

# Mallard Creek STEM Academy (MCSA)

## 2025-2026 K-8 Parent/Student Handbook\*

Please visit our website: [www.mcstemacademy.org](http://www.mcstemacademy.org)  
[Parents' Bill of Rights Link](#)

### Academics

#### Assessment

Assessment is the gathering and analysis of information about student performance. It identifies what students know, understand, can do, and feel at different stages in the learning process. Please refer to the school's assessment calendar. It is critical that these days, students arrive on time, and are prepared to do their best. Late students will not be permitted into the classroom until the assessment period is complete. Encourage your students to get a good night's rest and eat breakfast the day of assessments!

#### Reporting and Progress Monitoring

Progress reports are provided to all students. Students who are struggling and/or receiving a grade of D or below will receive additional reports and notices related to interventions. Failure to meet grade level standards may result in program limitations, including but not limited to restriction from extracurricular activities taking place during the school day. Failure to meet grade level standards may also result in program modifications, including student participation in remedial instructional programs both during and outside of the school day. At the first quarter progress report, underperforming students in honors/advanced courses will meet with faculty and/or School leadership to discuss their progress and placement. Formal, detailed report cards are issued at the end of each quarter. Achievement or progress shall be reported as indicated below.

#### Homework

Homework is implemented as a purposeful extension of learning. It provides students the opportunity to independently practice skills introduced during the school day. Homework is assigned Monday- Thursday. The following serve as parameters for the average amount of time allotted for nightly homework:

- Kindergarten: 10—15 minutes
- 1<sup>st</sup> grade: 15—30 minutes
- 2<sup>nd</sup> grade: 30 minutes
- 3<sup>rd</sup> grade: 30—45 minutes
- 4<sup>th</sup> grade: 45 minutes—1 hours
- 5<sup>th</sup> grade: 1 hour
- Middle School students should expect 1 hour of homework per night.

*Note:* Should homework be taking significantly more or less time than indicated, please contact your child's teacher.

### Grading Policies

#### Grades K-3: Standards Based Report Cards

A standards-based report card lists the most important skills students should learn in each subject at a particular grade level. Student progress on these standards is reported as follows:

- 4= Exceeds grade level expectations for this quarter with accuracy and a high level of quality
- 3= Demonstrates grade level expectations with accuracy and quality for this quarter

**2=** Developing but is not meeting grade level expectations for this quarter

**1=** Beginning to show limited progress & understanding but is not meeting grade level expectations for this quarter

**Blank=**Standard did not evaluate this quarter

### **Grades K-5 Specials Classes**

K-5th Grade Students will receive a grade of pass/fail for each Specials class (Art, PE, STEM, STEAM, and possibly others) at the end of the quarter. Students will be evaluated on their behavior, performance, and content knowledge.

### **Grades 3-8: Academics / Subjects**

Defining “expectations” as the progress toward mastery of the standards and objectives as set forth by the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and Essential Standards:

<b>90-100</b>	<b>A</b>	Consistently Exceeds Expectations at this time.
<b>80-89</b>	<b>B</b>	Exceeds Expectations at this time.
<b>70-79</b>	<b>C</b>	Meets Expectations at this time.
<b>60-69</b>	<b>D</b>	Inconsistently Meets Expectations at this time.
<b>0-59</b>	<b>F</b>	Does not meet expectations at this time.

### **Middle School Late Work / Homework & Projects:**

In order to be eligible for full credit and gain the most out of their studies, students should submit assignments by the assigned due date. Should a student miss the original deadline due to an absence, full credit may be earned given that it is submitted following the teacher’s expectations as outlined in their syllabus. Student communication with the teacher is encouraged regarding late work. Late work will only be accepted up to 2 calendar weeks after the original due date.

### **Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)**

All students are included in the MTSS process using the Standard Treatment Protocol (STP). Students are selected for tiers of support using our Universal Screening Process and multiple forms of data are previewed before students enter into tiered interventions. Students are moved throughout tiers based on their progress. The MTSS Child Study team makes the final decision on when and how students move (when needed) throughout tiers.

### **Intervention:**

Intervention & Enrichment classrooms are designed to support student’s unique learning needs. During this time, students receive targeted help in areas where they may need extra support, such as reading, math, or organization skills. It’s also a time for students who are ready to go deeper to explore enrichment activities that challenge and extend their learning. Parents are encouraged to discuss with their students the benefit of this support and help promote attendance at tutoring after school as well as at additional academic boot camps offered during the year. If your family is encountering extenuating circumstances or would like suggestions on how to support your child while catching up on work, please reach out to your assigned counselor for further guidance.

### **Academic Honesty and Integrity**

In keeping with our school’s mission, we desire to create and maintain an ethical academic atmosphere where honest behavior is an expectation for all students. Such behavior must be reflected in all areas of student life, including the completion and submission of all assignments. By holding students accountable for honest behavior in all areas, we will help them grow in integrity and skill as they learn, and practice effective and

ethical behaviors connected with the use of information and information technology.

## **Defining Cheating/Plagiarism**

Cheating is the act of using any unauthorized means, including but not limited to digital tools, material, information, notes, study aids, devices, or communication, to complete any form of academic exercise. This includes acquiring answers from any unauthorized online sources in completing any assigned work or examinations. Plagiarism is using and claiming someone else's material without giving credit to that person. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Copying any portion of another student's answer or work and/or allowing someone to copy one's own answer or work, including working together on an independent assignment and/or copying the work of another person that has already been submitted as that person's own.
- Using and claiming another person's ideas, opinions, theories, words, sentences, paragraphs, or entire work without appropriate acknowledgment of the source, which includes failing to use parenthetical in-text or in- project documentation and/or using documentation that is invalid and/or does not match the Works Cited page.

### **AI plagiarism**

#### **Plagiarism & Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

All work submitted by students must be their own. Using AI tools (like ChatGPT or image generators) is only allowed when approved by a teacher and must be clearly acknowledged. Per North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) guidelines, failure to disclose AI assistance or copying AI-generated content without permission may be considered plagiarism. Students and staff are expected to use AI responsibly, thoughtfully, and with academic integrity.

Submitting work generated by artificial intelligence (such as ChatGPT or other AI tools) without proper acknowledgment or citation, and representing the content as entirely original or authored solely by the student. This includes copying AI-generated essays, answers, or code and failing to disclose that an AI tool was used in the creation of the assignment.

The school utilizes plagiarism monitoring software to ensure original work by students and addresses student misconduct in accordance with the school discipline plan.

## **School Hours, Attendance, & Before/After School Care**

### **School Hours**

The Elementary and Middle School instructional day for students is 8:00am-3:00pm. The school office can be reached at 980-288-4811 during the school day. It is recommended that students arrive at school by 7:50 in order to be ready to start instruction at 8:00.

### **Remote Learning Attendance Policy**

In the event that the school provides remote learning, the school will implement a fully remote technology platform which includes an attendance function, progress reports and alerts for staff, students, and parents. Daily attendance will be taken for ALL students, regardless of their physical or remote presence on campus and this tool will be used to track attendance each day. Each student and parent will be trained in how to check in daily to demonstrate attendance and participation. Absences will also be recorded in this tool and then updated.

### **Attendance Policy**

*Attendance is a key factor in student achievement; therefore, students are expected to be present each day that*

*School is in session.* Regular attendance by every student is mandatory: the State of North Carolina requires that every child in the State between the ages of seven (or younger if enrolled) and 16 attend School. Parents or legal guardians have the responsibility for ensuring that students attend and remain at School daily. When unexcused, students absent for half or more of the school day will not be permitted to participate in Afterschool events on that date. All absences are to be verified by sending communication and documentation to [attendance@mcstemacademy.org](mailto:attendance@mcstemacademy.org)

Absences are excused for the following reasons:

- Student illness or injury. Students with fever of 100.4°F or higher, vomiting and/or diarrhea may not return to School until 24 hours after the symptoms have subsided. Health guidelines may be modified by the school at any time to align with federal, state, or local guidance.
- Quarantine
- Death in the immediate family
- Doctor/dental appointments that *could not be arranged outside of School hours*.
- Pre-authorized absence, including “educational opportunity.” Contact your child’s School Principal at least five days prior to the absence.
- Religious Holidays that are not observed by the school calendar.
- Court or administrative proceedings
- Absence related to deployment activities.
- **Students with fever of 100.4, vomiting, and/or diarrhea may not return to school until 24 hours after the symptoms have subsided.** Health guidelines may be modified by the school at any time to align with federal, state, or local guidance.

In the event of an excused absence, send a written notification or doctor’s note to [attendance@mcstemacademy.org](mailto:attendance@mcstemacademy.org). Written notification must be received by the office **within 5 days** of the student’s return to School. School leadership may pre-authorize an excused absence in situations when it is demonstrated that the purpose of an absence is to take advantage of a valid “educational opportunity,” such as travel. Approval for such an absence must be granted prior to the absence. Additionally, should a student miss three or more consecutive School days, a doctor’s note may be required in order to render the absences excused.

When students reach **3 days of unexcused absence**, parents will be contacted via a notification letter/email. When students reach **6 days of unexcused absence**, parents will be contacted via a notification letter/email. When **10 days of absence (either excused or unexcused)** has been reached, parents will be contacted by School personnel to review the student’s academic status and factors surrounding the absences and to make recommendations of corrective action as needed. Should any student reach 20 days of absence (either excused or unexcused) the student and parents will meet with School leadership to discuss the impact on the child’s education and to review the potential of retention in grade level and/or course failure. The school reserves the right to retain/fail a student based on absences and tardies according to NC law.

### **Tardiness**

Students who report to a class after the start time will be counted as tardy. Tardies to School are excused for the reasons listed above for which absences are excused.

When students reach **3 days of unexcused tardies**, parents will be contacted via a notification letter/email. When students reach **6 days of unexcused tardies**, parents will be contacted via a notification letter/email. When **10 days of tardies (either excused or unexcused)** have been reached, parents will be contacted by School personnel to review the student’s academic status and factors surrounding the absences and to make recommendations of corrective action as needed. Should any student reach **20 days of tardies (either excused or unexcused)** the student and parents will meet with School leadership to discuss the impact on the child’s education and to review the potential of retention in grade level and/or course failure. The school reserves the right to retain/fail a student based on unexcused absences and tardies according to NC law.

### **Illness During the School Day**

When a student becomes ill during the school day, he/she should notify the teacher, and the teacher will send the student to the front office. The office staff will call the parent or guardian or emergency contact for parent pick-up. **Pick up should occur within one hour of notification.**

### **Family Death or Terminal Illness**

If there is a death, terminal illness, or similar traumatic situation in your family that may affect the student's attendance, emotional well-being, and/or level of concentration, please notify the office and classroom teacher.

### **Make-Up Work**

Students, with support from the parents, have an obligation to complete all assignments missed due to absence. Students are guaranteed two school days to make up their work for each day absent from school. In the case of a prolonged absence, parents are encouraged to contact the teacher to make arrangements to have assignments picked up. If a parent would like to come to pick up work for their child while the child is out, parents must contact the teacher to provide work and give teachers at least two school days to assemble the assignments. Students who miss an announced test during their absence will take the test within 2 school days upon their return to school unless other arrangements are made with the teacher.

### **Early Dismissal**

Please check in at the School front office when you come to pick up your child. In no case will a student be allowed to leave School with anyone except his/her parent or guardian and emergency contacts unless the school has communication from the student's parent/guardian. To ensure an orderly dismissal process, early dismissals after 2:30pm for grades K-8 are not permitted.

