

# NEW BOSTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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## Parent-Student Handbook



**2024 - 2025**



**Mercer County School District #404**  
**District Office: 309-582-2238**  
**New Boston Elementary: 309-587-8141**  
**Mercer County Junior High: 309-584-4171 Ext. 6**

[www.mercerschools.org](http://www.mercerschools.org)

# District Mission Statement

Mission Statement MCSD #404, in an active partnership with family and community, shall provide a positive environment in order to promote excellence in education, enabling students to become respectful, productive, and responsible citizens.

New Boston Elementary School  
301 Jefferson Street  
New Boston, Illinois 61272

Phone: 309-587-8141  
Fax: 309-587-3349

This handbook has been approved by the Mercer County School District Board of Education. This handbook is not a contract and is subject to change at the discretion of the administration. This handbook reflects the status of the rules and procedures currently in practice and is subject to change.

## **New Boston Elementary Vision Statement**

Creating a respectful community of personal excellence and determination.

## **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to develop a sense of determination and leadership in our students, so they may become productive members of their community.

## **Motto**

Soaring to excellence

## **Core Values**

**Excel and  
Achieve your  
Goals  
Lead your peers  
Everyday have fun  
Show your pride**



**We are**

**The New Boston Golden Eagles.**

**Our school colors are navy blue and Las Vegas gold.**

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# New Boston Elementary Staff

## Administration

- **Superintendent:** Mr. Tim Farquer
- **Principal:** Dr. Teresa Ibouhouten

## Teaching Staff

### Kindergarten:

- Mrs. Jennifer Olson
- Mrs. Erin O'Donnell

### Grade 1

- Mrs. Kaylie Meyers
- Miss Kyrstin Plohr

### Grade 2

- Mrs. Cassy Bieri
- Mrs. Brooke Heath

### Grade 3

- Miss Hannah Callahan
- Mrs. Miranda Nimrick

### Grade 4

- Mrs. Pam Carey
- Mrs. Michaela Matlick

### Grade 5

- Mr. Sam Jones
- Mrs. Trudi Shepard

### Specials

- **Physical Education:**  
Mrs. Jamie Breeden
- **STEM & Art:** Mrs. Samantha Duncan
- **Music Teacher:** Mr. Crispin Fornoff

### Special Education

- **District Coordinator:** Mrs. Becky McPeek
- **K-1:** Mrs. Amy Hofer
- **2-3:** Mrs. Andrea Gatton
- **4-5:** Mrs. Aleeka Holmes

## Office

- **Secretary:** Mrs. Tonya LeHew
- **Nurse:** Mrs. Holly Lamkin

## Paraeducators

- Mrs. Cinda Bly
- Mrs. Kylee Busch
- Mrs. Patty Callahan
- Miss Hali DeFrieze
- Mrs. Deb Giles
- Miss Nikole Lenz
- Mrs. Connie Sabel
- Ms. Carlene Sell
- Mrs. Paula Smith

## Library Clerk & Aide

- Ms. Jennifer Hockenberry

## Support Staff

### Custodian

- Ms. Tiffany Daum
- Ms. Lyla Giles
- Mrs. Pam Nelson

### Cafeteria

- Mrs. Teresa Schell
- Ms. Wendy Hermanson

## Other Services

- **Speech & Language Pathologist:**  
Ms. Caitlyn Merkel
- **Title I Reading Specialist:**  
Mrs. Amy Molburg
- **SEL Teacher:** Mrs. Shannon Sedam
- **Math Interventionist:**  
Mrs. Ashley Stice
- **Social Worker:** Mrs. Jessie Thomson
- **SRO:** Officer Brian Evins

## District Calendar



### Mercer County School District Calendar Description 2024-2025

**\*\*2PM Dismissal every Wednesday\*\***

August 6, 2024	~	Registration 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
August 13, 2024	~	NO SCHOOL Teachers' Institute
August 14, 2024	~	NO SCHOOL Teachers' Institute
August 15, 2024	~	1st Day of School - 2:00 PM Dismissal
September 2, 2024	~	NO SCHOOL LABOR DAY
October 18, 2024	~	End of 1st quarter
October 24, 2024	~	NO SCHOOL PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES
October 25, 2024	~	NO SCHOOL PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES
November 5, 2024	~	NO SCHOOL ELECTION DAY
November 26, 2024	~	2PM HOLIDAY DISMISSAL
November 27, 2024	~	NO SCHOOL THANKSGIVING BREAK
November 28, 2024	~	NO SCHOOL THANKSGIVING DAY
November 29, 2024	~	NO SCHOOL THANKSGIVING BREAK
December 20, 2024	~	2:00 DISMISSAL-End of 2nd quarter/ 1st semester
Dec. 23, 2024-Jan. 3, 2025	~	NO SCHOOL WINTER BREAK
January 6, 2025	~	NO SCHOOL Full Day Inservice
January 7, 2025	~	CLASSES RESUME
January 20, 2025	~	NO SCHOOL MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY
February 17, 2025	~	NO SCHOOL PRESIDENTS DAY
March 14, 2025	~	End of 3rd quarter
March 17 - March 21, 2025	~	NO SCHOOL SPRING BREAK
April 17, 2025	~	2:00 HOLIDAY DISMISSAL
April 18, 2025	~	NO SCHOOL EASTER BREAK
April 21, 2025	~	NO SCHOOL EASTER BREAK (Emergency Day)
May 18, 2025	~	HS Graduation
May 22, 2025	~	End of 4th Quarter/ 2nd Semester
May 22, 2025	~	Last Day of School - 2:00 PM DISMISSAL
May 23, 2025	~	NO SCHOOL Teachers' Institute
May 26, 2025	~	NO SCHOOL MEMORIAL DAY
May 27, 2025	~	Emergency Day
May 28, 2025	~	Emergency Day
May 29, 2025	~	Emergency Day
May 30, 2025	~	Emergency Day

## Daily Schedule

7:35 – Students who do not ride a bus to school may enter the building. The breakfast program will begin serving at this time.

7:55 – Students need to be in the building. First bell rings.

8:05 – Second bell rings.

