (from the teacher)
1.4 Attending class without materials	Provide materials, negative Dean's List point(s)
1.5 Uniform policy violation	Follow uniform policy
1.6 Throwing objects in class (paper, pencils, erasers, etc)	Redirect
1.7 Eating in classroom without permission	Remove food
1.8 Unauthorized locker use	Redirect
1.10 Running in classroom, hallway or school building	Redirect, negative Dean's List points
1.11 Misuse of school computer, office equipment or classroom materials	Remove equipment

Tier 2

Tier 2 behaviors are those behaviors that cause disruption to the academic environment, involve damage to school property, or may cause minor harm to self and/or others. Tier 2 behaviors result in school-based responses, parent contacts, and may result in exclusion from extra-curricular activities

Tier 2 Behavior	In-Class Response/ Consequence
2.1 General noncompliance with classroom/school rules or teacher/staff instructions	Restorative action, parent contact
2.2 Disrespectful comments toward teacher/staff	Restorative action, parent contact
2.3 Directing profanity or obscene/offensive gestures toward peers	Restorative action, parent contact
2.4 Inappropriate or disruptive physical contact between students. (Pushing, slapping/hitting, wrestling, etc)	Restorative action, parent contact
2.5 Making verbal threats toward peers	Restorative action, parent contact

2.6 Inappropriate or disruptive verbal comments directed toward other students (making fun of other students)	Restorative action, parent contact
2.7 Throwing food or intentionally starting/participating in a food fight	Restorative action, loss of cafeteria privilege for a limited time, parent contact
2.8 Throwing objects that may cause injury or damage	Restorative action, parent contact
2.9 Skipping class	Loss of academic credit, parent contact
2.10 Leaving class without permission	Alert security, parent contact
2.11 Documented pattern of persistent Tier 1 behaviors	Parent contact
2.12 Unauthorized cell phone use	Confiscate phone, parent contact

Tier 3

Tier 3 behaviors are those behaviors that cause significant disruption to the academic environment, school operation, or cause harm to self or others. These are referable offenses and school administration should be made aware of all behaviors. In addition to lesser consequences, Tier 3 behaviors may result in either removal from class, academic consequence, exclusion from extra-curricular activities or parent meeting.

Tier 3 Behavior	In-Class Response/ Consequence
3.1 Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, plagiarism, or claiming a peer's assignment as your own	Loss of assignment credit
3.2 Communicating slurs/derogatory comments based on race, religion, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identification, appearance, place of residence, etc.	Complete tolerance assignment
3.3 Directing profanity, obscene, or abusive language or gestures towards students/staff.	Apology letter
3.4 Verbal threat of physical harm or action against staff	Parent meeting, wellness team referral
3.5 Fighting or assault where there is no injury and no weapon	Mediation
3.6 Leaving the school building without permission	Parent meeting

3.7 Causing a major disruption on school property or at any Meridian sponsored/supervised activity	Restorative action, loss of travel privilege and parent meeting
3.8 Gambling	Parent meeting
3.9 Stealing	Parent meeting with resource officer, restoration of stolen property
3.10 Vandalism- deliberate destruction or damage to property of a peer, staff or school	Restoration of destroyed property, parent meeting with resource officer
3.11 Possession or distribution of obscene material on school grounds	Parent meeting with resource officer
3.12 Skipping school issued consequence	Parent meeting, attendance contract
3.13 Documented pattern of persistent Tier 2 behaviors	Parent meeting, behavior contract
3.14 Violation of a behavior contract that stipulates suspension and further violations	Parent meeting and follow through of contract consequences
3.15 Inciting others to violence or disruption	Restorative action, parent meeting, behavior contract

Tier 4

Tier 4 behaviors are those behaviors not specifically enumerated in any other tier that are illegal, cause significant disruption to school operations, or cause substantial harm to self or others. These behaviors are referable and administration should be alerted immediately. In addition to lesser consequences, Tier 4 behaviors may result in either suspension or expulsion.

Tier 4 Behavior	Response/ Consequence
4.1 Bullying/Cyberbullying - severe pervasive or persistent physical or verbal contact that interferes with a student's physical/mental health, academic performance, or ability to participate in school activities	Parent meeting, restorative action, wellness team referral, and bullying contract
4.2 Using/sharing cellphones, computers or other electronic devices to view or display inappropriate videos/photos of others and self	Parent meeting, loss of electronic device privileges, wellness team referral
4.3 Activating false alarm or placing a false call to 911	Parent meeting with resource officer, behavior contract

4.4 Possession of a weapon	Suspension or Expulsion
4.5 Possession of or use of fireworks or explosives	Suspension or Expulsion
4.6 Arson or bomb threat	Suspension
4.7 Fighting which creates a substantial risk of injury, results in injury or emotional distress	Suspension
4.8 Planning or participating in a group fight that results in injury	Suspension
4.9 Engaging in sexual acts on school premises or at school related functions (including sexual harassment)	Parent meeting, referral to wellness team, mandatory counseling sessions
4.10 Lewd or indecent public behavior or sexual misconduct	Parent meeting, referral to wellness team, mandatory counseling session
4.11 Acts of exceptional misconduct or disruption at other schools or venues	Loss of travel privilege
4.12 Assault with a weapon	Suspension or Expulsion
4.13 Tampering with, changing, or altering, an official record or school document	Parent meeting, academic consequence
4.14 Attack/assault on a student or staff which causes bodily injury or emotional distress	Suspension or Expulsion
4.15 Using an article that is not normally considered a weapon to cause bodily injury to another individual.	Suspension or Expulsion

Disciplinary Terms and Definitions

Academic Dishonesty: Using or submitting information through methods not approved by teachers or administration, obtaining data that is classified, and/or taking ownership for information or documentation that is not created by the student. This includes, but is not limited to plagiarizing, cheat sheets, unapproved materials during testing, possession of answer keys or tests and/or completing another student's assignment. Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

Assault/Battery: The willful and unlawful use of force or violence upon the person of another; has three primary elements present - (1) an aggressor, who (2) intended to cause physical harm, to (3) an innocent person.