### **K-8 Before/After School Care**

The Before and After School Program is available through our partners, Firm Foundation. Drop in care is not available on campus. Families will be charged a late fee of \$20 for every instance where there is late pick up.

For information on how to register for the before and after school program email Kim Roseboro at [kroseboro@firmfoundationsinc.org](mailto:kroseboro@firmfoundationsinc.org).

### **Communication**

Effective communication between school and home is vital to the successful academic, social, and emotional well-being of all students. MCSA will communicate often and by a variety of means to keep parents informed of the happenings at School and the growth of the students. The following are samples of methods of communication used by MCSA:

- Weekly "Go Home" Folders for students in Grades K-5
- Weekly newsletters for students in grades K-8

### **Online Resources**

We use online communication tools that provide information about our School, your child's classroom, and your child's progress. General information is available at [www.mcstemacademy.org](http://www.mcstemacademy.org)

For students in grade 3-8, appropriate credentials for Infinite Campus (online gradebook program – <https://MCSA.powerSchhttps://61q.ncsis.gov/campus/portal/parents/psu61qmcsa.jspool.com>) required for logging in are provided by the school. Our school is also capable of conducting School-wide communication using Parent Square (<https://www.parentsquare.com>).

## **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Parent/Teacher Conferences may be scheduled to allow parents and teachers to discuss a child's performance at School. Conferences can be held as needed, before or after School as well as during the school day per teacher availability. After the end of the first quarter, there is one teacher workday that provides opportunities for Parent/Teacher conferences. Additional conferences may be scheduled as needed throughout the remainder of the school year. Parents/Guardians should contact their child's teacher(s) to schedule a conference.

## **Adverse Weather Communications and Other Closures**

The Principal determines whether to close or delay School or release students early for any safety concern, primarily when inclement weather is predicted, and road conditions are unsafe for travel. Typically, the School will generally follow the lead of the school district except for in extenuating circumstances. The decision to close or delay school, including how long to delay, will be shared in the following ways no later than 6AM that morning:

- MCSA Website
- MCSA Parent Square
- Social Media
- Local News Affiliates (weather-related events only)
- Telephone Notification System

**If no announcement is made, the school schedule remains as normal.** If inclement weather is predicted after the school day has begun, a decision regarding early release will be made as quickly as possible. In the event School is dismissed for the day, notifications will be announced via the lines of communication listed above. Please remember to make plans for childcare in the event that the weather closes school during the day. If school is already in session when a severe weather watch or warning is issued, the school will remain open. Staff will take appropriate safety precautions.

## **School Phones**

Students may use school phones to call home with permission. If a student is ill, the school office will contact the parent/guardian. Important messages will be given to students or staff members upon request.

## **Student Cell Phones and Electronic Devices**

Student technology may not be used at school and must remain silent and away unless explicit staff permission has been granted at that time. "Silent" refers to the absence of any kind of noise generated by the device and "away" refers to the device and accessories being completely out of sight. Headphones, airpods, and/or bluetooth devices must be removed when inside any building. Please refer to related sections in the Discipline Plan including but not limited to sections 2g, 4g and 6c for additional details regarding student technology. The school is not responsible for lost or damaged cell phones or any electronic devices.

## **Grievance Policy for Parents/Students**

**Purpose:** To provide the procedures parents/students will follow when they have an issue at the school that constitutes a grievance.

This policy is in place to respond to parent/student or volunteer grievances (referred to as parent/student hereafter). It is expected that any parent/student with an issue will first try to resolve the issue by using open communication with those directly involved (see Pathways of Communication). This means that if a parent or student disagrees with any policy or procedure within the classroom, the **first level** of grievance is with their student's Teacher; likewise, the first level of grievance of an athletic or Parent Teacher Partnership would be with the coach or PTP committee chair, respectively. If the student/parent is not satisfied with the teacher's

response, they will then proceed to the **second level** of grievance by setting a meeting with the grade-level Principal or the grade level administrator.

At that meeting, the teacher, student, grade-level Principal, and parents must be present and the issue at hand will be fully discussed. If the parent or student wishes to pursue the matter further, they will proceed to the **third level** of grievance by setting up a meeting with the Principal. Similarly, if a parent/student disagrees or has an issue with a policy or procedure at the school, the parent/student will set up a meeting with the Principal or Director. If the parent/student feels that their issue is still a concern after meeting with the Principal and the issue meets the definition of a grievance set forth below, the parent/student may initiate the grievance procedures as described below. Many issues that a parent/student has with the classroom, teacher or School will not rise to the Board level of a grievance and appropriate resolution will be found with the teacher and/or grade-level Principal.

**Definition of a grievance:** a grievance is defined as a formal written complaint by a parent/student stating that a specific action has violated a school policy, board policy, or law/regulation. A complaint under Title IX is not a grievance and this policy does not apply to such complaints. Please refer to the School's Title IX policies and procedures for Title IX matters ([www.mcstematicademy.org](http://www.mcstematicademy.org)). In addition, this procedure does not apply to complaints that fall under the School's Non-Title IX policies, including bullying and harassment. Please refer to the School's Non-Title IX Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying complaint process for such matters (Appendix).

**Time Limits:** a grievance will only be heard if the complaint has been filed within fifteen business days of the meeting with the Principal or Principal. The fifteen-day deadline may be extended at the sole discretion of the Principal or Principal.

**The grievance process is as follows:**

Step 1: If the parties are not satisfied with the decision of the Principal and the grievance meets the definition set forth above, the parent/student must submit a letter in writing stating the school policy, board policy, or law/regulation that was violated including details of the actions and the place, date, and time of the violation. The parent/student should make all efforts to include any details about the event that may be helpful in the decision-making process. The written letter should be submitted to the Principal and to the Board Representative. If the Principal is implicated in the grievance, the grievance should only be submitted to the Board Representative.

Step 2: The Board representative will review the facts and notify the parties in writing (email accepted) if further action is necessary or if further information is needed. The Board reserves the right to appoint a committee to investigate any grievance, to appoint an investigator, or take any other action to investigate the grievance and issue a decision. If the Board considers the matter should be heard, the parties will be called to meet with the Board. After the hearing, any decision of the Board will be communicated to the Principal or Director and the parent/student who filed the grievance within five School days. If the board issues a decision without a hearing, the Board will communicate such a decision to the Principal or Director and the parent/student who filed the grievance within five School days. The Board's decision concerning the grievance is final.

## **School Governance and Leadership**

The governance of MCSA involves a number of groups and individuals. Each is listed below with a description of their function.

### **Authorizing Agency**

The Authorizing Agency, the North Carolina State Board of Education, grants a charter to the nonprofit corporation, Alliance Preparatory Schools, Inc.

## **School Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors is the governing body of the school. School policy is created between the Board of Directors and the Administrative Team.

**Executive Director:** Executive Director: The Executive Director serves to oversee daily operations of the school building including school safety and accountability and reports directly to the School Governing Board.

## **The School Principal**

The School Principal functions primarily in the role of providing leadership in all areas of the school, including teachers, staff, students, parents, and curriculum. The Principal is the general manager of the school and leads the school in site-based decision making.

## **Parent and Family Engagement**

MCSA is a strong advocate of parent support and involvement. The support of our families is critical to the success of MCSA and is warmly welcomed and very much appreciated.

### **Parent Partnership Committee:**

All MCSA parents, teachers, and staff members are automatically members of the MCSA Titan Community Alliance (TCA), and membership is free. The TCA brings together parents and staff to support student growth by fostering a positive environment that encourages collaboration, resource sharing, and active involvement in school activities and initiatives. The TCA is made up of various committees, including Family Events, Staff Appreciation, and Fundraising. TCA members play an essential role in building a strong, connected school community. Parents are encouraged to get involved and make a difference. Information regarding TCA will be shared on ParentSquare.

### **General Guidelines for Visitors and Parent Volunteers**

The following are guidelines for visitors while they are in the building:

- All guests must sign in with a valid photo ID at the office upon arrival at the campus to complete a Level I clearance. This also applies to student sign-out.
- All guests must wear a name badge. For security purposes, any guest on campus without a name badge will be escorted back to the office to obtain one.
- The distribution of literature or solicitation of any kind is not permitted.
- Prior to leaving the campus, guests must sign out in the office.
- Former students that withdrew from MCSA or otherwise no longer attend MCSA are not permitted to visit during School hours without prior written approval from the principal. Alumni, however, will be allowed to sign in under normal visitor procedures.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers are the key to making a wide array of opportunities truly beneficial for our teachers and students. These opportunities include classroom and special event activities, fundraisers, and field trips.

- All MCSA volunteers must complete volunteer training and renew background screenings each year.
- All MCSA volunteers are required to complete criminal background checks prior to volunteering, including chaperoning field trips.
- MCSA shall not accept voluntary services from any individual whose certificate or license has been denied, suspended or revoked by the SBE or any other licensing board or agency on the grounds of unethical or immoral behavior, including improper sexual or physical conduct with children or students.
- Volunteers must sign in at the office when entering the building and wear a name badge while volunteering.



## **Expectations for Adult Visitors While on Campus or Attending School-Sponsored Events (On or Off Campus)**

- Visitors may not disrupt or attempt to interfere with the operation of a classroom or any other area of a School.
- Adult visitors must respect and not infringe upon obligations and time constraints of School staff and faculty.
- Only service animals as defined by ADA.gov (dogs and miniature horses that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities) are permitted in all areas of campus where members of the general public are allowed.
  - A service animal must be under the control of its handler. In addition to other requirements outlined by the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless the individual's disability prevents using these devices or these devices interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of tasks. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
  - Animals whose sole function is to provide comfort, companionship, or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.
  - Other animals or pets are not permitted on or off campus, unless safely confined inside of a vehicle, without an exception granted by the appropriate School Principal or Principal. For any scenarios not defined explicitly in this document, MCSA will follow the ADA's guidelines on special needs animals found here:  
<https://www.ada.gov/resources/service-animals-2010-requirements/>

Anyone on School property or at a School-sponsored event (on or off campus) that displays disruptive behavior is subject to being directed to leave or otherwise removed from the school property or outside event property by a school administrator or other authorized School staff member at any time for any reason. If a visitor/volunteer violates these or other expectations/rules/laws/etc. They may have limitations placed on their access to any future campus or School-sponsored events (on or off campus). Loitering on School property is prohibited.

Disruptive behavior is any action that interferes with or may reasonably be expected to interfere with the normal, orderly operation of the school and/or School sponsored event, including but not limited to:

- Profane, lewd, obscene, abusive and/or slanderous/libelous language, gestures or other written or electronic communication
- Rude or riotous noise
- Disorderly or assaultive behavior
- Vandalism or the defacement of public property
- Overt or implied threats to the health or safety of others; and
- Any other conduct that violates any applicable law or School policies

## **Safety**

The safety of the students, staff, and visitors at MCSA is extremely important. The following are some of the measures that will be in place to secure the MCSA campus.

### **General Safety**

1. All MCSA employees must pass criminal background checks and drug tests.
2. Volunteers/visitors who may be in any unsupervised position with students will undergo further criminal background checks, or otherwise will not be allowed to be placed in such roles (e.g., coaches, tutors, chaperones).
3. Access to the campus and to our facilities is monitored.
4. All teachers/staff wear ID badges.
5. All visitors are required to check in at the office at the beginning and end of each visit.