8:05 – Announcements

3:05 – Dismissal, 1<sup>st</sup> busses leave

3:05 – Walkers are dismissed

3:35 – Late busses leave

**Note:** Individual class schedules vary on a daily basis as well as from grade to grade.

## Registration

Registration is typically held approximately two weeks prior to the beginning of the school year. Please watch for announcements through the local media. At this time, you will be required to furnish the following:

- Documentation of a physical examination and all necessary immunizations, if your student is
  - Entering kindergarten
  - Entering Illinois schools for the first time

The examination must be done within one year prior to each of these entrance dates by a physician practicing within the state of Illinois. Kindergarten students are also required to have vision exams, dental exams, and a lead screening.
- A copy of your child’s official birth certificate (if not already on file). Official birth certificates are issued by the county courthouse, NOT the hospital.
- Payment of registration fees (**currently \$55 per student**). If you are unable to make the registration payment at the time of registration, you should go to the District Office to make arrangements for payment before you come to New Boston.
- Be prepared to fill out a registration card containing updated information about your child, your residence, your phone number (home and work), and emergency care information. You will need to provide a current phone number of the person who will accept responsibility for your child should the school be unable to reach you. Please let us know immediately if any of these phone numbers change. This person must be available during school hours.
- Bring personal information about your student regarding any health conditions that might require special care, medication, PE restrictions, etc.
- Signatures indicating agreement with the Mercer County District Internet Acceptable Use Policy, permission to have your child photographed for various recognition/publicity purposes, and field trip permission form.

## Insurance

Students are offered accident insurance as a school service found on the district website ([click here](#)). Neither the school nor any school employee profits from it. The plan is strictly voluntary. Cost, coverage, and payment information is available from the New Boston office at the time of registration. All accident report forms are filed with the New Boston office immediately following the accident occurrence. The office will keep a copy of the accident report and provide a copy to parents upon request. Insurance claim forms are provided by the student health insurance provider

## Student Attendance & Procedures

### Absences

- If a student arrives 30 minutes or later after the start of the school day, that absence will be recorded as a half day absence.
- If a student leaves with more than 30 minutes left at the conclusion of the school day, that absence will be recorded as a half day absence.
- When students are absent from school for any reason (other than pre-arranged), a phone call must be made to the school office the morning of the absence, preferably prior to 8:30 A.M. When not notified of an absence, state law requires the school to make attempts to contact the parents. If contact is not made with the school, the child must bring a note written by the parent to the office the day he/she returns. The note must clearly state the reason for absence.
- If your child is absent and you request that makeup homework be gathered to be picked up from the office please give the teacher a reasonable amount of time to do this. If not prearranged, students are responsible for getting make-up work and completing it. Students will be allowed one (1) additional day, plus the number of days absent to complete missing work.

### Tardies

- The school day starts at 8:05. If a student arrives within 30 minutes of the beginning of the school day, that will be counted as a tardy.
- The school day ends at 3:05 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday) and at 2:05 on Wednesday. If a student leaves with less than 30 minutes left at the conclusion of the school day, that will be counted as a tardy.
- Should a student accrue five or more tardies within a semester, those tardies will then be counted as a half day absence

### Truancy

Students are allowed five (5) parent call-in days per semester. These call-in days may be used for any reason the student is not in attendance at school. There are only two exemptions for an excused absence: a death in the immediate family or a visit to the doctor's office for the student with an excusal from the doctor for that date. These excusals do not count toward a parent call-in or truancy. Once a student has missed five days or used all of their parent call-ins, the student will then be considered truant by the state and district. Truant days continue throughout the year.

- Guidelines for truant students: (after all five call-ins have been used per semester)
  - o 3 days truant (8 total)
    - Letter sent to the parents/guardians from the Regional Office of Education
    - Student is referred to the Regional Office of Education for truancy
  - o 6 days truant (11 total)
    - Second letter sent to the parents/guardians from the Regional Office of Education
    - Student is again referred to the Regional Office of Education for truancy
    - Regional Office of Education will make contact with the parents/guardian
  - o 9 days truant (14 total)
    - The parent/guardian will be issued a citation from the Regional Office of Education
  - o 12 days truant (17 total)
    - Third letter sent to the parents/guardians from the Regional Office of Education
    - Contact made from truancy intervention and liaison officer from the Regional Office of Education
  - o 15 days truant (20 total)
    - A Legal Notice to Appear will be sent to appear before the Truancy Review Board
  - o 18 days truant (23 total)
    - Upon any additional unexcused absences after the Truancy Review Board a petition to the State Attorney of the County resided in will be filed



## Emergency School Closings

Parents will be notified of emergency school closings through a phone notification system as well as announcements through local media. Radio stations include: WRMJ (102.3FM), WRAM (1330AM), WMOI (97.7FM), and TV stations include: KWQC, WHBF, and WQAD. It is recommended that parents have plans in place for emergency closings about what your child is to do in such events.

## Request for Early Dismissal

To ensure safety, teachers will not release any student from the classroom during the school day without authorization from the office. Parents who need to speak with or pick up their student(s) during school hours **MUST CHECK IN** at the school office. Their student(s) will then be called to the office. **Parent or guardian must sign and date the Student Arrival & Departure record book in the office.** Anyone picking up a student may be requested to show identification.

## Transportation to and from School

Students who regularly ride the bus, walk, or are picked up by their parent after school, are not to leave school in any other manner unless written permission, signed by a parent, is received by the teacher.

- If an emergency arises and a parent must make a change in the location of after-school care or supervision, school officials must be notified immediately of the change.
- It is preferred that the office is notified no later than 2:30 to make sure that students, teachers, and transportation personnel can be notified in a timely manner. Without proper notification, a student will be sent home according to the regular schedule and location.

## Parent Parking & Pick-up

\*Please look for TeacherEase communication for transportation changes as we are still working with construction needs this year

- **Car Riders:** Please drop off and pick up students at the Main Entrance (South doors) of NBE
- **Bus Riders:** Will be dropped off on the new NorthWest Doors. This is where the Junior High and High School students will catch the shuttle bus as well.

## Parent and Community Complaints Regarding Transportation

It is permissible for parents to talk with the Transportation Supervisor about daily route changes or to ask questions about route times. However, all parent and community complaints should be directed to the Transportation Director, not the Transportation Supervisor.


- School bus transportation is provided to those students living one and one half miles or more from a school building.
- Courteous behavior is the standard while riding on a school bus, the same as in a classroom. Misbehavior will be reported to the bus contractor, and in turn to the building principal and superintendent. Misbehavior could result in suspension from riding the bus.
- **By signing off that you have received and read this handbook, you have given the school district the right to audiotape and/or videotape your child for safety purposes while he/she is riding the bus. These tapes may be viewed by school administration and may be used to address safety/discipline issues.**

## Student Conduct and Discipline

One of the more important lessons education should teach is self-discipline. It is the shared responsibility of the home and school to accomplish this goal. Effective training develops self-control, character, orderliness, and efficiency. Self-discipline is the key to good conduct and proper consideration for other people and their property. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that will promote a safe, orderly learning environment for all. Any behavior which causes the learning atmosphere to be disrupted, or which infringes upon the rights of others in the school, will not be tolerated.

### School-Wide Expectations for Student Behavior at New Boston Elementary

New Boston Elementary students are expected to be <sup>1</sup>Super Respectful, <sup>2</sup>Organized and Prepared, <sup>3</sup>Always Safe, and <sup>4</sup>Responsible. The below chart shows how those behaviors look in various situations - it is not an exhaustive list and may change during the year based on feedback.