Bodily injury means a cut, abrasion, bruise, burn, or disfigurement; physical pain; illness; impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty; or any other injury to the body, no matter how temporary.

Bullying: Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- **An Imbalance of Power:** Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors happen more than once

Computer Inappropriate Use or Misuse: Using the computer/Internet for any other purpose than research or study or to view unauthorized material including but not limited to chat rooms, pornographic material, and game sites; includes, but is not limited to, unauthorized access to, modification of, use of, creation or destruction of computer stored data and programs and the inappropriate use of electronic devices and instruments.

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior.

The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are:

- Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter
- SMS (Short Message Service) also known as Text Message sent through devices
- Instant Message (via devices, email provider services, apps, and social media messaging features)
- Email

Defiance: A daring or bold resistance to authority or to any opposing force, open disregard or contempt; the refusal or failure to carry out lawful or reasonable instructions of authorized school personnel or failure to comply with school regulations, behavior contracts, or classroom rules.

Disorderly Conduct: Disorderly conduct includes, but is not limited to: yelling, running, pushing, shoving, or engaging in horseplay. Excessive verbal or physical interaction which substantially disrupts the orderly learning environment or poses a serious threat to the health, safety, and/or welfare of students, staff, or others; serious campus disruption.

Drugs: The possession, receipt, use, being under the influence of, cultivation, transportation, sale, purchase, or negotiation for the sale or distribution of any controlled or unlawful substance; possession or use of an inhalant or any substance represented as drugs (such as designer drugs, caffeine pills, herbs, foods), or any prescription drug for which the student does not have a valid prescription and/or which is not in the original container on school property or at a school-sponsored activity on property other than school property. A student, who distributes “drugs”, is defined as a student who possesses, gives to or

leaves drugs for another student. It also applies to the student who takes, receives, passes to/from or picks up the "drugs". Drug paraphernalia is any apparatus or material that may be used in the cultivation, use, manufacture, or distribution of drugs.

Emergency removal means the immediate out-of-school suspension or disciplinary unenrollment of a student based on the school's reasonable belief that the student's presence poses an immediate and continuing danger to other students or school staff.

Emotional distress means mental suffering or distress that requires more than trivial treatment or counseling

Fabrication/Forgery/Alteration/Destruction: Intentionally providing false or misleading information or the withholding of valid information from a school investigation. Any form of tampering with records/documents either for one's own purpose or to alter the records of others for any purpose. It also includes, but is not limited to, the writing and signing of notes and papers by any person not authorized to do so, misrepresenting a situation, or falsely signing another's name to such notes or other papers.

False Alarms: Willful and/or malicious activation of an emergency alarm or response designed to evacuate the campus when no emergency exists. This applies to threats made verbally, physically, in writing or by any other method, including but not limited to 911 phone calls, issuing a bomb threat, setting off a fire alarm, etc.

Fighting: Mutual participation in an altercation with physical violence that requires physical restraint and/or results in injury; to include group fighting.

Gang-Related Activity/Behaviors: Any activity that can reasonably be associated or identified with a gang, such as, but not limited to, symbols, special dress, verbalizations or colors or distributing any gang-related literature or communications of any kind of gang language.

Harassment: Any electronic, written, verbal or physical act or conduct toward a student which is based on any actual or perceived trait or characteristic of the student and which creates an objectively hostile school environment that meets one or more of the following:

- Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property
- Has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or privileges by a school

Inappropriate Language: The use of profane, obscene, abusive language or gestures, or the possession of objects or pictures which are disrespectful, offensive or socially unacceptable and which can or tend to disrupt the school environment, a school function, or extracurricular/co-curricular activities. This includes the taking and / or sending, of inappropriate or offensive images or texts using electronic devices as well as being in the possession of inappropriate images or texts.

Incitement: To provoke, urge on or coerce another to engage in an activity which is prohibited under this code. The consequence may not exceed the penalty for the activity.

Sexual Assault: Any unwanted sexual contact towards another person that is achieved by force, threats, bribes, manipulation, pressure, tricks, and/or violence.

Sexual Harassment: Is unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other unwelcome verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature; Undesired sexual behavior towards another; unwanted or repeated verbal or physical sexual behavior that is offensive and objectionable to the recipient, causes discomfort or humiliation, or creates a hostile environment.

Sexual Contact (also contact or behavior of a sexual nature): Any contact or behavior of a sexual nature regardless of consent including, but not limited to, lewd or suggestive movement or displays as well as physical contact. Shakedown, strong arm, extortion, obtaining of money or property (something of value) from an unwilling person by means of coercion or intimidation.

Theft: Acceptance, possession, sale, purchase, transfer and/or taking of property belonging to another person with the intent to prevent or deprive the rightful owner of its use.

Threats: Verbal or physical acts and/or written statements regarding harm to an individual's life, physical or emotional well-being and/or personal property. Additionally, obtaining or attempting to obtain any item or money by intimidation, force, fraud or illegal use of authority is considered extortion. These actions include but are not limited to arguing, balling up fists, writing notes, extortion, displaying a weapon and posturing.

Trespassing (also loitering): To enter or remain on campus without authorization or invitation and with no lawful purpose for entry, including students under suspension or expulsion.

Uniform Policy Violations: Wearing clothing other than what is specified in the Meridian Public Charter School Dress Code (i.e., wearing of sweat hoodies, non-regulatory clothing, overcoats and jackets).

Vandalism: Willful or malicious destruction, defacement or damage to school and/or personal property.

Weapon: Any object that is or can be used as a means to physically harm, threaten, intimidate or endanger someone. These items include but are not limited to knives, scissors, guns, fireworks, razors, BB guns, box cutters, etc.

Discipline Responses Definitions

Behavior Contract/Discipline Plan: The student meets with teachers to create a written contract that includes objectives and the specific performance tasks that the student will accomplish to meet those objectives. The contract is signed by the student and teacher and, where appropriate, by the parent or guardian. A behavioral contract between a student and appropriate school personnel may define expected behaviors, conditions, and consequences.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP): A Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) is a written, specific, and purposeful plan which describes behavioral interventions and other strategies that will be implemented to reduce and/or prevent targeted misbehaviors and reinforce appropriate replacement behaviors.