6. Students are not permitted to receive visitors during the school day without prior approval except for parents/guardians.
7. For students wishing to bring a guest to a school event (e.g., dances or socials), the guest must be pre-approved via the submission of the “Student Guest Approval Form.” A new form must be completed for each event.
8. All medications are kept in a locked location in the school office and dispensed only as authorized.
9. Emergency supplies, including a first aid kit and other emergency needs, are kept in each classroom.
10. Access is granted to local health and fire department officials for inspection of the premises or operation of the school on a regular basis.

### **Safety Regulations**

1. MCSA is in full compliance with all federal, state, and local fire and safety regulations, including but not limited to conducting fire drills, tornado drills, lockdown drills, and other applicable drills.
2. All exits and stairways will be kept clear at all times to facilitate evacuation.
3. All emergency procedures and evacuation plans will be posted in each classroom. All procedures and plans will be consistently evaluated and refined.
4. All combustible and/or potentially harmful materials such as chemicals and cleaning supplies will be properly stored, maintained, and disposed of.
5. MCSA does not condone students leaving campus in third-party car services, specifically, ridesharing services whose own policies explicitly prohibit minors from using them, such as Uber and Lyft. The school will not approve of or otherwise facilitate any student to be picked up from School in a third-party car service, such as Uber or Lyft, and if encountered will turn away such ride sharing services from the school.

### **Immunization of Students**

MCSA will comply with all state and federal immunization requirements. All students will be required to produce a record of current immunizations within thirty days of enrollment. Failure to provide this record will result in suspension until such an immunization record is submitted. MCSA will provide parents with immunization information as specifically required by the NC Health Department.

### **Medications**

Prescription or over-the-counter medications cannot be dispensed by the school or brought to School without an approved written medical authorization form. Blank forms are available in the school office. Medications must be brought to School in their original container with a prescription label (if applicable). Students may carry or otherwise have possession of medicine of any form, except inhalers or Epi-pens (provided the authorization for student self-medication form is on file in the office), in their possession on campus. Students must turn in their medications at the office and a designated staff member will administer medications provided all requirements are met. Administration of non-prescription medications at School is discouraged.

### **Tobacco Policy**

MCSA is a tobacco-free School. To this end, the use of any tobacco product, electronic cigarette, vapor pen, or similar device is prohibited on campus or during School events. This applies to anyone on campus, including faculty, parents, staff, and visitors.

## **General Information**

### **Breakfast and Lunch**

### **Payment Options**

Breakfast and Lunch will be free for the 25-26 school year.

Please see the following documents (also available on the website under “School Nutrition” on the Parent Resources page) for students with milk or food allergies that require a medical substitution.

[fluidmilk-sub-eng-MCSA MCSA 792024 \(1\) \(2\).pdf](#)

[Med statement MCSA and mcsa .doc \(1\) \(2\).pdf](#)

[Special Meal Accommodations Policy 792024 \(2\).pdf](#)

Students will be allowed to purchase an additional lunch or other snacks if desired. Funds must be electronically deposited in your child's cafeteria account to receive a second meal, extra milk, adult meals, or a la carte items. Cash or Checks will not be accepted for the 25-26 school year. You can access the school payment portal by going to <https://mcstemacademy.org/>, click on the parent's tab, click on the cafe/food tab, click on the payments tab. Once on the payment portal website, click parents, create an account, and deposit funds. You can also download the app to your smartphone by following the links on the payment portal website.

You can also use this link: <https://schoolpaymentportal.com/Default.aspx>

### **Other Fees**

**Cash or Check Payment to Front Office:** Place payment in a sealed envelope with student/teacher name(s) and reason for payment noted on the envelope. Teachers, coaches, or other School employees can pass along payments to the office, but only designated MCSA employees should process cash payments. Personal checks are not accepted at MCSA. Payments are made through the parentsquare website.

**Donations and Donation-Based Fundraisers (e.g., Dress Down Days):** Payments for School based fundraising should be made on the ParentSquare portal. Donations through outside vendors such as Boosterthon should be made directly to the vendor through their payment portal.

**Outside Programs Approved to Collect Payments (e.g., lunch accounts):** Payments should be made directly to these programs Lunch Time Payment Portal on the website for lunches, and ParentSquare for everything else. Payments should not be sent to the front office unless directed to do so by an MCSA employee.

### **MCSA Fees and Collections**

**Fee Discounts:** Children of employees and those on free and reduced lunch are entitled to 50% off participation fees for School sponsored sports and extracurricular activities for which they are eligible. These benefits do not stack. Free and reduced lunch fee discounts do not apply to business type activities (e.g., before and after School care) or activities not directly sponsored by the school.

**Late Balances:** When outstanding balances are equal to at least one activity participation fee AND are 30 days or more past due, that student will no longer be eligible for participation in fee based extracurricular activities until their account is in good standing, unless eligibility is granted for extenuating circumstances. Parents/guardians with student balances equal to at least one activity participation fee will be referred to an outside collection agency.

**MCSA Fundraisers:** All School fundraisers benefit MCSA and its student community and are all pre-approved by School leadership and the Board of Directors before the start of School unless a special circumstance exists. Fundraising activities for personal/individual matters or outside charities at MCSA are expressly not permitted. Students are encouraged to support charitable causes outside of MCSA through available service activities through the school as a part of our core values.

**Personal Items:** The school will not accept responsibility for any personal items of students, including electronic devices. Items brought to School or a School sponsored event that the school judges to be unsafe or inappropriate for School will be confiscated by School leadership and held in the office until the parent can retrieve them.

### **Breakfast and Lunch**

MCSA will provide a free, full breakfast and lunch service in conjunction with the National School Lunch Program. Students may also bring a nutritious lunch from home including a drink. Students may not bring caffeinated soda or energy drinks. Food delivery directly to students from vendors (Door Dash, Uber Eats, etc.) is not permitted.

### **Celebrations**

In order to provide opportunities for celebrations while also maintaining continuity within the school day, all classroom celebrations must occur during a time deemed appropriate by faculty and/or School leadership. In response to student allergies and health concerns, food/snacks may not be shared in the classroom, in the cafeteria or at other School events unless it is a pre-approved celebration. To ensure the safety of all students, parents and guardians may provide commercially prepared food items or prepackaged and washed fruits and vegetables for classroom/building food celebrations.

### **Extracurricular Clubs**

Students in the middle School may initiate an extracurricular student club provided that the club supports the general curriculum of the school and that the students have the support of a staff sponsor.

### **Field Trips**

Whenever students are traveling away from School, they are subject to the same expectations and rules observed at MCSA. As in the classroom, the teacher will judge acceptable or unacceptable behavior. Every facet of the Discipline Plan will be enforced on field trips just as it is in the classroom. Signed permission slips must be on file for each field trip. We encourage parents to serve as chaperones. Should the supply for chaperones be greater than the demand of the venue, a lottery will be held. Chaperones are expected to serve in a supervisory capacity and are asked not to bring additional children on the trip. In some cases, additional parents may attend as participants. Parent participants would be responsible for their own transportation and fees. Please check with your child's teacher. Parent chaperones may not bring additional children or adults along on any field trip.

### **Multi-Day Field Trips**

Learning at MCSA goes beyond the classroom walls. Beginning in fifth grade these extended extracurricular field trips are designed to integrate and expand our core academic curriculum. These extended studies have as one of their goals to educate in a real environment with hands on-learning. There are many other kinds of learning and growth in this program which include students developing independence within a nurturing framework, practicing social group living skills, activities that involve development of self and group awareness, and practicing good manners and behavior in new environments. These experiences provide valuable life-learning opportunities and help to bond students and build positive memories.

### **Enrichment Programs**

Fee-based after School enrichment opportunities (music lessons, etc.) and summer camps will also be offered by our Enrichment program. Details are posted on the MCSA website as these programs are available.

## **State and Federal Compliance**

### **Promotion and Retention**

MCSA will follow the North Carolina statutes and the State Board of Education regulations regarding promotion and retention.

Students are required to meet promotion standards in grades K-8 that include demonstrated grade level proficiency on local assessments, standardized tests, report cards, and student work. In determining the best educational interests of a student, appropriate grade placement decisions shall be based upon the mastery of critical knowledge and skills including reading and mathematics. To be promoted to the next grade levels, students in all grades should be proficient in reading and mathematics, which may be demonstrated through North Carolina End-of-Grade tests, School assessments, student portfolio of work, and report card grades. A promotion decision should not be made solely based on a state assessment. Parents will receive quarterly report cards and progress reports and data reports from benchmark assessments. Parent conferences will provide face-to-face conversations related to student progress. Additional parent meetings will be held related to EC and EL student progress.

If a student appears likely to be retained, then the parent/guardian of the student shall receive at least two (2) notices. The first notice may be a conference; the second notice must be in writing and provided by the end of the third quarter. The principal's office must provide in writing an official notice of retention to the parent/guardian by the last day of School. It is the principal's responsibility, in accordance with G.S.115C-288(a), when evaluating a student for retention or promotion, to consider information, such as the student's classwork and grades, along with the student's scores on the K-2 Literacy and Math assessment. In grades 3-8, the state EOG assessment, observations, grades, other formal and informal assessments, and classwork will be used to consider promotion. Students in grades 6-8 may obtain high School credits by taking advanced level courses (i.e., Math 1) but are held to high School standards for those courses. Students must meet local and state graduation requirements, which include passing scores on state-mandated exams of essential skills. In addition, students must meet a proficiency score of level 3 or above on the NC EOC Exams.

Students must achieve a letter grade of a D or higher in each semester in core subject areas to be promoted to the next grade level. A student who does not meet the minimum required grade may enroll in course recovery. Students who are **not proficient** on the EOG for ELA must receive remediation in the form of an intensive reading course to strengthen reading strategies. Students who are **not proficient** on the EOG for Mathematics must also receive remediation, which may be provided in the Summer.

### **Students with Disabilities and Limited English Proficiency Students**

Students with disabilities who cannot participate in the North Carolina Essential Standards Assessments may be exempt from certain promotion standards. However, exempt students must be enrolled in a functional curriculum and demonstrate evidence of progress on alternate assessments. All recommendations regarding special needs students will be made in conjunction with the IEP Committee or the Section 504 Committee.

Students of Limited English Proficiency (LEP), as identified by state and federal standards, shall meet the same standards as all students; however, per federal law, English language proficiency cannot be the factor that determines whether a student has not met performance standards. All retention recommendations regarding Limited English Proficient students will be made in consultation with the English Language Learner Coordinator

### **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. p 1232g; 34 CFR part 99) is a Federal Law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all Schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a School beyond the high School level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

1. Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such

as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

2. Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a School correct any records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the School decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
3. Generally, Schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows Schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties under the following conditions (34 CFR p 99.31):
  - School officials with legitimate educational interest.
  - Other Schools to which a student is transferring.
  - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes.
  - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student.
  - Organizations conduct certain studies on behalf of the school.
  - Accrediting organizations.
  - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
  - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies, and.
  - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, and date of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, Schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each School.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act—TITLE II**

The school does not discriminate against any person on the basis of disability in admission or access to the programs, services, or activities of the school, in the treatment of individuals with disabilities, or any aspect of operations. The school does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices. This notice is provided as required by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Questions regarding the ADA and Section 504 may be forwarded to the school office.

### **Bullying**

Includes, but is not limited to, any pattern of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, which takes place on School property, at any School-sponsored function, or on a school bus, and that: (1) Places a student or School employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or (2) Creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits. For purposes of this section, "hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

Bullying or harassing behavior includes, but is not limited to, acts reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. (From N.C.G.S. § 115C-407.15).

Bullying also includes cyber-bullying as defined by N.C.G.S § 14-458.1.