<b>New Boston Eagles S.O.A.R</b>						
	Classroom 	Hallways 	Media Center 	Cafeteria 	Playground 	Buses 
<b>We are... Super Respectful</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses kind words: please, thank you, excuse me</li> <li>Follow directions of adults</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeps hands off the wall</li> <li>Keeps hands &amp; arms to self</li> <li>Uses own locker</li> <li>Follow directions of adults</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waits in line to check out books</li> <li>Respects the books and uses them appropriately</li> <li>Follow directions of adults</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stands in a line while waiting</li> <li>Does not cut line</li> <li>Talks only with people in your table section</li> <li>Follow directions of adults</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses kind words</li> <li>Plays cooperatively                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include everyone</li> <li>Invite others to play</li> <li>Share all equipment</li> <li>Share all toys</li> </ul> </li> <li>Follow directions of adults</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listens and obeys the driver's directions</li> <li>Enters and exits the bus quietly</li> <li>Follow directions of adults</li> </ul>
<b>We are... Organized and Prepared</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completes all assigned work</li> <li>Stays on task</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stays in line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses shelf markers appropriately</li> <li>Returns books to proper shelf</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeps food on tray</li> <li>Gets all silverware, napkins, and food before sitting down</li> <li>Pour liquids in the bucket at clean-up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dress for the weather</li> <li>Brings all needed equipment</li> <li>Lines up                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when 3 long whistles are blown</li> <li>On classroom's line</li> <li>Face forward &amp; quiet</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has materials zipped in backpack</li> <li>Leaves nothing on the bus</li> </ul>
<b>We are... Always Safe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walks in the building</li> <li>Uses chairs correctly</li> <li>Uses materials and supplies safely</li> <li>Keeps hands and feet to themselves</li> <li>Reports bullying</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Faces forward</li> <li>Walks on the right side of the hallway</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses computers safely</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stays in assigned seat/area</li> <li>Does not save seats</li> <li>Welcomes others to sit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses equipment correctly                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bottoms on the swing</li> <li>Bottoms on slide with feet out front</li> </ul> </li> <li>Stays in boundaries                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Always get an adult to go outside the fence or near the road</li> <li>Game ends when 3 balls are hit outside the fence</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walks to seat</li> <li>Stays in seat</li> </ul>
<b>We are... Responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cleans up after themselves</li> <li>Keeps track of their belongings</li> <li>Follows school dress expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Goes directly to assigned location</li> <li>Keeps track of belongings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reports damaged or lost books</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cleans up eating area</li> <li>Throws leftovers in trash</li> <li>Stacks tray on cart</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeps track of belongings</li> <li>Reports broken equipment to adult on duty</li> <li>Returns equipment to the shopping cart.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cleans up area before leaving</li> <li>Keeps track of belongings</li> </ul>

## Consequences

When students fail to meet expectations, consequences should be expected. Depending on the severity and frequency of misbehavior, and the age of the student, consequences may be any one or more of the following, or others as deemed appropriate in specific situations:

- Verbal correction from adult supervisor/teacher
- Student self-reflection on behavior
- Change in seating or line-up arrangement
- Recess modification
- Temporary denial of special privileges or preferred activities
- Temporary denial of incentives or rewards
- Natural consequences related to misbehavior (cleaning up mess, writing an apology, etc.)
- Communication with parent via note, telephone call, or conference
- Referral to counselor
- Referral to principal's office
- Time-out from the classroom (short-term detention)
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Behavioral contract agreement
- Referral to outside agency
- One-on-one mentoring with staff member

Expulsion This list does not necessarily represent a continuum of consequences that will be applied in the order listed. It does, however, represent a menu of consequences from which school personnel may select.

## Suspension and Expulsion Policies

Two types of suspension are possible. One is the in-school suspension (or alternative educational placement) when the student remains in an assigned school area to complete assignments under the supervision of a staff member. An out-of-school suspension may be assigned by the building principal at his/her discretion, up to a maximum of 10 days. All out-of-school suspensions will be treated as unexcused absences. Parents will be notified prior to the suspension. They will be given a full statement of the reasons for the suspension and the beginning and ending dates of the suspension. They will also be advised of a right to an appeal to the District Superintendent, and then to the Board of Education, if needed. The decision of the Board of Education is final. Students serving out-of-school suspension time are not permitted on school property and may not participate or attend any school activity. Before the student returns to school, a conference with the parents may be arranged.

A student may be suspended for the following:

1. Use or possession of prohibited drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.
2. Use or possession of a weapon, or any object that can reasonably be considered, or looks like, a weapon.
3. Gross disobedience or misconduct, including but not limited to the following:
  - a. behavior which is injurious to persons or property, or intended as such
  - b. behavior which substantially and materially disrupts the educational process or discipline in the school
  - c. minor incidents of misbehavior that other disciplinary measures have failed to deter
  - d. gross disrespect of teachers, staff or administration

A recommendation for expulsion may occur as a result of a third suspension in the academic year or for gross disobedience or misconduct showing a clear and flagrant disregard for the educational process. The student may be temporarily suspended from school pending a hearing before the Board of Education to determine the outcome of the case. Board of Education policy will govern the procedures, and a copy of the policy will be made available to the student and his/her parents at the same time he/she is advised that a recommendation for expulsion is to be made.

## Other Discipline

### Special Education Students - Discipline

The District shall comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 and the Illinois State Board of Education's Special Education rules when disciplining special education students. No special education student shall be expelled if the student's particular act of gross disobedience or misconduct is a manifestation of his or her disability.

### Appropriate Language

Students should speak and converse appropriately for a school setting. Swearing, profanity, vulgar, suggestive or threatening expressions may result in a severe penalty.

Students will not use any form of aggressive behavior that does physical or psychological harm to someone else. Students will not urge other students to engage in such conduct. Prohibited aggressive behavior includes, but is not limited to, the use of violence, force, noise, coercion, threats, intimidation, fear, bullying, or other comparable

### Damage to Property

Students who damage property, unless by accident, will be required to pay for the damages done, which includes replacement and/or repair if possible. Whenever possible, students will be required to assist in the repair of the property.

### Harassment

All students and staff members have the right to be free from harassment, which includes sexual harassment and physical torment, while in school and while passing legitimately on the school grounds. ALL INCIDENTS OF HARASSMENT SHOULD BE REPORTED TO THE PRINCIPAL OR COUNSELOR.

### Cell Phones/Electronic Devices

Cell phones and similar electronic devices (such as game consoles, earbuds, and others) must be kept "powered-off" and kept out of sight (in locker or book bag) during the regular school day. Students will be issued a warning the first time their phone is taken. The student may pick the device up at the end of the day. A parent will be required to pick up the phone the second time. Upon a third time, the student will have to check the device into the office from then on.

### Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is illegal and will not be used. Corporal punishment is defined as slapping, paddling, or prolonged maintenance of students in physically painful positions, or intentional infliction of bodily harm. Corporal punishment does not include reasonable force as needed to maintain safety for students, staff, or other persons, or for the purpose of self-defense or defense of property.

### Firearms, Knives, & Other Objects Used, or Attempted, to Cause Harm

A student who is determined to have brought one of the following objects to school, any school-sponsored activity or event, or any activity or event that bears a reasonable relationship to school shall be expelled for a period of not less than one year:

- 1) **A firearm:** For the purposes of this Section, "firearm" means any gun, rifle, shotgun, weapon as defined by Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code, firearm as defined in Section 1.1 of the

Firearm Owners Identification Card Act, or firearm as defined in Section 24-1 of the Criminal Code of 1961. The expulsion period may be modified by the superintendent, and the superintendent's determination may be modified by the board on a case-by-case basis.

- 2) **A knife, brass knuckles or other knuckle weapon** regardless of its composition, a billy club, or any other object if used or attempted to be used to cause bodily harm, including “look-alikes” of any firearm as defined above. The expulsion requirement may be modified by the superintendent, and the superintendent's determination may be modified by the board on a case-by-case basis.
- 3) **Severe Clause:** If a student's misconduct is severe, as in cases of fighting or threatening injury, possession of a weapon or any other object used or attempted to be used to cause bodily harm, willfully damaging property, displaying extreme disrespect or other extreme misbehaviors, other disciplinary action will be determined and the parents will be contacted immediately. Disciplinary actions may range from a one day in-school suspension, to a ten day out-of-school suspension, to expulsion by the Mercer County Board of Education.

### Bus Conduct & Discipline

To ensure the safety of all students, it is extremely important that every student behaves properly and follows the rules for riding the school bus. The Board of Education and the Mercer County School District #404 expect students to cooperate at all times and exhibit attitudes of respect and courtesy to other children, teachers, school personnel and property. Mercer County School District provides transportation to all students who abide by reasonable rules of conduct. Students, who cannot behave on the bus or while waiting for the bus, will be issued bus conduct cards. Bus video may be used to monitor student’s behavior on the bus. Parents will be informed of a child's misbehavior on the bus with a Bus Conduct Notice. Cards may be issued for any of the following reasons:

- Refusal to cooperate with bus driver
- Obscene and unacceptable language, gestures, remarks, or signs.
- Excessive talking and unnecessary noise, lack of courtesy and respect
- Throwing items of any kind in the bus or out of the windows
- Fighting or scuffling on the bus or at the bus stop, not keeping hands and feet to yourself
- Deliberate delay – loading or unloading
- Refusal to stay seated – turning around in seat or switching of seats
- Having or using tobacco on the bus or at the bus stop
- Extending arms, hands or head out windows- not keeping all body parts inside the bus
- Tampering with equipment
- Eating or drinking on the bus

### Bullying, Cyber-Bullying, Intimidation, & Harassment

Bullying is NOT acceptable and is strictly prohibited. Bullying conduct that is covered within the handbook and by the full Mercer County School District’s Policy on Bullying, is conduct that occurs on school property or at school or at school sponsored activities or events; while students are being transported or walking to or from school or school sponsored activities or events; while students are waiting at school bus stops, or when the conduct otherwise would substantially impede the educational environment, regardless of where the conduct occurs.

- Any student who engages in bullying will be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including suspension or expulsion and referral to local law enforcement. A student’s bullying conduct also may be addressed through any other behavioral interventions.



- Any student who is a bystander to any bullying conduct and who fails to take any action to discourage the bullying conduct also may be subject to appropriate discipline.
- No student shall be retaliated against for reporting bullying conduct. Any student who is determined to intentionally have falsely accused another of bullying shall be subject to appropriate discipline.
- For purposes of this Policy, a bystander to bullying is a witness to bullying conduct and may be considered to be aiding or abetting the bully. This aiding and abetting includes, but may not be limited to, standing idly by, looking away or otherwise actively encouraging the bully
  - Anyone who witnesses any conduct that could constitute bullying shall make a written report as soon as possible to any school staff member.

**Bullying** is any type of conduct that may:

1. Reflect a coercive imbalance of power; **AND**
2. Is purposeful and repeated; **AND**
3. Places an individual in reasonable fear of substantial detrimental effect to his or her person or property or to otherwise substantially interfere in participating in any activity.

**Cyber-bullying** is:

- Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photo-electronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications.
- "Cyber-bullying" includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section.
- "Cyber-bullying" also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in [105 ILCS 5/27-23.7(b)].

For purposes of this Policy “**Conduct**” includes:

- Physical acts, such as physical contact with another, stalking, sexual assault and destruction, harm or damage to property of another
- Written and electronic communication any medium as well as verbal threats made to another or blackmail, or demands for protection money
- Non-verbal threats or intimidation such as aggressive menacing gestures may also be considered conduct for purposes of this policy
- Use of school property, including computers, the electronic network, or any other electronic device, to communicate with others; and
- Any of the above conduct which occurs off school grounds when such conduct creates, or reasonably can be expected to create, a substantial disruption in the school setting and/or at school sponsored activities and events. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

Conduct that would not ordinarily be considered bullying for purposes of this policy includes:

- Mere teasing
- “talking trash”
- Trading insults
- The expression of ideas or beliefs (expressions protected by the First Amendment), so long as such expression is not lewd, profane, or intended to intimidate or harass another.

The complete copy of the Mercer County School District’s ‘Policy on Bullying’ can be found at [mercerschools.org](http://mercerschools.org). The ‘Bullying Report Form’ is available at each Mercer County School District school building and on the district website on the last page of the ‘Policy on Bullying.’ This report then shall be

immediately submitted to the principal or designees(s) responsible for student discipline who, as soon as practicable, shall conduct or cause to be conducted a thorough investigation of the alleged incident. The police and State's Attorney shall be notified immediately of all incidents involving bodily harm, property damage or any conduct which reasonably is believed by the school administrator(s) to be a violation of the criminal laws. The investigation of any such bullying conduct shall proceed in cooperation with the police and other applicable law enforcement authorities.