Counseling: Individual/Group Counseling: Counseling provides students with an outlet to share issues in privacy that may be negatively impacting their attendance, behavior, and/or academic success. Students discuss and formulate goals, and learn problem solving strategies that will enable them to overcome a

variety of personal challenges. Counseling could be provided by a guidance counselor, mental health counselor or school psychologist.

Detention: At the discretion of the administrator, upon notifying the parent/guardian, detention is held after school and/or Saturday morning at the school the student attends. Parents/guardians are responsible for the student's transportation.

Exclusion of Privileges: At the discretion of an administrator, a student is temporarily banned from attending school sponsored events to include, but not limited to, field trips, special assemblies, parties, co-curricular or extracurricular activities.

Expulsion: Permanent dismissal of a student from the school program and school activities. If an expulsion is approved, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to place the student in another school unless the student is considered Special Education.

Homebound Services: Due to severe conduct referrals and long-term suspensions, a student may be recommended, on a case-by-case basis for homebound services; academic services provided in a non-traditional setting.

In-School Disciplinary Action: Disciplinary actions such as lunch or after school detention, loss of privileges, exclusion from extracurricular activities, written reflection, conflict resolution, mediation, or similar actions of short duration that do not result in the student's loss of academic instruction time.

Mediation: At the discretion of an administrator, a mandatory meeting may be held between the student, parent/ guardian, and administrator (and/or teacher as appropriate) to address any issues to include, but not limited to, misconduct, violation of the Code of Conduct, poor attendance, and/or academic evaluation. In this meeting, all parties will come to a mutual understanding of any future repercussions that may occur if issues persist.

Mentoring Program: A mentoring program matches a mentor who may be a counselor, teacher, student and/or leader with a protégé. The object of this relationship is to help the protégé in his/her personal, academic and social development.

Parent/School Conference: Conferences between/among any combination of student, teachers, parent/guardian, and administrator may be held to discuss student conduct and/or problems. Such conferences consider alternatives available and seek to determine a plan of action which will be most beneficial to the student.

Parent Shadowing: A parent/guardian will come in and attend class with their student. Shadowing can last a class period up to an entire school day.

Referral to Law Enforcement Agencies: Student may be referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency for behavior that is illegal and/or exceeds Meridian's Code of Conduct.

Restitution: Parents are responsible for replacing, repairing, or compensating for any items that have been damaged or stolen. Failure to do so will result in consequences including but not limited to seizure of student records.

RtI Team: Response to Intervention teams are school-based teams that utilize a multidisciplinary approach to encourage student success through prevention and intervention strategies and supports.

The RtI Team will create an individualized plan to help students overcome their academic and/or socio-emotional difficulties.

Temporary Removal of Student from Classroom: A student is removed from the classroom for less than half a school day, not to extend beyond the time of dismissal on the day of the disciplinary action. During any such removal, the student shall be supervised by the Dean or another school staff member and provided with instructional materials, reflection activities, and restorative assignments.

Severe Disciplinary Action: Suspensions and Expulsions: Suspension and/or expulsion from school are two formal disciplinary actions the school can employ in the event a student's behavior warrants such consideration. As these actions are serious in nature, a formal procedure is outlined for both below.

Disciplinary Plans/Behavior Contracts

A student who has committed repeated violations of the Code of Conduct or a major violation of the Code of Conduct may be placed on disciplinary plan. Prior to the imposition of disciplinary plan, Meridian will provide the student and his/her parents with an opportunity for an informal conference as in the case of suspension, above. If placed on disciplinary plan, the student and his/her parent/guardian will be notified in writing that the student has violated school policy and that future violations could incur more stringent disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from Meridian.

If, while on a Disciplinary Plan or a Final Plan contract, a student violates another major school policy (Tier 4), s/he may be expelled. Each violation is treated on a case-by-case basis. The length of disciplinary plan and its conditions will be determined individually for each student by the Administration. Plan is a serious status with severe consequences. Students can be expelled for violations of disciplinary plan and behavior contracts.

A student's Dean will make reasonable attempts (three phone calls or written communications or email or any other form of contact) to contact a parent/guardian regarding a student's Disciplinary Plan status. If a parent fails to communicate and/or refuses to sign a contract, the contract shall be enacted. A final copy of the contract will be provided to the parent/guardian.

Steps in Disciplinary Plan

- After a student is placed on disciplinary plan, s/he will be required to attend a conference with the Dean and/or another member of the Administrative team and his/her parent/guardian. During this conference a Disciplinary Plan contract will be signed stating behavioral goals and/or a timeline for meeting behavioral goals (e.g. no ISS or OSS and fewer than three detentions, earning 50 PBIS points, 3 positive contributions to the community).
    - If a student meets the stated expectations of the Disciplinary Plan s/he will be reviewed by their Dean and/or Administration at which point s/he may be removed from Disciplinary Plan.
    - If a student fails to meet the state goals of the Disciplinary Plan contract will result in further action which may include a Final Plan contract or expulsion from Meridian.
- If the student violates Disciplinary Plan, s/he may be placed on a Final Plan Contract, if the violation does not warrant expulsion. This contract is a serious document that makes clear that major violations (Tier 4) of the Code of Conduct could result in expulsion from Meridian.
- If a student meets the stated expectations of the Final Plan contract, s/he will be reviewed by their Dean and/or Administration at which point s/he will be placed on Disciplinary Plan.

- If a student fails to meet the stated goals of the Final Plan contract s/he will come before a Disciplinary Hearing which will review the student's behavior to date and make necessary recommendations which could result in expulsion from Meridian.

Suspensions and Expulsions

Meridian is a place where "the love for learning lives". As a result, our primary goal is to educate the whole child. Suspension is a consequence that temporarily removes students from the school atmosphere due to behavior that is contrary to school expectations and the school code of conduct. At Meridian suspension is not a preferred consequence method, and will only be a choice if the student's behavior results in significant physical or emotional injury of other students, school staff, or if the behavior significantly jeopardizes the safety of self or others. Before any student is suspended, their age and mental state at the time of the behavior will be taken into consideration. However, below are behaviors that can result in suspension:

- Fighting that results in injury
- Attack of school staff or students
- Possession of alcohol, cigarettes, illegal substances including but not limited to marijuana
- Possession of weapons
- Attack/assault on a student or staff which causes, attempts, or threatens bodily injury or emotional distress

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) involves separation from the school and all school activities for a specified period of time, which is determined by a school administrator. The primary intent is to impress upon the student and parent/guardian that a serious behavior problem exists and that steps must be taken to ensure that the behavior is not repeated.