If an allegation of bullying is made, procedures outlined in the Non-Title IX Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Complaint Process (Appendix) will be followed.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

With respect to the services provided to our student population and staff, no person shall be discriminated against in any education program, activity, or other related service based on race, color, religion, gender, sex, age, national origin, or disability.

### **Health and Wellness**

In accordance with NCGS 115C-218.75. (a), the school provides students and families with information related to student health and well-being with regards to meningococcal meningitis, influenza, cervical cancer / dysplasia, human papillomavirus, preterm birth in subsequent pregnancies, and lawful abandonment of a newborn baby. This information is contained on the “Health and Wellness” page under “Parent Resources” on the school website.

### **Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento)**

In 2015, Congress reauthorized the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to help people experiencing homelessness. The federal law includes the Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program that entitles children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence to a free, appropriate education and requires Schools to remove barriers to their attendance and success in School.

If you or someone you know is in transition and would like to speak with someone about the program, please contact the McKinney-Vento Liaison or your School counselor.

Examples of living situations that may qualify are:

- Living with a friend, relative or other person
- Hotel or motel
- Shelter or transitional housing
- Car, park, or another public place
- Campground, storage unit, abandoned building or other inadequate home.
- Youth living on their own, runaway youth.

The living situations above do not include all situations that may qualify.

**Access to Programs & Services:** Students will have access to the same programs and services that are available to all other students, including:

- Transportation
- Supplemental educational services
- Child Nutrition
- All eligible McKinney-Vento students will receive free meal benefits. There is no Free & Reduced Application required.

Visit the School website for information on Parent and Student rights.

**Dispute Process:** If the parent/guardian/youth disagree on the McKinney-Vento eligibility, a process is in place to appeal the decision.

Please refer to the liaison for the MCSA Dispute Process guidelines.

Lindsey Masters [lmasters@mcstemacademy.org](mailto:lmasters@mcstemacademy.org)

MCSA NC Homeless Liaison

Lisa Phillips

## Uniform Policy

The student dress code is designed to further the learning process by providing parameters within which students can make personal decisions. The parameters are in place to ensure that the school learning environment reflects respect and dedication to the learning process. Clothing should never be distracting to the student or to anyone else.

School leadership reserves the right to determine appropriateness of dress at all times including reserving the right to designate certain days, included but not limited to “Spirit Days,” where more flexibility in dress is allowed.

Students may wear...

- Teal, black, light blue or white collared shirts with MCSA logo or Official MCSA spirit shirts (on designated days) from an approved vendor.
- Solid khaki or black pants, shorts, skirts or skorts.
- Solid khaki jumper-style dress or polo dress with MCSA logo.
- Shoes that fully cover the toes and the back of the heel.
- Solid colored (no logos, pictures, or prints) black sweaters, cardigans or jackets may be worn indoors.
- Outerwear with the MCSA logo if worn indoors from an approved vendor.
- Outerwear that is only worn outdoors should be school and temperature appropriate.

### Additional Dress Code Guidelines

- Hats, hoods, bandanas and athletic headbands must be removed when inside any building.
- Headphones, airpods, and/or bluetooth devices must be removed when inside any building
- Crocs, sandals, and slides are not permitted.
- Pants and shorts must be secured at the waistline, not sagging and/or revealing anything underneath.
- Clothing must be free of rips and holes. This includes jeans/pants on designated Spirit Days
- All clothing must fully cover the underclothes, the shoulders, the areas around the waist, the back below four fingers from the base of the neck and the chest below four fingers from the collar bone: no visible cleavage.
- If clothing material (sheer, mesh, lace, etc.) reveals what is underneath, clothing must be worn underneath that meets the coverage guidelines above.
- Leggings and clothing similar to leggings may be worn as undergarments: under shorts, skorts, skirts and dresses that meet length requirements. Leggings must be solid white or black.
- All clothing must be free of words, sayings, slogans, or graphics (symbols, images, etc.) with the exception of official MCSA spirit wear.
- Elementary students may not carry purses.

### Friday Spirit Day Dress Code Guidelines

- Students may choose to wear either regular uniforms OR black or blue jeans only with an official Spirit Shirt.
- Pants and shorts must be secured at the waistline, not sagging and/or revealing anything underneath.
- Clothing must be free of rips and holes. This includes jeans/pants.



## MCSA/SCSA Discipline Plan 2025-2026

### Discipline Philosophy

We view discipline as a means of promoting positive character by establishing trust, respect, and productive relationships that help maintain a community of strong communicators, courageous problem solvers, and responsible citizens. In our discipline program, we strive for the full cooperation of all students, parents, teachers and school leadership, where everyone involved supports and embraces the actions necessary to maintain a culture that embodies the Mission Statement & Core Values.

**School Leadership Commitment:** School leadership will model, promote, and inspire others to support and embrace this philosophy by demonstrating respect for students, parents, teachers, and community members through the way they lead, relate, and communicate, while supporting teachers as they work to fulfill their commitment of establishing a culture of respect.

**Teacher Commitment:** Teachers will model, promote, and inspire others to support and embrace this philosophy by establishing a respectful environment where each child has a positive relationship with a caring adult, where a student is treated as an individual, and where teachers work collaboratively with all parties involved highlighting the positive in each student and holding them accountable in a fair, productive manner when expectations are not being met.

**Student Commitment:** Students will model, promote, and inspire others to support and embrace this philosophy by following school-wide and classroom expectations at all times in action and in attitude, addressing and/or reporting behaviors that are unsafe or disrespectful to themselves or others, accepting responsibility for their actions, taking steps to resolve the issue, and when necessary, accepting consequences for failing to meet expectations.

**Parent Commitment:** Parents will model, promote, and inspire others to support and embrace this philosophy by reinforcing school-wide and classroom expectations at home and by supporting staff members through communication and collaboration, helping to identify, address, and overcome any obstacles in the process.

### Response Plan for Infractions at the Elementary/Middle School Teacher Level

Teacher-Level Infractions	Recommended Response
<p><b>Failure to follow core academic expectations or directions in class</b>, including, but not limited to, not bringing classroom materials, not participating in activities, not completing work in a reasonable time frame, etc.</p>	<p><b>Step 1: Address Problem Behavior</b> -Including, but not limited to, redirection towards positive behavior, modeling &amp; reteaching appropriate behavior, private conversation with the student, visual prompts, verbal warnings, etc.</p>
<p><b>Failure to follow core <u>behavioral</u> expectations or directions in class</b>, including, but not limited to, not following general classroom procedures, talking without permission, causing minor distractions or disruptions, being disrespectful to staff in minor ways, sleeping or having head down, drinking or eating without permission (including candy and gum), etc.</p>	<p><b>Step 2: Remove Privilege</b> -Including, but not limited to, leaving class last, assigned place in line, changing seats or groups, time out, think sheet, losing participation points, being restricted from an activity and assigned an alternate activity, etc.</p> <p><b>Step 3: Contact Home</b> -Including, but not limited to, calling home, email, ParentSquare, planner/tracking card (K-8), etc.</p> <p><b>Step 4: Contact Home &amp; Assign Consequence</b> -Including, but not limited to, silent lunch, detention, etc.</p>

	<p><b>Step 5: Submit Referral to School Leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Depending on the situation, it may not be feasible to make a parent contact or assign a detention before writing a referral.</li> <li>-At any point in the process, teachers may contact school leadership with questions or concerns before officially referring a student.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Types of Student Discipline Set Forth in North Carolina Law and Code of Conduct set forth herein:</b></p> <p><b>In School Suspension (ISS):</b> students report directly to administration and stay current with assignments in an alternate location within the school building. Students who are placed in in-school suspension (ISS) may be required to turn over all electronic devices to the administration while they are in ISS. Students are not eligible for participation in school activities during the suspension period. This consequence may not be available at all times and may be exchanged for an equivalent consequence (OSS).</p> <p><b>Short-Term Suspension (OSS):</b> suspension from school, school activities and school grounds for a period of up to ten (10) school days.</p> <p><b>Disciplinary Reassignment:</b> permanent removal of a student from school due to extreme non-compliance with school expectations/rules. NCGS 115C-218.60</p> <p><b>Long-Term Suspension:</b> suspension from school, school activities and school grounds for more than ten (10) school days. NCGS 115C-390.7</p> <p><b>Expulsion-</b> Is the permanent termination of the student-school relationship. This applies only to students 14 years of age or older whose continued presence constitutes a clear threat to the safety of other students or school staff. Students considered for expulsion are entitled to a hearing before the School's Board of Directors as set forth in North Carolina statutes. NCGS 115C-390.11</p>	
<p><b><i>As circumstances warrant, the school may impose consequences more or less severe than the Class-category would suggest. The consequences in the discipline plan are <b>recommended responses</b> and may be adjusted after considering the student and the situation, including the age of the student, the severity of the infraction, the frequency of the infraction, discipline history of the student and/or a student's disability.</i></b></p>	

K-8 Response Plan for Infractions at the School Leadership Level	
Category One Infractions	Recommended Response
<p><b>1a. Classroom Tardy</b> Consequences for tardiness reset each quarter.</p> <p><b>1b. Littering on school property</b></p>	Level I (1-6 Infractions)
	Parent Contact
	Level II (7-9 Infractions)
	Detention
	Level III (10 + Infractions)
	Administrative Conference
Category Two Infractions	Recommended Response
<b>2a. Classroom Procedures Violation</b> , including, but not limited to, continuing or consistent choices to not follow general classroom procedures, not bring classroom	<b>Level I (One Infraction)</b>

<p>materials, not participate in classroom activities, not complete work in a reasonable time frame, talk without permission, disrupt or distract in minor ways, sleep or have head down, drink or eat without permission (including candy and gum), etc. This also applies to bus and cafeteria procedures. For elementary school, this infraction may also include not following dress code.</p> <p><b>2b. Irresponsible Behavior</b> leading to things such as loss or damage of a student's property, incidental physical contact or offense, concern or embarrassment of a student, if to a degree necessary to involve school leadership.</p> <p><b>2c. Irresponsible Behavior</b>, including, but not limited to, acting in a manner that is risky or unsafe for oneself or others, as well as causing messes or minor property damage, if to a degree necessary to involve school leadership. Irresponsible behavior includes unsafe driving in categories 2 and 3.</p> <p><b>2d. Dress Code Violation</b></p> <p><b>2e. Campus Procedures Violation</b>, including, but not limited to, not following all procedures for hallway movement, class transitions, lunch, arrival and dismissal, as well as taking unauthorized routes. This also includes parking violations and unauthorized food orders. This does not include related infractions in higher categories.</p> <p><b>2f. Failure to Serve Detention</b> (This infraction applies only to middle and high school students).</p> <p><b>2g. Misuse of Technology</b>, including not meeting the following technology requirements:  - Technology must remain silent and away unless explicit staff permission has been granted at that time. "Silent" refers to the absence of any kind of noise generated by the device and "away" refers to the device and accessories being completely out of sight. The instructional time requirement applies to hallways, restrooms, and other areas on campus.</p> <p>-Use of external speakers is not permitted at any time without explicit staff permission.  -In addition to receiving the recommended disciplinary response, students who are assigned a 2g infraction will be required to temporarily surrender the device to school leadership. Failure to comply will result in a "5a: Disrespect towards an Adult" infraction. After two infractions of this type, a parent may be requested to retrieve the device.</p> <p><b>2h. Excessive Display of Affection</b>, not including related infractions in higher categories (middle and high school students are permitted to hold hands and give brief hugs).</p> <p><b>2i. Possession or Unsupervised Use of Non-Prescription Medicine</b>, not including related infractions in higher categories.</p> <p><b>2j. Unauthorized Sale/Distribution of Merchandise</b>, not including related infractions in higher categories.</p>	Parent Contact
	<b>Level II (Two to Three Infractions)</b>
	<p>Elementary School:  2. Parent Conference with AP  3. Parent Conference with Principal</p> <p>Middle School:  Parent Contact/Detention</p>
	<b>Level III (Four or More Infractions)</b>
<p><b>Category Three Infractions</b></p>	<p>At least one day Out of School Suspension (OSS)*</p> <p>*When available, ISS and OSS consequences may be exchanged at the sole discretion of school leadership.</p>
	<b>Recommended Response</b>
	<b>Level I (One to Two Infractions)</b>
	<p>Elementary School:  Parent Contact/Conference</p> <p>Middle School:  Parent Contact/Detention</p>
<p><b>3a. Disrespect to an Adult</b>, including, but not limited to, being slow to comply and arguing or disputing. This does not include related infractions in higher categories.</p> <p><b>3b. Disrespect to a Student</b>, including, but not limited to, unwelcome flirting or propositions, name calling, mocking, ridiculing, insulting, taunting, slander, retaliating or excluding in any form or for any reason, throwing an object at someone in a way that is not aggressive, interacting with personal property without permission regardless of whether or not damage occurs, if to a degree that seems necessary to involve school leadership. Infractions involving physical contact and/or property damage may receive a higher-level consequence.</p> <p><b>3c. Irresponsible Behavior</b> leading to the minor injury of someone, if to a degree that seems necessary to involve school leadership.</p> <p><b>3d. Lying to an Adult or Failing to Provide Necessary Information</b>, including intentionally withholding information, giving misleading information, impeding an investigation, etc.</p>	<b>Level II (Three to Four Infractions)</b>
	At least one day OSS
	<b>Level III (Five or More Infractions)</b>