The School District always retains its right to investigate and impose any discipline for violation of this Policy, whether or not criminal charges are pursued. Administrative Contact Information:

- Tim Farquer, the Superintendent (309) 582-2238
- Andrea Cooper, High School Principal (309) 582-2223
- Brandy Dornon High School Assistant Principal (309) 582-2223
- Tim Sedam, Junior High Principal (309) 584-4174
- Teresa Ibouhouten, New Boston Principal (309) 587-8141
- Chad Robertson, Apollo Principal 582-5350 27

## School Services Student Health

### Physical Examinations and Immunizations

In accordance with Illinois law, before entering kindergarten, all students are required to have a physical examination, including required immunizations. Any students who are new to the Mercer County School District must also show evidence of the required examinations and immunizations. The examination must be completed within one year prior to the entrance date by a physician on the Illinois physical form, and the documentation should be provided to the school at the time of registration. **Students whose records are not complete and on file in the health office will be excluded from school until the records are complete by the 15<sup>th</sup> of October each year.** For all kindergarten students lead screen, dental examination, and vision examination are also now required by the state.

**Dental examinations are required for all second grade students.**

### Vision/Hearing Screening

We will be screening vision for prekindergarten, special education students, and kindergarten, second, and third grade. This vision screening will not take the place of the vision exam required for kindergarten entrance or first time enrollees in Illinois schools. The Illinois school code states: Vision screening is not a substitute for a complete eye and vision evaluation by an eye doctor. Your child is not required to undergo this vision screening if an optometrist or ophthalmologist has completed and signed a report form indicating that an examination has been administered within the previous 12 months. Hearing screening will be done for kindergarten through third grades and those new to Illinois schools.

### When Is Your Child Too Sick For School?

Many parents wonder when their child is too ill to attend school. If your child experiences any of the following symptoms before school, please keep them home:

- Sore Throat or Rash of Unknown origin
- Fever – 100 degrees or over
- Poor Appetite
- Runny nose (with yellow or green discharge)
- Headache
- Severe Coughing or Sneezing
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea within the last 8-12 hours
- Chills
- Red, burning, itchy or watery eyes – white or yellow discharge, eyelids stick together in the morning, or eyelids that are red and swollen
- Swelling in the face or jaw – can be due to swollen glands underneath your child’s jaw or the back of the neck. It may also be due to an abscessed tooth
- Earache – a child pulling on his ear, bleeding or drainage from the ear canal or pain

**Please make sure your child is fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication and has not vomited for 24 hours before they return to school.**



## Request for Administration of Medication

Students are not permitted to keep medication in their possession while at school. The Mercer County School Nurse will provide first aid only as authorized by the State Board of Health. Over-the-counter medication will only be given with written permission from the parent. Prescription medication will be administered at school only if the physician completes the medication administration form.

- Any medication to be taken **Three Times a Day Need Not** be taken at school.
- Any child taking medications must:
  1. Leave medication at the school office
  2. Have medication in bottle or box plainly marked with the following
    - Name of student
    - Name of medication
    - Dosage
    - Doctor prescribing medication
    - Reason for taking medication
    - Termination date for Administering the medication
  3. Be responsible to come to the office at designated time to take medication.
  4. Be responsible for picking up medication if it is to be taken home at the end of the day.

## Self-Administration of Medication

A student may possess an epinephrine auto-injector, e.g. EpiPen®, and/or asthma medication prescribed for use at the student's discretion, provided the student's parent/guardian has completed and signed a *School Medication Authorization Form*. The school District shall incur no liability, except for willful and wanton conduct, as a result of any injury arising from a student's self-administration of medication or epinephrine auto-injector or the storage of any medication by school personnel. A student's parent/guardian must indemnify and hold harmless the School District and its employees and agents, against any claims, except a claim based on willful and wanton conduct, arising out of a student's self-administration of an epinephrine auto-injector and/or medication, or the storage of any medication by school personnel.

## Communicable Disease Re-Admission Procedure

Children who develop cases of communicable diseases may be readmitted to school after all health department provisions for isolation and quarantine have been met and the attending physician has given permission, in writing, for return to school.

## Head Lice

Researchers have shown that the discovery of lice or their eggs on the hair should not cause the child to be sent home or isolated. Therefore, Mercer County Schools will not routinely send a child home, but will notify the parent of proper methods to treat the head lice after the child returns home at the end of the day.

## Physical Education/Recess Requirements

All pupils will be required to participate in regular physical education activities as well as recesses unless excused for valid reasons, i.e. illness or injury. Requests to be excused from Physical Education/Recess must be made in writing by a physician. The parent may request 1 day off from P.E./Recess without a physician's excuse.

## Personal Hygiene

Students are responsible for maintaining a reasonable standard of cleanliness and grooming. Counseling will occur to help each student meet appropriate standards.

## Student Injuries – Illness

An attempt will always be made to notify parents when their child is significantly injured or becomes ill at school. When the parent cannot be reached, we will keep the child as comfortable as possible until the parents can be contacted. If a serious injury or illness should occur, and parents cannot be located, we will contact those people listed in the student's registration information, then contact the student's physician if contacts are not available.

**It is very important that contact information including phone numbers, be kept updated with our school office.**

**Should hospital care be required, we will have the child transported to the emergency room of Genesis Medical Center - Aledo by ambulance. An adult will always accompany the child to the hospital if this situation should occur.**

## Breakfast and Lunch Programs

Eating well-balanced meals is essential for the physical and mental growth of each child. For this reason, New Boston Elementary provides both a breakfast and lunch program for the students. Students can either eat hot lunch or they may bring a cold lunch from home. You can put money on your child's account on Teacherease or you can **send your check or money in a sealed envelope to the school with your child.** **Please** write on the outside of the envelope the student's name, the homeroom teacher's name, and the amount enclosed. If writing a check for more than one child, list each child's name, each homeroom teacher's name and the amount of the check. We will be happy to accept your check. If two or more checks are returned for insufficient funds (NSF), then only cash will be accepted for breakfast and lunches. New Boston Elementary School is a member of the Mercer County State's Attorney's Check Enforcement Program and individuals who have NSF checks against the school can be prosecuted. Free and reduced lunch prices are available to students who qualify. The forms for the Free and Reduced lunch/breakfast program are available in the office at any time during the school year for families to fill out to see if the student qualifies. We cannot offer free or reduced-cost meals until the proper papers have been filled out and signed in the school office.

**Breakfast:** School breakfast is available from 7:35 to 7:55 am. The cost of breakfast is as follows:

- School Breakfasts and Lunches will be **Free** for the **2024-2025** school year.
- Extra milk, or for a sack breakfast is \$.40

**Lunch:** Students may choose to bring a sack lunch. Milk is provided in the price of the school's hot lunch or it may be purchased for \$.40 with a sack lunch. Parents are not to include pop, energy drinks, or candy in lunches. Parents are welcomed to eat the school hot lunch, breakfast (\$3.05- lunch, \$1.90 - breakfast) or to bring home-packed lunches. Parents are not allowed to bring prepared restaurant food for school lunch. The cost of lunch is as follows:

- School Breakfasts and Lunches will be **Free** for the **2024-2025** school year.
- Extra milk, or for a sack lunch is \$.40

**Treats & Snacks:** Due to the district’s current wellness policy students are not allowed to bring home-made treats for birthday treats or any other treats to be provided for other students. Treats must be pre-packaged or prepared in a state-licensed kitchen facility. Treats/snacks for any occasion must be arranged in advance with the classroom teacher.