Before a student is suspended, the school will:

1. Notify the student of the infraction
2. Conduct a thorough investigation.
3. Accept information from the student(s) and other persons who have knowledge of the incident. The student involved shall have the opportunity to express his/her side of the incident. A student's age and development will be considered.
4. Determine the accuracy of the infraction(s) based on this information.
5. The Principal/Assistant Principal or his/her designee has sole discretion to implement an out of school suspension based on the information obtained during the investigation or if it is determined an emergency removal is necessary.

In the event that an offense threatens the safety of students and/or staff, students will be removed immediately from the building prior to following the above outlined steps.

Once a decision to suspend a student is made, the Principal/Assistant Principal or his/her designee shall proceed as follows:

- Inform the student of the suspension and the reason(s).
- Notify the parent/guardian. School administrator may notify the parent/guardian of the suspension via phone, email or in person in addition to providing written notification. Written

notification may be given to the student if he/she is under 18 when the parent/guardian is notified by phone/email of the suspension.

- Send written notification, by the end of the school day when possible, to the parent/guardian that includes:
    - The disciplinary infraction,
    - The length of the suspension,
    - A plan for continuity of education
    - The student's right to return to school at the end of the suspension, and
    - Any conditions for that return. When a student is serving an OSS, s/he may not be on school grounds before school, during the school day, or after school.

A manifestation determination meeting will be held for a student who holds an IEP when an OSS would be 10 days or more, as per IDEA guidelines.

Appealing an Out of School Suspension

Students and parents/guardians may make a written request to the Principal/designee to appeal a short-term suspension within one (1) school day of being notified of the suspension. The Principal/designee will attempt to schedule the Appeal Hearing within seven (7) school days of receiving the written request to appeal.

The Principal/designee will conduct the Appeal Hearing, which is closed to the public, and may include the presentation of evidence, testimony, and questioning of those present. Accordingly, parents/guardians and one (1) additional adult may represent the student at the hearing. If the parent/guardian fails to appear for the scheduled Appeal Hearing, the right to appeal is waived, and the original disciplinary decision will stand. The hearing will not be recorded by any means.

If the principal issued the suspension, he/she will not be the party to hear or decide the appeal. A designee will be appointed by the Head of School or his/her designee.

The Principal/designee will typically notify the parent/guardian of the appeal decision within two (2) school days after the Appeal Hearing. If the suspension is overturned, the student's cumulative record and any other school-maintained records will reflect that conclusion.

Appealing to the Head of School (HOS)

If the short-term suspension is upheld on appeal, and the parent/guardian wants to continue the appeal process, the parent/guardian may make a written request to the HOS within two (2) school days of the suspension appeal decision, stating why the suspension should be reversed/modified. The HOS or designee will attempt to schedule the Appeal Hearing within seven (7) school days of receiving the written request to appeal.

In the event that the HOS issued the suspension, the Appeal will be heard by the Board Chair.

The HOS, or his/her designee, will conduct the Appeal Hearing, which is closed to the public and may include the presentation of evidence, testimony, and questioning of those present. Accordingly, parents/guardians and one (1) additional adult may represent the student at the hearing. If the parent/guardian fails to appear for the scheduled Appeal Hearing, the right to appeal is waived, and the original disciplinary decision will stand. The hearing will not be recorded by any means.

The HOS or designee will typically notify the parent/guardian of the appeal decision within three (3) school days of the Appeal Hearing. If the suspension is overturned, the student's cumulative record and any other school- maintained records will reflect that conclusion.

If the HOS upholds the suspension, the suspension shall be imposed, and such decision will be final.

Suspension Lengths and Expulsion

Out of school suspensions will be no longer than 5 consecutive days for students in grades K-5 and 10 consecutive days for students in grades 6-8. The maximum number of cumulative suspension days during a school year is 20. In extreme cases, the Head of School will provide written justification to the student and parent describing why exceeding the 20-day limit is a more appropriate action than alternative responses.

An expulsion is the revocation of a student's right to attend a school. Repeated Tier 4 violations of the school's code of conduct, and specifically recurring incidents that threaten physical or emotional well-being of members of the school community can result in expulsion. Students who are recommended for expulsion will have a Disciplinary Hearing.

In the event that an offense committed by a student threatens the safety of students and/or staff, students will be removed immediately from the building prior to following the outlined steps in a suspension or expulsion.

When a student commits an offense that is eligible for expulsion the school will:

- Notify the student of the infraction(s).
- Conduct a thorough investigation.
- Accept information from the student(s) and other persons who have knowledge of the incident. The student involved shall have the opportunity to express his/her side of the incident. The student's age and development will be considered.
- Determine the accuracy of the infractions(s) based on the investigation.
- Send written notification, within one (1) school day of the conclusion of the investigation to the parent/guardian that includes:
    - The disciplinary infraction,
    - The date and time for the Disciplinary Hearing,
    - The student's status pending the hearing
    - Appeal process

Expulsion

Students may be expelled for:

A. Tier 4 violations of the Code of Conduct that significantly and demonstrably harm the educational environment of Meridian or harm the safety or security of Meridian students, staff, faculty, or others associated with Meridian.
B. Repeated Tier 4 violations of the Code of Conduct after appropriate remediation have been attempted.
C. Tier 4 violation of Disciplinary Plan or a Final Plan Contract.
D. Any student violating the Gun Free School Act will be permanently expelled.

School administrators may notify the parent/guardian of the suspension and potential expulsion via phone, email or in person in addition to providing written notification. Written notification may be given

to the student if he/she is under 18 when the parent/guardian is notified by phone/email of the suspension.

If it is not possible to provide written notification within one (1) school day of the infraction, Meridian will email, hand-deliver, or send via certified mail a copy of the notification.