<p><b>3e. Leaving Class without Permission</b>, not including related infractions in higher categories.</p> <p><b>3f. Using or Displaying Profanity, Vulgarly or Discriminatory Language or Gestures</b> not connected to or directed towards a specific person or used in a way that may seem to be connected to or directed towards a certain person. This also applies to audio and video content, as well as content on clothing, but does not include related infractions in higher categories.</p> <p><b>3g. Possession of Profane, Vulgar, Pornographic or Graphically Violent Materials</b> in any medium, also including such images that may have been drawn or created. This does not include related infractions in higher categories.</p> <p><b>3h. Sharing, supporting, Promoting or Glorifying Offensive, Disturbing, Unethical or Illegal Activity</b> through comments, conversations, images, signals, drawings, media, attire, etc. This does not include related infractions in higher categories.</p> <p><b>3i. Possession or Unsupervised Use of One's Own Prescription Medicine</b>, not including related infractions in higher categories.</p>	At least three days OSS
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Category Four Infractions	Recommended Response
<p><b>4a. Disrespect to an Adult</b>, including, but not limited to, raising the voice, using sarcasm, mocking, slandering, ridiculing, insulting, etc.</p> <p><b>4b. Disrespect to Student</b>, including, but not limited to, unwelcome flirting or propositions, name calling, mocking, ridiculing, insulting, taunting, slandering, retaliating or excluding in any form or for any reason, throwing an object at someone in a way that is not aggressive, interacting with personal property without permission regardless of whether or not damage occurs. Must also include things like profanity, vulgarity, or discriminatory actions connected to or directed towards a person or shown to a person in a way that is unwelcome or disrespectful. Infractions involving physical contact and/or property damage may receive a higher-level consequence. This does not include related infractions in higher categories.</p> <p><b>4c. Disrespect to a Student</b>, including posturing, challenging, confronting or provoking. This may also include an attempted or minor physical contact, not serious enough to be considered a related infraction in a higher category.</p> <p><b>4d. Disruptive Behavior</b> (including display of items) that interrupts or disrupts regular school activity or learning.</p> <p><b>4e. Cutting Class</b>, not including skipping school or leaving campus without permission.</p> <p><b>4f. Unauthorized Interaction with School/Staff Property</b> in a manner that is intentional but does not directly involve theft or vandalism. This includes intentionally making messes or leaving any area in the school in disarray.</p> <p><b>4g. Misuse of Technology</b>, including, but not limited to, recording students or staff without permission, taking and/or posting pictures or recordings (audio or video), etc. without school authorization. Tech infractions that occur during an assessment will also be reviewed as a potential 4h (Cheating and Plagiarism) infraction. This does not include related infractions in higher categories. In addition to receiving the recommended disciplinary response, students who are assigned a 4g infraction will be required to temporarily surrender the device to school leadership. Failure to comply will result in a "5a: Disrespect towards an Adult" infraction.</p> <p><b>4h. Cheating &amp; Plagiarism</b> (See student handbook for definition.)</p> <p><b>4i. Congregating</b> around a fight or disruptive activity, as well as identifying or acting with a group to cause disruption, etc.</p> <p><b>4j. Instigating</b> and/or encouraging others to use aggressive actions.</p> <p><b>4k. Interfering with a Safety Drill</b> in any way, including but not limited to acting irresponsibly, failing to follow directions, or causing a disruption.</p>	<b>Level I (One to Two Infractions)</b>
	Elementary School: Parent Conference OR At least one day ISS
	Middle School: Parent Contact/Detention OR At least one day OSS
	<b>Level II (Three to Four Infractions)</b>
	At least two days OSS
	<b>Level III (Five or More Infractions)</b>
	At least four days OSS

<p><b>4l. Misrepresentation</b>, including but not limited to falsifying documents, entering an event without having paid the fee, speaking/acting as if you are someone else, etc. This does not include related infractions in higher categories.</p> <p><b>4m. Gambling</b> for money or personal property, not including related infractions in higher categories.</p>	
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Category Five Infractions	Recommended Response
<p><b>5a. Disrespect to Adult</b>, including, but not limited to, public defiance, failure to comply and/or walking away without permission when being addressed by an adult. This may also include using profanity, vulgarity, discriminatory speech or communicating in a flirtatious or suggestive manner during any interaction with an adult. This does not include related infractions in higher categories.</p> <p><b>5b. Disrespect to Student</b>, including, but not limited to, unwelcome communication of a sexual nature, particularly in a manner that seems to imply a sexual advance or sexual request. This does not include related infractions in higher categories.</p> <p><b>5c. Aggression to a Student or the School Community</b>, including any type of intimidating or threatening speech, gestures, statements of violence, or similar actions/communication. This also includes conduct/communication that results in widespread disruption to the educational process or school community. This does not include related infractions in higher categories.</p> <p><b>5d. Assault on a Student</b>, including a physical act of anger, retaliation or intimidation such as grabbing, shoving or tackling. This does not include related infractions in higher categories.</p> <p><b>5e. Leaving Campus without Permission or Skipping School</b></p> <p><b>5f. Vandalism</b> including willful and malicious property damage or defacement valued at \$100 or less.</p> <p><b>5g. Organizing a Disruptive or Disorderly Gathering</b></p> <p><b>5h. Being in an Unauthorized Area</b>, including, but not limited to, a desk, cabinet, room, building, or fenced-in area at any time when this location is considered off limits. This also includes coming onto campus while suspended.</p> <p><b>5i. Possession of a Potentially Dangerous Device</b> not considered as or used as a weapon.</p> <p><b>5j. Refusal to Allow Search</b> of personal belongings, desk, locker, car, or related areas where a student may possess something of concern to administration and where reasonable suspicion has been established. This does not include related infractions in higher categories.</p> <p><b>5k. Theft</b> of item(s) valued at \$100 or less. This also applies to someone who knowingly possesses an item stolen on campus or during a school sponsored activity off campus. Any act of taking or possessing property without the permission of the owner may be considered theft.</p> <p><b>5l. Misuse of Technology</b> to include violation of the acceptable use policy to include accessing inappropriate content and/or sexually explicit material on school grounds.</p> <p><b>5m. Committing a combination of or repeated violations (6 or more) of Lower Category Infractions.</b></p>	<b>Level I (One Infraction)</b>
	At least one day OSS
	<b>Level II (Two to Three Infractions)</b>
	At least two days OSS
	<b>Level III (Four or More Infractions)</b>
	At least five days OSS OR at least ten days OSS and Disciplinary Reassignment
Category Six Infractions	Recommended Response
<p><b>6a. Disrespect to an Adult</b>, including, but not limited to, directing profanity, vulgarity, suggestive language, or discriminatory speech toward an adult.</p> <p><b>6b. Assault on a Student</b>, including a physical act of anger, retaliation or intimidation such as spitting, smacking, slapping, kicking or hitting with an object not considered potentially dangerous. This does not include related infractions in higher categories.</p>	<b>Level I (One Infraction with no impact to minimal impact)</b>
	At least two days OSS

<p><b>6c. Misuse of Technology</b>, including, but not limited to, any form of hacking of school computers or programs and/or unauthorized access to school records or computer programs. This does not include related infractions in higher categories.</p> <p><b>6d. Possession or use of electronic cigarettes, vapor pens, or similar items</b>, but not containing nicotine or a controlled substance. For a second offense, up to 2 days of OSS may be waived from the Level III consequence if the student shows proof of substance abuse assessment and a scheduled first appointment from a substance abuse agency for counseling.</p> <p><b>6e. Theft</b> of any item valued between \$101 and \$500. This also applies to someone who knowingly possesses an item stolen on campus. Any act of taking or possessing property without the permission of the owner may be considered theft.</p> <p><b>6f. Vandalism</b> including willful and malicious property damage or defacement valued at \$101-\$500.</p>	<b>Level II (One Infraction with moderate to high impact)</b>
	At least three days OSS
	<b>Level III (Two infractions)</b>
	At least five days OSS OR at least ten days OSS and Disciplinary Reassignment
<b>Category Seven Infractions</b>	<b>Recommended Response</b>
<p><b>7a. Disrespect to an Adult</b>, including, but not limited to, making physical contact with a staff member in a way that is disrespectful but not aggressive.</p> <p><b>7b. Assault on a Student</b>, including a physical act of anger, retaliation or intimidation, such as choking or hitting with the closed fist or with an object considered potentially dangerous. This does not include related infractions in higher categories.</p> <p><b>7c. Fighting</b>, including mutually aggressive physical contact between two or more students. This does not include related infractions in higher categories.</p> <p><b>7d. Breaking and Entering</b>, including acts such as forcibly entering a building, office, classroom, locker room, locker, desk, cabinet, closet, storage container, etc.</p> <p><b>7e. Theft</b> of any item valued above \$500. This also applies to someone who knowingly possesses an item stolen on campus. Any act of taking or possessing property without the permission of the owner may be considered theft.</p> <p><b>7f. Vandalism</b>, including willful and malicious property damage or defacement valued above \$500.</p> <p><b>7g. Lighting a Fire</b> in any manner but not such that it is considered arson.</p> <p><b>7h. Inappropriate or Unwelcomed Touching</b>, including touching that is based on sex/gender, communicates a sexual message or implies a sexual advance. This does not include related infractions in higher categories.</p>	<b>Level I</b>
	N/A
	<b>Level II (One Infraction)</b>
	At least three days OSS
	<b>Level III (Two Infractions)</b>
	At least five days OSS, up to ten days OSS and Disciplinary Reassignment