**Milk Break:** Milk is offered to all students once daily as a snack. *This is not covered by the free/reduced program.* Students may bring in milk money by the semester (\$30.00) or yearly (\$60.00).

## School Counselor & Supports

A part time elementary guidance counselor is available. The counselor helps students overcome problems that may impede learning. The counselor may meet individual students or with groups of students who may have similar concerns. The counselor may contact parents directly about the need for continuing services.

### Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

SEL stands for Social Emotional Learning. There are 5 SEL Competencies that we work on building here at school. The SEL Competencies are:

- Self-awareness
- Social awareness
- Responsible decision making
- Self management
- Relationship skills.

See below for a chart that explains a little more of what each of these mean. There are years of research that help us understand the important roles social and emotional skills play in each child’s success in school, in the community and eventually in higher education and the workplace. At NBE, we work hard on building SEL skills in the classrooms. Once a week, each classroom has a lesson from the *Second Step* curriculum that helps to build strength in their social emotional learning.

The Second Step curriculum has 4 units.

- Unit 1: Growth Mindset and Goal Setting
- Unit 2: Emotion Management
- Unit 3: Empathy and Kindness
- Unit 4: Problem Solving.

Mercer County and New Boston also use DESSA (Devereux Student Strengths Assessment) as a tool to identify which social emotional skills students have a good grasp of, and which skills they might still need help in developing. Our goal at NBE is to ensure that your child is continuously developing the social emotional skills they need for lifelong success. With the results from the DESSA assessment, school counselors, and SEL, teachers can form groups for interventions to help students grow in their social emotional skills. SEL is part of our MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) program in the same way as math and reading. Students may be pulled in small groups once a week for a few weeks to work on their SEL skills until they have a better understanding of those skills. DESSA is administered three times a year.



## MTSS Multi Tiered System of Supports (RTI)

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) laws both require the use of research-based instruction and interventions. In Illinois a problem-solving model must be implemented to evaluate student responses to research based interventions. A child's response to interventions is often abbreviated and referred to as MTSS. A problem-solving model is a systematic and data-driven method for determining the degree to which a student has responded in interventions. Services should intensify for a student as the student's response to the intervention is below expectations. The problem-solving model is an initiative that supports general education school improvement goals. It is intended to help as many students as possible to meet proficiency standards without special education. The model is applicable to academic and behavioral issues.

There are three levels of interventions that are referred to as Tiers. The descriptions of each Tier are described below. These tiers are viewed as a continuum of services where Tier 1 is the least intense, while Tier 3 involves the most intense interventions. Tier 1 is the delivery of a Scientifically Based Core Program within the general educational setting. Universal screening will determine the students that may be at risk in comparison to the identified district benchmarks. Screenings will be done three times a year. All students receive instruction within

- Tier 1 in the general education classroom which may include core group interventions designed to promote students to progress at a sufficient rate. When the core program is delivered with fidelity, intensity, passion, and with necessary, appropriate, and practical accommodations it should meet the needs of approximately 80% of the students within the grade level subject area.
- Tier 2 is delivered to those students which have been identified to be at risk of failure through the universal screening tool. Students identified for Tier 2 will receive supplemental instruction using targeted interventions. This supplemental instruction will include MORE time, explicit teacher-led instruction, scaffold instruction, opportunities to respond with corrective feedback, language support, intensive motivational strategies and frequent progress monitoring in order for students to decrease the 20 performance gap in comparison to Tier 1 peers. Once the progress monitoring data indicates a student has made sufficient progress toward benchmarks, a decision could be made that the student no longer requires Tier 2 supplemental interventions but Tier 1 instruction will continue. Research indicates that approximately 15% of the students will be in Tier 2.
- Tier 3 is designed for students who, through progress monitoring data, do not show significant improvement in their identified deficit area(s) when presented with various Tier 2 interventions. Tier 3 students will receive intensive, individualized targeted interventions. This is in addition to Tier 2 supplemental and Tier 1 core instruction. This intensive instruction will include the MOST time, explicit teacher-led instruction, scaffold instruction, opportunities to respond with corrective feedback, language support, motivational strategies, and frequent progress monitoring in order for students to decrease the performance gap in comparison to Tier 1 peers. Approximately 5% of students will require the intensity of Tier 3 interventions.

Mercer County School District has a written RTI plan in place. The tiered model is intended to be a fluid system that promotes the movement of students from one tier to another as indicated by the data. Our district plan will dictate when a request for evaluation of possible special education services should be considered.

## **Assistant Team (SAT)**

The SAT team is a joint school staff and community effort to identify, assist and support all students who are at risk of having academic and behavioral issues which may interfere with them having success in school. The team consists of teachers and school staff members who, through the problem solving methods, will evaluate the student's needs and offer solutions to assist and support the student. The main goal of the SAT team is to identify students whose behavior, attendance, health and/or other factors are preventing them from experiencing school success. Faculty, staff, and parents who feel that a student is in need of such assistance or support may be referred to the SAT team for consideration.

## **Learning Resource Center (LRC)**

New Boston Elementary School houses a library. The library offers students library classes and lends books to all students. Students are responsible for any books that are checked out. If lost or damaged, students will be required to pay for the book(s) based on replacement or repair costs. It is our policy to not allow students to check out new books until lost or damaged books have been paid for.

## **Preschool Screening**

Each spring New Boston Elementary offers a free preschool screening for children ages 0-5. Children are screened in the areas of vision, hearing, cognitive and motor development. The purpose of the screening is to identify delays in development and match student needs with available services. Parents are urged to have their child screened each year as children progress and grow quickly with many changes occurring from year to year. There is no charge for this screening. Screening dates and locations will be announced several weeks in advance.

## **Title I Program**

The Title I program in the Mercer County School District is funded under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Title I of this act provides financial assistance to local school districts to provide services which help at-risk children achieve the high standards expected of all children.

The main goal of our program is to provide a wide range of assistance so that all students can achieve the high standards expected of all students. Characteristics of the New Boston Elementary Title I program is:

1. The New Boston Elementary Title I program is a school-wide program. This allows Title I funding to benefit all students through programs, materials, and professional development for all teachers.
2. In class as well as after class assistance is provided.
3. Through diagnosis and teaching, we endeavor to discover and overcome the special and particular needs of each student.
4. The Title I program is correlated to the student's classroom program.
5. The District/School has a parental involvement plan in order to assist and encourage parents to become involved in their child's education. Those policies are available upon request.