Discipline Due Process

Suspension

The decision to suspend a student shall be made by a school administrator (e.g. Dean, Principal, Head of School, or any other school administrator) without the recommendation of the student's teacher or other staff. The administrator issuing the suspension will determine the number of days for suspension based on the severity of the infraction and previous infractions. The suspension shall become effective immediately unless otherwise stated by the administrator issuing the suspension. See special notes regarding Counting Suspension Days.

The parent/guardian may appeal a student's suspension as noted in the Student Handbook.

Expulsion

The decision to recommend a student for expulsion shall be made by a school administrator (e.g. Dean, Principal, Head of School, or any other school administrator) without the recommendation of the student's teacher or other staff. In recommending expulsion, the administrator will consider the severity of the infraction, the Discipline Policy, the student's previous infractions, any student Discipline contracts, and the student's age and development. A student recommended for expulsion will have a Disciplinary Hearing to review the recommendation. The Head of School will make a final decision as to the student's expulsion or long-term suspension.

In the event that an offense threatens the safety of students and/or staff, students will be removed immediately from the building prior to following outlined steps in a suspension or expulsion process.

Discipline Hearing

A student will have a Discipline Hearing when:

- He/she been recommended for expulsion or violated an expellable offense;
- He/she has exceeded 10+ cumulative days of suspension in the school year.

Discipline Hearings will be scheduled within ten (10) school days of the conclusion of the investigation of any incident.

Discipline Hearings will be conducted by the Discipline Review Panel (DRP). The Discipline Review Panel (DRP) will consist of the Head of School and one other school administrator. If the Head of School has a conflict with the student or is involved in the incident being reviewed, a designee will be appointed who is not conflicted. The Discipline Review Panel serves as an impartial decision maker. DPR are closed to the public. During the hearing, a school administrator(s) will carry out the following procedures:

- A statement of the Code of Conduct violation and summary of the Discipline Hearing procedures.
- An explanation and review of the evidence or facts for which potential long-term suspension/ expulsion is being considered. If video footage is available of the incident, the panel will view the footage.
- The student may be represented by his/her parent/guardian and one additional advocate.

- The student may present any information that he/she wants to the Discipline Review Panel to consider. The panel may ask questions regarding the matter to anyone present at the hearing. An advocate may speak on the student's behalf. The student has the right not to speak on his/her own behalf. Neither the school's representative at the hearing nor the student nor his/her representative(s) will be given the opportunity for cross-examination during the hearing.
- Within 24 hours of the conclusion of the hearing, the panel will make a recommendation regarding the consequence. The panel's recommendation will be effective immediately.
- The student/family will be informed of the decision via phone within two (2) school days of the conclusion of the hearing and written notification will be mailed within three (3) school days of the decision. This notice will contain information regarding appeal procedures.
- If a parent/guardian does not request a hearing, or fails to attend the hearing at the scheduled date, time, and place, the right to a hearing will be waived. Therefore, the school will proceed with its determination regarding the proposed infraction and the ruling of the Disciplinary Review Panel. The findings from the hearing will be approved and take effect immediately. Appeals will not be accepted by students who do not appear at the initial hearing.

In making its decision, the Discipline Review Panel will review evidence presented at the hearing, any statements heard on behalf of the school or student, the Meridian Code of Conduct, and prior conduct and/or academic performance, if applicable. The decision of the DRP must be unanimous. If panel members cannot agree, the expulsion or suspension will not be recommended.

Discipline Panel Hearing Appeal

Any student who is expelled or has a long-term suspension has the right to appeal the decision in writing to the Board Chair within three (3) school days of the written notice of expulsion or long-term suspension being issued. The following process shall be implemented for all appeals.

- An appeal hearing date will be set within seven (7) school days of the receipt of the Appeal request.
- The appeal hearing date will occur within thirty (30) calendar days from the date of the hearing being set.
- Appeal hearings will be heard by the Board Chair and one additional Board member. If the Board Chair has a conflict he/she may be replaced by another Board of Trustee member without a conflict. The Board Chair will designate a Board member in such instances.
- The student may be represented by his/her parent/guardian and one additional advocate.
- The student has the right to speak on his/her behalf at the Appeal Hearing. The student may choose not to speak at the Appeal Hearing.
- The student may not return to Meridian and participate in school activities while an appeal is pending.
- Appeal hearings are closed to the public.
- If a parent/guardian fails to appear at the Appeal Hearing the right to appeal is waived, and the original disciplinary decision will stand.

In making its decision, the Appeal Panel will:

- Review all evidence and documentation from the DPR and any supporting documentation;
- Review any statements heard at the DPR on behalf of the school or student;
- Review the Meridian Code of Conduct;
- Review the student's prior conduct and/or academic performance;

- The Panel may ask questions regarding the matter to anyone present at the hearing. One advocate may speak on the student's behalf. The student has the right not to speak on his/her own behalf. Neither the school's representative at the hearing nor the student nor his/her representative(s) will be given the opportunity for cross-examination during the hearing.

The Board Chair or designee will typically notify the parent/guardian of the appeal decision within three (3) school days of the Appeal Hearing. The Panel may determine to:

- Uphold the suspension/expulsion.
- Uphold a suspension/expulsion but clear the student's record of the suspension/expulsion at the end of the semester or school year per specific guidelines determined by the Panel.
- Determine that the suspension/expulsion was not within school guidelines, overturn the suspension/expulsion and order that all records and documents regarding the disciplinary proceeding be destroyed. No information regarding the suspension/expulsion will be placed in the student's permanent record, or shared with anyone not directly involved in the proceedings.

If the suspension or expulsion is overturned, the cumulative record of the student and any other school-maintained records will reflect that conclusion. If the Panel upholds the expulsion or long-term suspension, the long-term suspension or expulsion shall be imposed, and such decision will be final and reflected in the student's school records. *Decisions made by the Appeal Panel will be final.*

Special Notes Regarding Audio/Video Recording of Discipline Review Panels (DRP) and Appeal Hearings

All disciplinary hearings are closed to the public. All such hearings may not be recorded using a video or audio recording device under any circumstances and may only be audio-recorded as required to provide accommodations by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. A written request must be made 48 hours prior to the hearing to audio-record the hearing to the student's Dean.