<b>Category Eight Infractions</b>	<b>Recommended Response</b>
<p><b>8a. Aggression to an Adult</b>, including, but not limited to, posturing, challenging, intimidating or any type of threatening behavior. This does not include related infractions in higher categories.</p> <p><b>8b. Bullying/Harassment</b>, including, but not limited to, a <u>pattern</u> of negative behaviors directed toward a <u>particular student</u> because of one or more distinguishing characteristics of that student, including based on sex/gender, involving a real or perceived <u>power imbalance</u> and having a <u>negative impact</u> on that student's overall educational experience. This infraction includes any conduct covered by North Carolina's Bullying Statutes, currently N.C.G.S. 115C-407.15 and N.C.G.S. 14-458.1.</p> <p><b>8c. Consensual Sexual Activity</b> of any type</p> <p><b>8d. Indecent Exposure</b>, including any public exposure of private body parts to one or more persons in a manner that is irresponsible but does not overtly communicate a sexual message or imply a sexual advance. This does not include related infractions in higher categories.</p>	<b>Level I</b>
	N/A
	<b>Level II (One Infraction)</b>
	At least four days OSS
	<b>Level III (Two Infractions)</b>
	At least five days OSS OR ten days OSS and Disciplinary Reassignment
<b>Category Nine Infractions</b>	<b>Recommended Response</b>

<p><b>9a. Assault on an Adult</b>, including any physical act of anger, retaliation or intimidation. This does not include related infractions in Category Ten.</p> <p><b>9b. Verbal Aggression</b> involving plausible threats of a severe nature towards students, staff and/or other adults.</p> <p><b>9c. Affray</b> (Fight involving two or more people in a public place that significantly disturbs others).</p> <p><b>9d. Disorderly Conduct</b> (Refer to N.C. G.S. 14-288.4.)</p> <p><b>9e. Possession, distribution, sale, or use of alcohol, tobacco or similar substances</b>, including being under the influence of such substances. Up to 5 days of OSS may be waived if the student shows proof of substance abuse assessment and a scheduled first appointment from a substance abuse agency for counseling, if applicable, such that as few as 5 days of OSS remain. This applies to regular cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, vapor pens, smokeless tobacco (eg, dip/chew) and similar items.</p> <p><b>9f. Possession of chemical or drug paraphernalia.</b></p> <p><b>9g. False Alarm</b>, including, but not limited to pulling a fire alarm or calling 911, not including related infractions in Category Ten.</p> <p><b>9h. Other illegal acts</b> of similar severity to the infractions in this category.</p> <p><b>9i. Possession or use of Marijuana (includes synthetic cannabinoids and substances intended to mimic the effects of marijuana).</b> Up to 5 days of OSS may be waived if the student shows proof of substance abuse assessment and a scheduled first appointment from a substance abuse agency for counseling (resulting in as few as 5 days of OSS remaining). Subsequent infractions will revert to a level 10e.</p>	<b>Level I</b>
	N/A
	<b>Level II</b>
	N/A
	<b>Level III (One Infraction)</b>
	At least five days OSS OR ten days OSS and Disciplinary Reassignment
<b>Category Ten Infractions</b>	<b>Recommended Response</b>
<p><b>10a. Assault on a Student or Adult</b>, including, but not limited to, a violent attack that may or may not result in serious bodily injury. This may also include actions such as tampering with a person's food or drink in a manner that could cause personal harm.</p> <p><b>10b. Sexual Assault, Sexual Offense, Taking Indecent Liberties, or Indecent Exposure</b> that overtly communicates a sexual message or overtly communicates a sexual advance, including but not limited to inappropriate touching, non-consensual touching, severe or extreme sexual harassment, or sexual favors.</p> <p><b>10c. Possession of a weapon, destructive device, or firearm.</b></p> <p><b>10d. Possession, distribution, sale, or use of another person's prescription drugs, or a controlled substance (excluding marijuana)</b>, including being under the influence of such substances (also applies to counterfeit drugs). This also applies to the distribution or sale of a student's own prescription drugs.</p> <p><b>10e. Distribution, sale, or second infraction of possession of or use of marijuana</b> (includes synthetic cannabinoids and substances intended to mimic the effects of marijuana)</p> <p><b>10f. Bomb Threat, Threat of School Level Violence</b>, or similar threat, even if a false alarm.</p> <p><b>10g. Arson</b> of any type or of any scope.</p> <p><b>10h. Gang Activity or Gang-Related Activity</b>, not including infractions in lower-level categories.</p> <p><b>10i. Other illegal acts</b> of similar severity to the infractions in this category.</p> <p><b>10j. Inciting or engaging in behavior which is intended to result in widespread disruption to the educational process.</b></p> <p><b>10k. Using aggressive, intentional force or violence to take, or attempt to take, someone's property.</b></p>	<b>Level I</b>
	N/A
	<b>Level II</b>
	N/A
	<b>Level III (One Infraction)</b>
	At least ten days OSS and Disciplinary Reassignment

#### Other Considerations Regarding the Discipline Plan

It is not possible for any disciplinary policy or code to list every potential misconduct. MCSA's Student Behavior Code sets parameters for addressing inappropriate student behavior, but the school can and will impose consequences for misconduct that is not listed. School is not required to engage in progressive discipline. Some offenses, and the context in which they might occur, could call for the immediate imposition of more severe consequences such as disciplinary reassignment, long-term suspension or expulsion. MCSA follows North Carolina and federal law in imposing disciplinary consequences.

The infractions listed in the **Response Plan for Acts of Misconduct at the School Leadership Level** are not exhaustive, and any related or comparable infraction not specifically listed in the plan will be handled in a similar way as outlined above.

The consequences in the discipline plan are **recommended responses** and may be adjusted after considering the student and the situation, including the age of the student, the severity of the infraction, the frequency of the infraction, the student's disability, and/or the student's discipline history from the current school year and previous school years. See following page for additional information related to students protected by law under IDEA and in conjunction with NCGS Chapter 115C - Article 27.

Due to scope and impact, infractions that include the use of **social media** or other means of **display/dissemination** may receive an increased consequence.

If a student is assigned consequences at **Level II or higher** for infractions in **any category**, the school may remove his/her eligibility in any/all after school and extracurricular activities for a period of time.



Athletes who are suspended from school for 3 days of accrued suspensions (ISS/OSS) during the school year or who have been suspended for a single aggressive/violent incident will no longer meet eligibility requirements and will be rendered ineligible for participation in athletics. See "Athletics at MCSA" in the Appendix for more information.

Any incidents involving property damage, destruction, or loss may require **financial restitution** by the student.

In accordance with state law, a school must report the following acts to **law enforcement**: "...assault involving serious personal injury, sexual assault, sexual offense, rape, kidnapping, indecent liberties with a minor, assault involving the use of a weapon, possession of a firearm in violation of the law, possession of a weapon in violation of the law or possession of a controlled substance in violation of the law. NCGS Chapter 115C-288 (g).

When a student uses reasonable force for the purpose of preserving physical safety, this will be considered **self-defense**. Self-defense is defined as the act by a non-aggressor victim using reasonable force to avoid being hit in order to enable oneself to get free from the attacker and notify school authorities. It is not self-defense to participate in the fight. Students who exceed reasonable force in protecting themselves will be held accountable for their actions, even though another person provoked the fight. School leadership will have the discretion to recognize the need for self-defense on an incident-by-incident basis and to determine appropriateness of consequences, if any.

Suspended students (ISS/OSS) are prohibited from attending after school or evening activities on days when they are suspended as well as on non-school days and weekends that occur during the suspension period. Students on Short Term Suspension (OSS) are not permitted on school campus. Suspended students are not eligible to receive a refund for pre-paid events that occur during their suspension period. They are permitted to return to regular school activities at the beginning of the first school day following the suspension and are eligible to begin attending school-related activities on that day. Dates of suspension are non-negotiable and are assigned to occur as close to the date of the infraction as possible, as determined by school leadership. Suspended students must complete homework and class work assignments in the allotted time frame they are given. Any work not completed in the allotted time frame will be recorded in the teacher grade book as 0's.

**Disciplinary Reassignment** involves the decision to permanently remove a student from this school due to extreme non-compliance with school expectations/rules. A student that has been reassigned from MCSA is prohibited from participation in future on-campus events and is prohibited from re-enrolling in the school. Any student eligible for disciplinary reassignment may also be eligible for long-term suspension and/or expulsion as well as due process. NCGS 115C-218.60

Students may receive consequences for **an infraction that occurs off \*school grounds** if the infraction has or is reasonably likely to have a direct and/or immediate impact on the orderly, efficient operation of the school or the safety/well-being of individuals in the school environment.

**Safe Harbor:** A student on \*school grounds who inadvertently possesses or finds a weapon, illegal substance, stolen property, or an object prohibited by the MCSA Discipline Plan shall immediately notify school staff and surrender the object prior to the discovery by another person. A student may approach a school staff member and voluntarily surrender the object without being subjected to discipline.

By law, a student may be suspended for 365 days if he/she brings a firearm or destructive device onto \*school grounds.

#### **Due Process for Short Term Suspension(OSS):**

1. Upon receiving a report of a potential occurrence of any of the above violations, school administration will begin an investigation. An investigation may include interviewing witnesses, reviewing camera footage, speaking with staff members, and a search of a student, a student's locker, or a student's belongings. Refusal to permit the search will result in the assignment of consequences that are commensurate with the suspected violation. Administration will speak with the student and give the student an opportunity to deny or explain the violation.
2. Upon completion of the investigation, school administration will determine if the preponderance of the evidence weighs in favor of the violation occurring. This means that it is more likely than not that the student committed the violation. If that is the conclusion, the student will be notified of the consequence of the violation as long as notification of the student does not

pose a risk to the safety and security of other individuals on campus. If the violation is an offense which requires a report to law enforcement, the appropriate agency will be notified.

3. The school administrator will make a reasonable attempt to contact the student's parent or guardian by telephone to communicate the results of the investigation and the assigned consequences. The Administration shall also notify the parent or guardian in writing that the student has been suspended from school. The administrator shall provide a description of the incident or incidents that resulted in the suspension, and may offer the opportunity for an immediate informal conference with the principal.

4. There is no appeal of out of school suspension that is 10 days or less to the Principal or the School's Board of Directors. (NCGS § 115C-390.5. and § 115C-390.6)

5. If a student is determined to have committed a violation for which the possible consequence is exclusion or long-term suspension, the school principal will follow the procedures outlined in the section below.

**Due Process for Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion:** the School will follow the requirements set forth in North Carolina's General Statutes and any other applicable laws including but not limited to NCGS 115C-390.7, 115C-390.8, 115C-390.11

**\*School grounds** includes, but is not limited to, the main campus grounds and buildings, bus stops, buses, or vehicles used for school activities and the grounds and buildings of all school-sponsored curricular or extracurricular activities occurring off campus.

## Discipline of Students with a Disability

The obligation and the responsibility to attend school regularly and to comply with the school's code of conduct applies to all students. When appropriate, a principal or designee may discipline a student with a disability who has not complied with the school's code of conduct. Exceptional Children's education services will be provided to a student with a disability if the student has been removed from school for more than ten school days. If a student with a disability is removed for less than ten cumulative days, educational services will be provided only if such services are provided to students without disabilities who have been similarly removed. The school will follow all applicable state and federal laws when disciplining students with disabilities.

Students identified with a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or suspected of having a disability, are bound by the Discipline Policy. School leadership will follow all federal and state laws and regulations regarding the discipline of students with a disability.