## Special Education

In accordance with federal and state mandates Mercer County School District provides special education free of charge to the parents. Mercer County School District is required to identify and provide appropriate educational programs for students 3-21 years of age residing in the district who require these services. The following special education programs are provided at New Boston Elementary to help each child reach his/her potential: Early Childhood Education (ECE, ages 3-5); Speech/Language; and Special Education services to students qualifying for those services in grades K-5 through in-class support, instructional or resource support, or on a consultative basis. Students requiring further assistance will be referred to other programs through the Black Hawk Area Special Education District.

## Parent Teacher Organization

New Boston Elementary has an active PTO that helps serve the needs of the school. They help by volunteering services, sponsoring programs, and funding special projects that are not funded by our district budget. Funds are raised through several projects. You are invited to be a part of this vital group. You may call the New Boston Elementary office for details.

## Grading

### Grading Scales

**Mercer County School District Scoring for standards based skills:  
grading scale:**

A - 90-100	1 = Exceeding Standards	VG = Very good
B - 80-89	2 = Meeting Standards	G = Good
C - 70-79	3 = Needs Improvement	S = Satisfactory
D - 60-69	4 = Unsatisfactory	N = Needs Improvement
F - 0-59	x = Not covered at this time	U = Unsatisfactory

## Report Cards

A progress report is made on each student every nine weeks during the school year – or four times per year. Report cards are sent home one week after the conclusion of each nine-week period.

## Parent/Teacher Conferences

Annual district-wide parent/teacher conferences are scheduled each fall. These conferences are held to discuss each student’s progress in school. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend. Additional follow-up conferences may be scheduled as needed. Parents are encouraged to request a conference with the teacher whenever questions arise.

## Student Records

A student’s records may be examined by the student’s parents following receipt of a written request to the building principal. Additional information regarding the rights of students and parents where student records are involved is available in the New Boston Elementary Office and the District #404 Office.



## Retention Procedure

If a student is in danger of failing a grade, parents will be informed well in advance so they are aware that their child needs extra help during the school year. The following procedure will document the student's progress throughout the year so if retention is necessary, a parent may feel comfortable that a right decision has been made.

- 1) **Parents should be informed** of a student's progress during the first parent-teacher conference, or as soon thereafter as difficulties are recognized.
- 2) **If the student is having difficulty**, another conference will be set up between the parents and teachers early in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. This conference will specifically mention that retention is a possible consideration with written documentation.
- 3) **As appropriate**, the teacher will refer the student to the Student Assistant Team for assistance in planning and implementing interventions to provide support for the child who is at risk of not being promoted.
- 4) **A teacher/parent/principal conference will be scheduled** after the 3<sup>rd</sup> nine weeks to consider any student who still is not achieving satisfactorily. The purpose of this meeting will be to determine recommendations for promotion or retention of the student.
- 5) **By the end of school**, the teacher and principal will meet to determine students to be retained. The parents will be informed of the decision to retain or to promote as well as the reasons for retention.

## Student Dress

When dressing your child for school several things need to be taken into consideration:

- **Weather:** Dress your child in cool comfortable clothes, yet must be appropriate for a school setting. Dress your child in warm clothes, including coat, hat, boots, and gloves when the weather begins to get cold. Students are outdoors for recess as well as during their transportation to and from school. Buses can become delayed or disabled and students need to be dressed to keep them safe and comfortable when the weather is cold.
- **Safety:** Shoes worn to school should be appropriate for activities at recess and PE that involve running (**flip-flops are strongly discouraged**). If flip-flops are worn the students should have another pair of shoes available that are appropriate for recess and PE. Shoes with heels are not allowed.
- **School Environment:** The administration reserves the right to disallow attire or hair styles (including colors) that may disrupt the teaching environment. This includes, but is not limited to the following:
  - No clothing promoting alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs, or items displaying lewd or inappropriate statements or pictures, will be allowed in school or at school-sponsored functions.
  - Students are expected to remove hats or caps when entering the building.
  - Students are not allowed to wear hoods inside the building.
  - No shoes with wheels
  - No sunglasses worn indoors

## Miscellaneous

### Personal Belongings

The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or broken articles. Please mark all items brought from home with your child's name. Students should not bring items to school that have significant sentimental or monetary value. Students should only bring money to school that is needed for school expenses. Students are not to bring trading cards, electronic games or other devices to school. Cell phones are allowed at school, although discouraged at the elementary level, but must be turned off and must remain in a student's locker or book bag. Scooters, skateboards, and roller blades are not allowed at school. Lost and found articles may be turned into the office.

### Textbooks

Textbooks are provided to the students. These will be distributed in the classroom by the teachers. Textbooks will be collected from the students at the end of the school year. Students are expected to take good care of the books issued to them. Charges will be assessed for excessively worn, marked, or lost textbooks.

### Chromebooks and Classroom Computers

There are district purchased Chromebooks or tablets for all students to use for educational purposes. Students are expected to use the equipment responsibly and according to guidelines that are established by the teachers and administration. Parents are asked to provide a signature at registration indicating agreement with our district's Acceptable Use Policy for the Internet. **Students are not to take the chromebooks or tablets home unless it is needed for homework and permission is granted by their classroom teacher.**

In the Spring, all third, fourth, and fifth grade students will use their Chromebooks to participate in the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) test. This test will assess the Career and College Readiness Standards or Common Core Standards.

### Visitors / Volunteers

Visitors and volunteers are welcome in our building and encouraged to be a part of our learning community.

- All visitors during the regular school day must report directly to the office to **sign-in** and **obtain a "Visitor's Pass"** before entering other areas of the building.
- Visitors are asked to **sign-out** in the office when leaving.
- Non-authorized persons should not be in the school building or on the school premises at any time without clearance from the office.

School visitation by parents and grandparents is encouraged. Parents or grandparents are welcome to eat lunch with their child at school when they are visiting. However, our wellness policy stipulates that parents are not allowed to bring prepared restaurant food to lunch at NBE. Parents are welcomed to eat the school hot lunch or to bring home-packed bag lunches (adult lunch price is \$3.25 breakfast \$2.00). When eating the school hot lunch we ask that you call ahead and make a reservation to do so. Students are not permitted to bring other children to school as visitors.



## Drug Free Zone

Mercer County School District #404 has been designated a Drug Free School Zone. This means that any drug or look-alike drug, alcohol, or tobacco violation on school property and/or at any school function (on campus or off) can result in disciplinary action by school officials.

## Bicycles

Students who live within biking distance from school are allowed to ride their bicycles to school. Parents are encouraged to make sure their child is knowledgeable in bicycle safety rules and regulations. Safety helmets are recommended. Bicycles are to be parked on the north side of the building and properly locked. Bicycles are not to be ridden on school grounds.