Participation at School and School Related Activities and Re-Enrollment

Students who have been expelled from Meridian shall not be eligible to participate or attend any school functions. Students will not be eligible to re-enroll for subsequent school years. Expulsion is the permanent removal of a student from Meridian.

Re-entry Meeting

The re-entry meeting may be suggested for both the student and parent(s). It occurs the morning on which a student returns to school from a formal suspension. If the parent or student cannot attend the re-entry meeting, a phone conference may be held. The meeting typically takes place prior to the start of the school day and lasts approximately 20-30 minutes. The purpose of this meeting is to provide the student and parents with the opportunity to reflect on the significance of the suspension and what the student has learned as a result of the disciplinary action and, to set the stage for a successful reintegration into the school environment. The student should be prepared to acknowledge the behavior that led to suspension and commit to a plan to abide by Meridian's Code of Conduct, meet specific behavior expectations, and avoid repeated misconduct. A document that summarizes the meeting is created, signed, and placed in the student's file.

Special Notes of Concern Regarding Counting Suspension Days

Suspension days shall be counted as follows:

a. The day the student left school should be counted as a part of the suspension, provided he/she was denied class participation before 12 noon of that day.
b. The suspension shall terminate at midnight on the day listed as the last day of suspension.
c. Times when school is not officially scheduled are not to be counted as part of the suspension time. (Should school be cancelled for any reason during a scheduled suspension day, the suspension will lengthen to include the time school was actually in session).

Make Up Work for Suspension

Students who are suspended shall be offered make-up work assignment. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to contact the school and make arrangements for the receipt and return of all assignments. In the case of long-term suspensions, unless other arrangements are made, teachers are to give work in two-week increments, and students must complete and return work before receiving additional work. All IDEA mandates will be followed for students with disabilities.

Participation at School and School Related Activities During Suspension

Students who have been suspended from school shall not be eligible to participate in any school functions for the entire period of their suspension including any function on or off school grounds.

Procedures for Suspending and Expelling Students with Disabilities

The basis for disciplining, suspending or expelling students with disabilities shall be no different than the basis for such actions taken against students without disabilities. Reasonable accommodation of a student's disabilities shall not prevent the school from applying its discipline policy to students with disability when their behavior is not related to the disability. However, students with disabilities are entitled to certain additional procedural protections during the discipline process. These protections include, but are not limited to, requirements for a meeting to determine if behaviors resulting in expulsion or suspension longer than ten (10) days are a manifestation of a student's disability. Parents can request more information about this process and a copy of the procedural safeguards by contacting the Special Education Coordinator or Section 504 Coordinator.

Disclosure of Infractions

Meridian faculty and staff, are ethically and legally obligated to respond to any question or statement regarding any infraction of the Code of Conduct. The school will protect student privacy and abide by all local, state, and federal laws.

NOTICES

Notice of Non-Discrimination

The primary goal of Meridian Public Charter School is to ensure that each student achieves at the highest possible level. Education is to be provided in a manner that does not discriminate or cause harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, or social and family background.

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ("Title VI"), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX"), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504"), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 ("The Age Act"), applicants for admission and employment, students, parents, employees, sources of referral of applicants for admission and employment, and all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with Meridian Public Charter School ("Meridian") are hereby notified that Meridian does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities.

Students, parents and/or guardians having inquiries concerning Meridian's compliance with Section 504 or the ADA **as it applies to students or who wish to file a complaint regarding such compliance should contact**:

Diandra Best,
Director of Student Support Services
Meridian Public Charter School
2120 13th Street NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 387-9830

For inquiries or to file a complaint regarding Meridian's compliance **with ADA and Section 504 as it relates to employees or third parties**, and Title VI, Title IX, and/or the Age Act as it relates to students, employees or third parties, please contact:

Chief Operating Officer, Meridian Public Charter School
2120 13th Street NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 387-9830

Notice of Procedural Safeguards

Parents and guardians who want to learn more about their rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act can obtain a copy of their procedural safeguards from the Section 504 Coordinator:

Diandra Best
Director of Student Support Services
Meridian Public Charter School
2120 13th Street NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 387-9830

Notice of Grievance Procedures

Any person, student, parent, employee or third party who believe that Meridian has violated the regulations of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title VI, Title IX, and/or the Age Act may submit a complaint pursuant to Meridian's Grievance Procedures. A copy of the grievance procedures can be obtained by request through:

Chief Operating Officer, Meridian Public Charter School
2120 13th Street NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 387-9830 OR

Director of Student Support Services, Meridian Public Charter School
2120 13th Street NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 387-9830

Safeguard of Student Information Policy

Meridian complies with all D.C. and federal laws regarding student privacy.

All student records are treated as confidential and kept under restricted conditions. Parents may request to review their child's record at any time, or to be informed of information contained therein. Parents may request a photocopy of their child's records but files may not be removed from the school location where they are maintained. Meridian Public Charter School will fulfill requests from parents for photocopies within 48 business hours.

Viewing Student Records

Parents or legal guardians may request to view their child's records. Requests should be made in writing to the school principal. The school will schedule an appointment within 15 school days of the written request. Records must be viewed under the supervision of the school principal or their designee and may not be removed from the school's main office.

Special education records are filed separately from regular student records. Requests to view these records should be made directly to the Director of Student Support Services.

In the case of a withdrawal, records will be transferred directly to the receiving school from Meridian upon the completion of the withdrawal form, and receipt of a records request from the receiving school. Under no circumstances will cumulative files be released to parents or guardians.

Requests to view any student files by individuals beyond the legal parent/guardian of the student must include a written request granting authorization to the individual to view the records from the parent/guardian. The request must detail which records are to be released (e.g. attendance, grades, etc.)

Notification of Rights Under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. **The right to inspect and review the student's education records** within 45 days after the day Meridian Public Charter School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students who wish to inspect their child's or their education records should submit to the school principal or admissions coordinator a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent 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 parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask Meridian Public Charter School to amend their child's or their education record should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. **The right to consent (in writing) to disclosures of personally identifiable information** (PII) contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. For example, Meridian Public Charter School 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, when such disclosure is requested for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. In addition, FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent to school officials whom Meridian Public Charter School has determined to have legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school or school district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by the school, performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer 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.