**Out of school suspension**—the temporary removal of a student from the school setting where services are delivered for any part of the school day. Any time a student is denied access to any part of the educational services, regardless of the time of day, it is counted as one day of out of school suspension. Short-term removal of less than 10 school days is not a change in placement. Depending on the circumstances, cumulative suspensions in the same school year totaling more than ten days could trigger the manifestation determination process.

**Long-Term Suspension**—a removal from the school setting where services are delivered for any part of the school day for more than ten school days. If a student with an IEP is recommended for a long-term suspension, a manifestation determination meeting must be held to determine if the behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability.

**Manifestation determination**—The North Carolina Department of Education requires that the LEA, the parent, and relevant members of the child's IEP team, must meet within ten school days of any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability. If the committee determines that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability and leads to a long-term suspension for regular education students who exhibit the same behavior, a student with a disability may be given a long-term suspension. Because the student is still entitled to a free and appropriate education under IDEA, MCSA is responsible for providing services so that the student continues to participate in the general education curriculum and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the student's IEP. When a student is recommended for suspension for more than 10 days (cumulative or consecutive) and the behavior was NOT a manifestation of the disability, school leadership will follow normal disciplinary procedures.

**Exceptions** to the above in the event the behavior does meet criteria for manifestation:

The school may remove the student to an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to 45 days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability when:

- (1) The child carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at school or to a school function (does not include a pocket-knife with a blade less than 2 ½ inches in length), or
- (2) The child knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs or sells or solicits the sale of controlled substance while at school or a school function (not cigarettes or alcohol), or
- (3) The child has inflicted serious bodily injury (injury that involves substantial risk of death; extreme physical pain, protracted and obvious disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty) upon another person while at school or a school function.

An IAES must be selected by the student's IEP team and must enable the student to continue to participate in the general curriculum and to receive the services and modifications in the current IEP so that he or she can make progress toward meeting goals in the IEP. The IAES must address behavior issues and create a transition plan. Placement in an IAES can last for no more than forty-five (45) days (if the IAES is the result of removal because of drugs, weapons or serious bodily injury), unless the extension is reviewed and renewed by a hearing officer.

## Disciplinary Reassignment Appeal Form

Use this form to appeal to a decision to make a disciplinary reassignment to home LEA/program. Submit to the Principal within three business days.

**To:**

Mallard Creek STEM Academy  
9142 Browne Rd  
Charlotte, NC 28269

**Date:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**From:**

_____	Parent
_____	Student
_____	Mailing Address
_____	Telephone Number
_____	Email Address
_____	School

I wish to appeal the decision to assign my child to an alternative program for the following reason(s):

\_\_\_\_\_ Mallard Creek STEM Academy procedures, as outlined in the Parent-Student Handbook, were not followed by the school. Please explain.

\_\_\_\_\_ The disciplinary reassignment is not appropriate. Please explain.

\_\_\_\_\_ Other. Please explain.

This appeal form must be submitted within three business days of the decision, or the decision becomes final. Your child's disciplinary reassignment remains in effect pending the outcome of the appeal process.

## MCSA Bus Discipline Plan 2025-2026

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

CATEGORY	INFRACTION #1	INFRACTION #2	INFRACTION #3	INFRACTION #4	INFRACTION #5	INFRACTION #6
Category 2	Parent Contact	Parent Contact	1-Day Bus Suspension	3-Day Bus Suspension	5-Day Bus Suspension	Loss of Bus Privileges
Category 3	Parent Contact	1-Day Bus Suspension	3-Day Bus Suspension	5-Day Bus Suspension	Loss of Bus Privileges	
Category 4	1-Day Bus Suspension	3-Day Bus Suspension	5-Day Bus Suspension	Loss of Bus Privileges		
Category 5	3-Day Bus Suspension	5-Day Bus Suspension	Loss of Bus Privileges			
Category 6	5-Day Bus Suspension	Loss of Bus Privileges				
Category 7 or above	Loss of Bus Privileges					

-The category numbers above correspond with the MCSA Discipline Plan.

-Wording in the plan that refers to teacher or classroom also applies to bus driver and school bus.

-As with the MCSA Discipline Plan, the consequences above are recommended responses that may be adjusted after considering the student and the situation (including, but not limited to, the age of the student, the severity of the infraction, the frequency of the infraction, the student's disability, and/or the student's discipline history from the current school year and previous school years).

# Athletics

## Eligibility

### 1. Academic

In order to qualify to play Sports, middle school students must have passed a minimum load of work during the preceding semester to be eligible at any time during the present semester. Students must also maintain a minimum of a “C” average or 2.5 GPA to remain eligible for play.

### 2. Disciplinary

- School-assigned consequences for disciplinary infractions must be served as assigned, even if this causes a student to miss an athletic event.
- Athletes who are suspended from School for 3 days of accrued suspensions during the school year or who have been suspended for a single aggressive/violent incident will no longer meet eligibility requirements and will be rendered ineligible for participation in athletics. Upon reaching 3 days of accrued suspensions or upon a single aggressive/violent incident, a student may be placed on a disciplinary probationary period, at the conclusion of which athletic eligibility may be restored provided that the student has not committed additional disciplinary infractions during the probationary period. The duration of the probationary period is determined by the school Principal and, after consideration of the student and situation, may be reduced for a student that completes School-based remediation related to the disciplinary infraction. Should a student that has regained eligibility after the conclusion of a probationary period incur any additional suspension during the remainder of the school year, he/she will lose eligibility for the remainder of the school year.
- A student athlete that commits an infraction at or comparable to level 9 or level 10 of the MCSA Discipline Plan may lose athletic eligibility up to and including the duration of his/her enrollment at MCSA.
- School administration maintains the right to suspend or remove an athlete from the team if necessary. Athletes suspended from School may be ineligible to participate in MCSA sports for the entire year.

## Try Out/Cut Policy

All sports will have limited and fixed rosters. All students must complete a tryout in order to be eligible for a position on a team. Tryouts are competitive and are assessed utilizing a skill-based rubric.

## Levels of Competition

Middle School teams may only consist of students in 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Middle School football is limited to only 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students by NC policy.

## Physicals and Liability Waivers

All athletes must have a completed liability waiver/Parent Consent/Physical on file with the Athletic Director at MCSA before they practice. The physical is valid for 395 days and must be current until the end of a specific sport season. Students may NOT participate in athletic activities without an updated/current physical exam and liability waiver, including summer workouts. Pre-Participation Form (Physical Examination Form)

## Participating in Two or More Sports

Middle School students are eligible to participate in multiple sports in the same season. See the Athletic Director to develop a multi-sport plan.

## Expectations of Student Athletes

1. Student athletes will follow advertised practice and competition schedules All student athletes are required to wear professional attire on game days as directed by the athletic department for the entire

School Day until entry into the locker room to change for the game. Any student not meeting this expectation may be rendered ineligible for that day's game.

2. In the case of unexcused absences, athletes must be present for at least three periods of the school day in order to participate in a sporting event (practice or game) that afternoon/evening.
3. Student athletes must leave campus and return if practice or game times are not immediately after School. Exceptions are staying on campus for monitored study halls or scheduled/monitored team pre-game activities.
4. For team-level infractions, consequences will be adjudicated by the coach, up to and including potential loss of playing time.
5. Conducting student-led team meetings to discuss non-athletic issues and/or individual students is expressly prohibited.

### **Expectations of Parents/Guardians of Student Athletes**

1. Ensure that student athletes have on-time transportation to and from all practices and games. Although bus transportation may be provided, that transportation may only be one-way. Bus drivers should not be expected to stay late for students to be dropped off or picked up.
2. Follow a chain of communication guidelines set forth in the Parent/Student Handbook (e.g., student/parent, coach, Athletic Director), schedule communication away from game times, and adhere to any closed practice guidelines.
3. Volunteer for sideline, admission, or concession needs at games. The number of times a parent/guardian is expected to volunteer depends on team size and volunteer needs but will always allow several games for parents to simply be spectators/fans. Student participation in extracurricular activities is not possible without parent/guardian assistance.
4. Follow expectations for all visitors attending School-sponsored events on or off campus.

### **Dressing/Locker Rooms**

Only IN-SEASON teams are allowed to use the Athletic Lockers. Athletic department staff will supervise their dressing facilities. Custodians are expected to clean dressing rooms daily but are not expected to pick up equipment and clothing left nor trash not in receptacles left behind by athletes. Students are not permitted to wear cleats inside the buildings or walk across the gym floor. Athletes are encouraged to secure all valuables. The athletic department will not be responsible for lost or stolen personal belongings. To protect student safety, phones/cameras are never to be used in locker rooms.

### **Athletic Training**

MCSA follows the guidelines in the Gfeller-Waller Concussion Awareness act regarding concussion protocol.

### **Athletics and After School Meals**

The athletic department will not provide funds to purchase pre-game meals, post-game meals, or overnight accommodations unless covered by the NCHSAA or prior approval is granted from the Athletic Director and principal. Team parents can be organized to help with pre-game meals for the season. In the event that team meals are facilitated by parents, the families of any participating student will be expected to contribute.

### **Transportation**

A valid driver's license, clear background check, and copies of the driver's license and valid insurance cards are needed in order to drive student athletes to games. Players are permitted to ride home with their parents provided the coach is informed by the player and/or parent. Parents must give permission for their child to ride with other parents. Students are only permitted to drive other students when the driver is legally licensed, and both sets of parents/guardians have provided permission to the coaching staff of this agreed upon arrangement.

### **Inclement Weather**

On the first day Schools are closed due to inclement weather conditions, all School activities shall be suspended. This rule applies to all games, practices, rehearsals, etc.

### **Game Postponement/Rescheduling**

The Athletic Director shall handle all games postponed because of inclement weather or other extenuating circumstances. Postponed conference games must be played on the next available playing date and at the discretion of the home team. If a Saturday date is selected, both teams must agree to play on that date. Once the opponents have been contacted and the contest has been rescheduled, the following shall be notified immediately:

- School Leadership
- Athletic Director
- Booking Agent or Authority if not on campus
- Announcement to athletes and student body, media, police, volunteers, announcer, and Athletic Trainers

### **Financial Obligations**

Participation fee payment and late policies are set forth in the MCSA Financial Policy. Also, all athletes are required to replace lost uniforms or damaged equipment either by payment or with the equivalent of the lost article. Athletes are responsible for clearing all obligations with their coaches before participating or practicing with another sport (good standing).

### **MCSA Titan Community Alliance**

The MCSA TCA is a part of our parent organization that assists the School, specifically the athletic department in providing the resources necessary to operate and manage our games and events, to help provide a great playing experience for our student athletes and to develop a fun fan atmosphere so students, parents, faculty, and staff enjoy supporting athletics. The Boosters generate revenues through a variety of programs to help fund the strength and growth of the MCSA athletic program.

Families, students, fans, and alumni can support Rockets Athletics in a variety of ways. Game Day Support has many opportunities where student-athlete families and Boosters can assist! These include on-field / court assistance, concessions, admissions, team meals, etc.! Contact your coach or look for signups throughout the year. Attending one of our Boosters meetings to learn more!



# **Appendix**

## **Non-Title IX Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Complaint Process**

### **Equal Education Opportunities**

The school provides equal education opportunities for all students and does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, sex, disability, nationality, religious affiliation or any other protected class. The school adheres to the legal obligations and requirements under all state and federal laws, including without limitation, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Individuals with Disabilities Act Amendments of 1997, including identification, evaluation, and provision of an appropriate education.