## Legalities

### Civil Rights Grievance Procedures

Notice of Nondiscrimination Mercer County School District #404 will not discriminate and will provide equal educational and extra-curricular opportunities for all students, without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, ethnicity, language barrier, religious beliefs, physical and/or mental disability, age, sexual orientation, economic and social conditions, or actual or potential marital or parental status. Gender Equity Mercer County School District #404 does not discriminate on the basis of gender in the provision of programs, activities, services or benefits, and it guarantees both genders equal access to educational and extra-curricular programs and activities. Facilities and related services, equipment and supplies are neither assigned nor limited on the basis of gender (excluding shower and toilet facilities, locker rooms, dressing areas and facilities used by exempt organizations).

Uniform Grievance Procedure Students, parents, guardians, employees, or community members should notify any District Complaint Manager if they believe that the School Board, its employees, or agents have violated their rights guaranteed by the State or federal Constitution, State or federal statute, or Board policy, or have a complaint regarding:

1. Title 2 of the Americans With Disabilities Act
2. Title 9 of the Education Amendments of 1972
3. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
4. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400et seq
5. Title 6 of the Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.
6. Equal Employment Opportunities Act (Title 7 of the Civil Rights Act). 42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.
7. Sexual harassment (Illinois Human Rights Act, Title 7 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Title 9 of the Education Amendments of 1972)
8. The misuse of funds received for services to improve educational opportunities for educationally disadvantaged or deprived children
9. Provision of services to homeless students.

The Complaint Manager will attempt to resolve complaints without resorting to this grievance procedure and, if a complaint is filed, to address the complaint promptly and equitably. The right of a person to prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint filed hereunder shall not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies. Use of this grievance procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies and use of this grievance procedure does not extend any filing deadline related to the pursuit of other remedies.

1. **Filing a Complaint** A person (hereinafter Complainant) who wishes to avail him or herself of this grievance procedure may do so by filing a complaint with any District Complaint Manager. The Complainant shall not be required to file a complaint with a particular Complaint Manager and may request a Complaint Manager of the same sex. The Complaint Manager may request the Complainant to provide a written statement regarding the nature of the complaint or require a meeting with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student. The Complaint Manager shall assist the Complainant as needed.
2. **Investigation** The Complaint Manager will investigate the complaint or appoint a qualified person to undertake the investigation on his or her behalf. If the Complainant is a student, the Complaint Manager will notify his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) that they may attend any investigatory meetings in which their child is involved. The complaint and identity of the Complainant will not be disclosed except (1) as required by law or this policy, or (2) as necessary to fully investigate the complaint, or (3) as authorized by the Complainant. Within 10 school days of the date the complaint was filed, the Complaint Manager shall file a written report of his or her findings with the Superintendent. The Complaint Manager may request an extension of time. If a complaint of sexual harassment contains allegations involving the Superintendent, the written report shall be filed with the School Board, which will make a decision in accordance with Section 3 of this policy. The Superintendent will keep the Board informed of all complaints.
3. **Decisions and Appeal** Within 5 school days after receiving the Complaint Manager's report, the Superintendent shall mail his or her written decision to the Complainant by U.S. mail, first class, as well as the Complaint Manager. Within 5 school days after receiving the Superintendent's decision, the Complainant may appeal the decision to the School Board by making a written request to the Complaint Manager. The Complaint Manager shall promptly forward all materials relative to the complaint and appeal to the School Board. Within 10 school days, the School Board shall affirm, reverse, or amend the Superintendent's decision or direct the Superintendent to gather additional information for the Board. Within 5 school days of the Board's decision, the Superintendent shall 22 inform the Complainant of the Board's action. The Complainant may appeal the School Board's decision to the Regional Superintendent pursuant to Section 3-10 of The School Code and, thereafter, to the State Superintendent pursuant to Section 2-3.8 of The School Code.

This grievance procedure shall not be construed to create an independent right to a School Board hearing. The failure to strictly follow the timelines in this grievance procedure shall not prejudice any party. **The complaint managers are listed as follows:** Andrea Cooper (Principal of Mercer County High School) and Tim Sedam (Principal Mercer County Junior High)

### **Students with Disabilities**

All children with disabilities have a right to a free appropriate public education as provided under the Illinois School Code. Mercer County School District shall provide, upon request, written materials and other information that indicates the specific policies, procedures, rules and regulations regarding the identification, evaluation or educational placement of children with disabilities. Inquiries should be directed to: Mrs. Carolyn McCrory, Special Education Coordinator for Apollo Elementary.

### **Student Records (FERPA)**

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

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the school to amend a record should write to the school principal (or appropriate school official), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health and medical staff and law enforcement unit 23 personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted as its agent to provide a service instead of using its own employees or officials (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are: **Family Policy Compliance Office U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20202-5920**. Directory information may be disclosed without prior notice or consent unless the parent/guardian or eligible student notifies the Records Custodian or other official in writing, before October of the current school year, that he does not want any or all of the directory information disclosed. Directory information includes the student’s name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended.

### **Notification Medicaid Data Release**

Special Education Students Only - If your child receives special education services and is also Medicaid eligible, Mercer County District can seek partial reimbursement from Medicaid for health services documented in your child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP). Medicaid reimbursement is a source of federal funds approved by Congress to help school districts maintain and improve diagnostic and therapeutic services for students. The reimbursement process requires the school district to provide Medicaid with your child’s name, birth date and Medicaid number. Federal law requires annual notification

of our intent to pursue this reimbursement opportunity. If you approve of the release of information to Medicaid, do nothing. If you object to the release of information to Medicaid, now or at any time in the future, please state your objection in writing and forward it to: **District Medicaid Reporter, 1002 SW 6 th St. , Aledo IL**. Regardless of your decision the district must continue to provide, at no cost to you, the services listed in your child’s IEP. **This program has no impact on your child’s or your family’s current or future Medicaid benefits.**

Under Federal law, your decision to participate in this program CANNOT:

- A. Decrease lifetime coverage or any other public insurance benefit
- B. Result in the family paying for services that would otherwise be covered by Medicaid,
- C. Increase your premiums or lead to discontinuation of benefits or insurance
- D. Result in the loss of eligibility for home or community-based waivers.

Your continued consent allows us to recover a portion of the costs associated with providing health services to your child.

### **Protection Of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)**

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

- Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)
  - Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent
  - Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family
  - Sex behavior or attitudes
  - Illegal, anti-social, self-incrimination, or demeaning behavior
  - Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships
  - Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers
  - Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents
  - Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
- Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of:
  - Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding
  - Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law
  - Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
- Inspect, upon request and before administration or use:
  - Protected information surveys of students
  - Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes
  - Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer to from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law. Mercer County School District #404 has developed and adopted policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of

protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. Mercer County School District will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. Mercer County School District will also directly notify, such as through US Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation in the specific activity or survey. Mercer County School District will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys.

Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above. 25 Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with: **Family Policy Compliance Office U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20202-5920**