4. **The right to file a complaint** with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Meridian Public Charter School 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

5. **The right to withhold disclosure of directory information.** At its discretion, Meridian Public Charter School may disclose basic "directory information" that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy without the consent of parents/guardians or eligible students in accordance with the provisions of District law and FERPA. Student name, address, parent/guardian email, student

telephone listing, grade level, diplomas/awards received, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, students date and place of birth, and dates of attendance. Parents/Guardians or eligible students may instruct Meridian Public Charter School to withhold any or all of the information identified above by writing to the school's principal; however, the school may still disclose this information if it is required to do so or if it is permissible under FERPA.

See the list below of the disclosures that elementary and secondary schools may make without consent.

FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students' education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in § 99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student, § 99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the school to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A school may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student –

- To other school officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom the school has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed in § 99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(*1*) - (a)(1)(i)(B)(*3*) are met. (§ 99.31(a)(1))
- To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of § 99.34. (§ 99.31(a)(2))
- To authorized representatives of the U. S. Comptroller General, the U. S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State educational agency (SEA) in the parent or eligible student's State. Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of § 99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf, if applicable requirements are met. (§§ 99.31(a)(3) and 99.35)
- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary for such purposes as to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid. (§ 99.31(a)(4))
- To State and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a State statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose records were released, subject to § 99.38. (§ 99.31(a)(5))
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, in order to: (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or (c) improve instruction, if applicable requirements are met. (§ 99.31(a)(6))
- To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions. (§ 99.31(a)(7))

- To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes. (§ 99.31(a)(8))
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena if applicable requirements are met. (§ 99.31(a)(9))
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to § 99.36. (§ 99.31(a)(10)
- Information the school has designated as "directory information" if applicable requirements under § 99.37 are met. (§ 99.31(a)(11))
- To an agency caseworker or other representative of a State or local child welfare agency or tribal organization who is authorized to access a student's case plan when such agency or organization is legally responsible, in accordance with State or tribal law, for the care and protection of the student in foster care placement. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(L))
- To the Secretary of Agriculture or authorized representatives of the Food and Nutrition Service for purposes of conducting program monitoring, evaluations, and performance measurements of programs authorized under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, under certain conditions. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(K))

Parents Right to Know Notification

In accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, Meridian is notifying you that you have the right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's classroom teachers. Meridian is happy to provide this information to you. At any time, you may ask whether the teacher has met qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction for DC Charter Schools.

You may also ask, at any time, whether your child is being provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

Please direct teacher and paraprofessional qualification requests, and any other questions related to this notice to hr@meridian-dc.org.

Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

PPRA affords parents/guardians certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole, or in part, by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)–

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
- Sex behavior or attitudes;
- Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
- Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
- Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of –

- Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;

- Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
- Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing, sale or distribution (this does not apply to the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions).

***Inspect*, upon request and before administration or use –**

- Protected information surveys of students and surveys created by third parties;
- Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
- Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

Meridian has developed and adopted policies, in consultation with parents/guardians, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. Meridian will directly notify parents/guardians of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. Meridian will also directly notify, such as through letter sent home, or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent/guardian to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. Meridian will make this notification to parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents/guardians will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their student out of such activities and surveys. Parents/guardians will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

EDUCATION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN & YOUTH PROGRAM

EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS PUBLIC NOTICE

The mission of the Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program is to ensure free, appropriate, public educational opportunities for homeless children and youths; to provide technical assistance to

schools, shelters and the community; and to heighten awareness of homeless issues. Homeless children and youth should have equal access to the same educational opportunities and services as non-homeless children and youth. In addition, homeless children and youth should have the opportunity to meet the same challenging academic achievement standards to which all students are held pursuant to Title X of ESSA; McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act federal law.

What is the definition of homeless children and youths?

- Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and includes children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelter (including D.C. transitional housing); are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above; and
- Unaccompanied youth, including youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, who qualify as homeless because they live in circumstances described above.

Can a homeless child enroll in school?

Yes. The child may continue enrollment in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness. The school of origin is the one the child attended prior to becoming homeless or the school in which the child was last enrolled. The child may also enroll in the school for the attendance area where he or she is living temporarily. If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the school must immediately enroll the homeless student in the school, pending resolution of the dispute. If the local school cannot resolve the dispute, the school must follow the Dispute Resolution Process, not to exceed 15 days. The local school must provide the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth with a written statement of the school placement decision and the appeal rights.

Whom should be contacted if a dispute arises regarding enrolling a homeless child or youth in school or if other assistance is needed?

The Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program has been designed to assist children and youth who are experiencing homelessness and their families regarding educational issues. If a homeless child or youth is experiencing difficulty in enrolling in school, please contact the Education of Homeless Children and Youth Office at (202)741-0470. The school's social worker has been designated as the McKinney-Vento coordinator at each campus and should be contacted for any additional assistance or grievances.

What services are provided by the Homeless Children and Youth Program?

The Homeless Children and Youth Program provides the following services: transportation assistance; dispute resolution; emergency school enrollment assistance; special projects; Homeless Awareness Month; staff development; and interagency collaboration.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To file a complaint alleging discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call, toll free, (866) 632-9992 (Voice). TDD users can contact USDA through local relay or the Federal Relay at (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (relay voice users). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Also, the District of Columbia Human Rights Act, approved December 13, 1977 (DC Law 2-38; D.C. Official Code § 2- 1402.11(2006), as amended) states the following:

It shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice to do any of the following acts, wholly or partially for a discriminatory reason based upon the actual or perceived: race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, family responsibilities, genetic information, disability, matriculation, or political affiliation of any individual. To file a complaint alleging discrimination on one of these bases, please contact the District of Columbia's Office of Human Rights at (202) 727-3545.

D.C. Code § 2-1402.11.

ANNEX

PLEASE SUBMIT THE SIGNED PARENT AND STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND COMMITMENT AGREEMENTS TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER.