The school takes all complaints of discrimination, harassment, and bullying. The process provided in this policy is designed for those individuals who believe that they may have been discriminated against unlawfully, bullied, or harassed in violation of the School's Equal Education Opportunities Policy. Individuals who have witnessed or have reliable information that another person has been subject to unlawful discrimination, harassment, or bullying also should report such violations in the manner provided in this policy. Reports may be made anonymously, and reports do not need to be made in a particular format or on a particular form. This policy applies to all discrimination, harassment or bullying on the basis of race (including Title VI), disability (including Section 504), nationality, religious affiliation or any other protected class.

This policy does not apply where an individual seeks to assert allegations regarding or related to the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or free appropriate public education of a student under Section 504 or the IDEA, such allegations may be raised through the procedures governing such matters. This Policy also does not apply to Title IX complaints, behavior falling within Title IX or Title VII complaints. Please refer to the School's Title IX policies for Title IX and VII matters.

If you have any questions as to what complaint process to use to address your concern, please contact the Principal or Title IX Coordinator, who will direct you to the proper process.

### **Reporting by Employees or Other Third Parties**

#### **1. Mandatory Reporting by The School Employees**

Any employee who witnessed or who has reliable information or reason to believe that an individual may have been discriminated against, harassed, or bullied in violation of The School Non-Title IX Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy must report the offense immediately to an appropriate individual designated in subsection B.1., below. An employee who does not promptly report possible discrimination, harassment, or bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

#### **2. Reporting by Other Third Parties**

All members of the school community including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors are also strongly encouraged to report any act that may constitute an incident of discrimination, harassment, or bullying.

#### **3. Anonymous Reporting**

Reports of discrimination, harassment, or bullying may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

#### **4. Investigation of Reports**

Reports of discrimination, harassment, or bullying under this policy will be investigated sufficiently to determine whether further action under this policy or otherwise is necessary, and The School officials shall take such action as appropriate under the circumstances. From the option of the alleged victim, the report may be treated as a complaint by the alleged victim under this policy.

## **Complaints Brought by Alleged Victims of Discrimination, Harassment, or Bullying**

### **1. Filing a Complaint**

Any individual who believes that he or she has been discriminated against, harassed, or bullied in violation of the School's Non-Title IX Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy is strongly encouraged to file a complaint orally or in writing to the following individuals as applicable:

- the school counselor, teacher, dean of students, principal, or assistant Executive Director of the school for any claim of discrimination, harassment, or bullying, including Title VI complaints.
- the Title IX coordinator for claims of sex discrimination or sexual harassment.
- the Section 504 coordinator or the ADA coordinator for claims of discrimination on the basis of a disability; or
- any member of the Board if the alleged perpetrator is the principal.

### **2. Time Period for Filing a Complaint**

A complaint should be filed as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after disclosure or discovery of the facts giving rise to the complaint. Complaints submitted after the 30-day period may be investigated at the discretion of The School officials and outside the formal process described in Section C of this policy; however, individuals should recognize that delays in reporting may significantly impair the ability of The School officials to investigate and respond to such complaints.

### **3. Informal Resolution**

The school acknowledges that many complaints may be addressed informally through such methods as conferences or mediation. The school encourages the use of informal procedures such as mediation to the extent possible; however, mediation or other informal procedures will not be used to resolve complaints alleging sexual assault or sexual violence or complaints by a student of sexual harassment perpetrated by an employee. Informal procedures may be used only if the parties involved voluntarily agree. Any informal process should be completed within a reasonable period of time, not to exceed 30 days unless special circumstances necessitate more time.

## **Process for Addressing Complaints of Alleged Incidents of Discrimination, Harassment, or Bullying**

### **1. Initiating the Investigation**

- a. Whoever receives a complaint of discrimination, harassment, or bullying pursuant to subsection B.1. shall immediately notify the Principal or Principal who shall designate an individual to conduct an investigation and respond to the complaint, such individual may be a The School employee or outside consultant.
- b. As applicable, the investigator shall immediately notify Title IX, or other relevant coordinator of the complaint, and, as appropriate, may designate the coordinator to conduct the investigation.
- c. The investigator shall explain the process of the investigation to the complainant and the alleged perpetrator.
- d. Written documentation of all formal reports and complaints, as well as the school system's response, must be maintained in accordance with the School's Non-Title IX Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy.
- e. Failure to report, investigate, and/or address claims of discrimination, harassment, or bullying may result in disciplinary action.

### **2. Conducting the Investigation**

- a. The investigator is responsible for determining whether the alleged act(s) constitutes a violation of the Non-Title IX Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy. In so doing, the investigator shall impartially, promptly, and thoroughly investigate the complaint. The investigator shall interview (1) the complainant; (2) the alleged perpetrator(s); (3) individuals identified as witnesses by the complainant or alleged perpetrator(s); and (4) any other individuals, including other possible victims,

deemed likely to have relevant information. The alleged perpetrator shall be notified of the general nature of the allegations. The investigation will include a review of all evidence presented by the complainant and/or alleged perpetrator.

If the investigator, after receipt of the complaint, an interview with the complainant, and consultation with the board attorney, determines that the allegations submitted, even if factual, do not constitute discrimination, harassment, or bullying as defined in The School's Non-Title IX Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy, the matter will be treated outside the scope of this policy. Information regarding the investigator's determination and the process for addressing the complaint will be provided to the complainant.

- b. The complaint and investigation will be kept confidential to the extent possible. Information may be shared only with individuals who need the information in order to investigate and address the complaint appropriately and those with a legal right to access the information. Any requests by the complainant for further confidentiality will be evaluated within the context of the legal responsibilities of the school system.
- c. The investigator shall review the factual information gathered through the investigation to determine whether, based on a preponderance of the evidence, the alleged conduct constitutes discrimination, harassment, or bullying, giving consideration to all factual information, the context in which the alleged incidents occurred, the age, and maturity of the complainant and alleged perpetrator(s), and any other relevant circumstances.

### 3. Notice to Complainant and Alleged Perpetrator

a. The investigator shall provide written notification to the complainant of the results of the investigation within 15 days of receiving the complaint, unless additional time is necessary to conduct an impartial, thorough investigation. The investigator shall specify whether the complaint was substantiated and, if so, shall also specify:

- 1) reasonable, timely, age-appropriate, corrective action intended to end the discrimination, harassment, or bullying, and prevent it from recurring.
- 2) as needed, reasonable steps to address the effects of the discrimination, harassment, or bullying on the complainant; and
- 3) as needed, reasonable steps to protect the complainant from retaliation as a result of communicating the complaint.

b. Information regarding specific disciplinary action imposed on the alleged perpetrator(s) will not be given to the complainant unless the information relates directly to the complainant (e.g., an order requiring the perpetrator not to have contact with the complainant).

c. If the investigator determines that the complaint was substantiated, the perpetrator(s) shall be subject to discipline or other corrective steps, as set forth in The School policy. If the corrective steps involve actions outside the scope of the investigator's authority, the Principal or designer will be notified so that responsibility for taking the corrective steps may be delegated to the appropriate individual.

d. The alleged perpetrator will be provided with a written summary of the results of the investigation in regard to whether the complaint was substantiated, whether the alleged perpetrator violated relevant law or The School policies by his or her actions, and what, if any, disciplinary actions or consequences may be imposed upon the perpetrator in

accordance with The School policy. The perpetrator may appeal any disciplinary action or consequence in accordance with any The School's policy governing disciplinary action. However, an appeal by the perpetrator of disciplinary action does not preclude The School officials from taking appropriate action to address the discrimination, harassment, or bullying.

### 4. Appeal

a. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, he or she may appeal the decision to the principal. The appeal must be submitted in writing within ten days of receiving the notice of the results of the investigation. The appeal must state with particularity whether the complainant is

appealing (1) the investigator's determination of whether the alleged conduct constitutes discrimination, harassment, or bullying in violation of the School's Non-Title IX Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy, or (2) the School's response to any violation, including the appropriateness of any remedial measures taken by the School. If the complainant is appealing pursuant to option (2), he or she must state what additional measures the complainant believes should have been taken by the school. The Principal or Executive Director or designee may review the documents, conduct any further investigation necessary, or take any other steps the Principal or designee determines to be appropriate in order to respond to the complaint. The Principal or Principal or designee shall provide a written response within 10 days after receiving the appeal unless further investigation is needed. The principal or Principals decision is final.

b. If the alleged perpetrator is the Principal or the Principal declines to hear the appeal and refers it to the Board Representative, the complainant may appeal the decision in writing within ten days of receipt directly to the Board Representative. The appeal must state with particularity whether the complainant is appealing the Principal or Principal's decision with regard to (1) the investigator's determination of whether the alleged conduct constitutes discrimination, harassment, or bullying in violation of The School's Non-Title IX Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy, or (2) the School's response to any violation, including the appropriateness of any remedial measures taken by the School. If the complainant is appealing pursuant to option (2), he or she must state what additional measures the complainant believes the school should have taken. Upon receipt of the appeal, the Board Representative shall appoint a panel of not less than two members of the Board to hear and decide the appeal. The panel shall make reasonable efforts to meet and consider the appeal within twenty days after the chairperson refers the grievance to the panel. The panel shall review the complaint on the record unless it determines that additional information may be presented. No new evidence, written or verbal, may be presented without the prior knowledge and consent of both parties. At the Board Panel's discretion, they may hold a hearing and ask each party to make a brief oral presentation of no more than twenty minutes to summarize his or her position. The panel has the authority to ask questions, extend time limits, exclude extraneous or duplicative information, and otherwise maintain an efficient and fair appeal of hearing. If a hearing is held, it will be recorded and shall be held in closed session. The Board panel may affirm, reverse, or modify the decision. The Board panel shall use the preponderance of the evidence standard in reaching its decision. The Board panel will provide a final written decision within twenty days after the Board hearing unless the panel determines that additional time is needed for further review. The decision of the Board panel shall be final.

### **Timeliness of Process**

If any School official charged with investigating the complaint or reviewing the investigation fails at any step in the process to communicate a decision within the specified time limit, the complainant will be entitled to appeal the complaint to the next step unless the official has notified the complainant of the delay and the reason for the delay. The school official shall make reasonable efforts to keep the complainant apprised of progress being made during any period of delay. Delays that interfere with the exercise of any legal rights are not permitted.

Failure by the complainant at any step in the process to appeal to the next step within the specified time or to attend a scheduled meeting or hearing under this policy will be considered acceptance of the results of the investigation and the School's response to the complaint, unless the complainant provided notice of the delay and the reason for the delay and the School consented in writing to the delay.

### **General Requirements**

1. No reprisals or retaliation of any kind will be taken by the Board or by any The School employee against the complainant or other individual on account of his or her filing a complaint or report or participating in an investigation of a complaint or report filed and decided pursuant to this policy. Disciplinary or other action may be taken against the complainant or other individual if the person knew or had reason to believe that the complaint or report was false or knowingly provided false information.
2. All meetings and hearings conducted pursuant to this policy will be private.

3. The complainant may be represented by an advocate, such as an attorney, at any meeting with the school under this policy. Should the complainant choose to be represented by an attorney, an attorney for the school may also be present.
4. Nothing in this policy shall prevent the Principal or Board from suspending the alleged perpetrator without pay during the course of the investigation or taking any other action deemed appropriate where the alleged perpetrator is an employee.

### **Records**

Records will be maintained as required by The School's Non-Title IX Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy.

\*Southwest Charlotte STEM Academy and Mallard Creek STEM Academy are governed by the same Board of Directors, Alliance Preparatory Schools, Inc. and therefore have equivalent policies and procedures contained herein. Please excuse any accidental mistitling as the policies and procedures are designed to support both schools as written.

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