PARENT AND STUDENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & COMMITMENT AGREEMENT

This Parent/Student Handbook has been prepared so students, parents/guardians and members of the Meridian family will be fully aware of the policies, procedures and expectations set forth by Meridian Public Charter School. This Parent/Student Handbook includes the following notices:

- Notice of Non-Discrimination
- Notice of Procedural Safeguards
- Notice of Grievance Procedures
- Notification of Rights Under FERPA
- Parents Right to Know Notification
- Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)
- Educational Rights Public Notice for the Education of Homeless Children & Youth Program

Failure to return this acknowledgement will not relieve any students or parent/guardians from the responsibility for the knowledge of the contents of this Parent Student Handbook.

Additionally, as a parent or guardian of a Meridian Public Charter School student, I am committed to supporting and guiding my child as he/she successfully carries out the above responsibilities. I will:

- Send my child to school in uniform daily and on time. If I am not able to meet this requirement, I will contact my child's teacher and the campus Attendance Officer regarding my child's absence or tardiness by sending an excuse note, as well as providing any necessary medical notes.
- Let my child's teacher know if my child has any problems with learning and be proactive in finding a solution.
- Inform my child's teacher and the school's Attendance Officer of any absences and submit the proper documentation for my child to be excused for his/her absence.
- Link reading and math concepts that my child has learned to pursue his/her interests and goals.
- Immediately inform my child's teacher AND submit a Change of Contact information form when there are any changes regarding my complete contact information including phone numbers and email address.
- Assist my child with his/her homework and if I am not able to help my child, I will seek resources within the school and/or within the community.
- Attend all Parent Teacher Conferences and workshops that will benefit me and the success of my child.

My signature below indicates I have read and reviewed the Parent/Student Handbook and agree with the above commitments.

_____

Parent's/Guardian's Printed Name Parent's/Guardian's Signature Date

_____

Student(s) Printed Name & Grade(s)

MERIDIAN PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENT COMMITMENT AGREEMENT

Students learn best when their parent/guardian takes an active interest in their education. Meridian Public Charter School has prepared this Commitment Contract and asks that you, as well as students, teachers, and the principal, agree to participate in this Commitment. By signing, you and your child indicate that you have read this contract carefully, have discussed it with your child, and most importantly, agree to form a partnership with the school as it relates to your child.

AS A STUDENT AT MERIDIAN PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL, I WILL:

- Inform my teachers and family if I need help with my schoolwork.
- Review weekly reading and math materials independently as well as with my family.
- Fulfill the responsibility of writing down all assignments
- Completing all class work and homework every day, and turn in assignments on time.
- Report to school in uniform, on time, and prepared daily.
- Be an active listener and participant in my journey of gaining knowledge.
- Abide by the school Code of Conduct

_____

Student's Name Grade Level

_____

Student's Signature Date

Meridian Public Charter School

SINCE 1999

Formal Complaint Form

Name:	**Phone:**
Address:	**City, State, ZIP**
Email Address:	**Cell Phone:**
Student:	**Student Date of Birth:**
School:	**Grade:**
Please state the nature of your complaint (attach additional sheets if necessary):	
Please state the resolution requested (attach additional sheets if necessary):	
Signature of Complainant:	**Date:**

Level I: Administrative Disposition – To be completed by the Dean / Supervisor

Date Received: **Initials:**

Date Contact: **Date of Meeting:**

Action on Complaint:

Signature: **Date:**

If you wish to request a review of the resolution offered by the Dean/ Supervisor you may do so by forwarding this form with a note explaining your reason for disagreement with the decision to the Head of School.

Level II: Administrative Disposition – To be completed by the Head of School/ Designee

Date Received: Initials: Action on Complaint:

Signature: Date:

Meridian Public Charter School

Absence Excuse Note Form

Please excuse my child, _____ (PRINT NAME OF STUDENT).

He/she missed school on _____ (DATE(S) OF ABSENCE) due to the reason checked below*:

**Please select the reason why your child missed school (required):*

☐ **Student illness/sickness** (for 4 or more consecutive absences, doctor's note is required)

☐ **Medical/dental appointment** (please provide note from the medical provider)

☐ **Student judicial proceeding** (please provide document from court verifying presence)

☐ **Religious holiday**

☐ **Death in the family**

☐ **Other** (If you selected "other", please provide details. Please understand that under DC law, only certain absences may be accepted as excused absences.)_____

_____

_____

Parent Name (PRINT) _____ Parent Signature (SIGNATURE) _____

Parent Phone Number _____ Today's Date**:_____

****Note to Parents/Guardians: Please be aware that DC Law states that excuse notes written by parents must be turned into school staff within five days following a student's return from an absence for the absence to be excused.**

Meridian Public Charter School

Formulario para la Justificación de Faltas de Asistencia

Por favor disculpe a mi hijo(a), _____ (ESCRIBA EL NOMBRE DEL ESTUDIANTE).

Él/Ella faltó a la escuela el día(s)_____ (FECHA(S) DE LA AUSENCIA) debido a la razón marcada abajo*

** Por favor seleccione la razón por la cual su hijo (a) faltó a la escuela (obligatorio):*

☐ **Enfermedad del estudiantes** (para 4 o más ausencias consecutivas, se requiere una nota del médico)

☐ **Cita médica/dental** (por favor proporcione una nota del proveedor médico)

☐ **Procedimiento judicial del estudiante** (proporcione un documento del tribunal verificando la presencia del estudiante)

☐ **Día festivo religioso**

☐ **Muerte en la familia**

☐ **Otro** (si seleccionó "otro", proporcione detalles. Comprenda que, de acuerdo con la ley de DC, solo ciertas ausencias pueden aceptarse como faltas justificadas.)_____

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_____

Nombre del Padre (ESCRIBA) _____ Firma del Padre (FIRME) _____

Teléfono del Padre: _____ Fecha del Día de Hoy**:_____

**** Nota para los Padres / Tutores: Tenga en cuenta que la ley de DC establece que las notas de justificación escritas por los padres deben entregarse al personal de la escuela dentro de los cinco días posteriores al regreso del estudiante de una ausencia para que la falta de asistencia sea justificada.**